



**GENDER EQUALITY STUDY
IN EDUCATION IN
THE WEST BANK AND GAZA
HUMANITY & INCLUSION**



Who's involved:

Consultancy Team:

Magaly Thill	(leading researchers)
Manal Awwad	(data collection in Gaza Strip)
Najm Yari	(data collection in West Bank)
Charlotte Axelsson	(Quality Insurance of methodological proposal)

Contributors:

Areej Al-Rajabi	Gender Technical officer
Sharaf Faqawi	Inclusive education Project Manager- Gaza Strip
Rinda Saleh	Inclusive education Project Manager- West Bank
Shireen Falouji	Education Technical Officer-Gaza

GENDER EQUALITY STUDY IN EDUCATION IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA FOR HUMANITY AND INCLUSION PALESTINE

Within the project:“Promoting the inclusion and access of girls and boys with disabilities to gender and disability responsive inclusive education in the emergency context of West Bank and Gaza”

Support by:



Disclaimer:

“The designations employed and the representation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Government of Canada.

Date: 25/03/2021

INDEX

ACRONYMS	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE STUDY	5
CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	13
1. Context of the assignment	13
2. Objectives, outcomes and expected results according to the ToR	14
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY	15
1. Inclusive education	16
2. Gender equality and education	16
3. Intersectional approach	20
METHODOLOGY FOLLOWED	22
1. Criteria, dimensions and domains of analysis.	22
2. Methodological safeguards	23
3. Adapted methodology due to COVID-19	24
4. Other constraints	25
5. Timeline of the study	25
6. Description of data collection techniques and tools	26
6.1. Secondary data collection: Desk review During the phase of desk review, the following HI has shared the following documents, which have read and analyzed by the consultancy team:	26
6.2. Survey to parents of children with and without disabilities.	27
6.3. In-depth interviews with parents of children with and without disabilities.	28
6.4. Semi-structured interviews (SSI) and Focus-groups (FG) with Education and Protection Clusters members, with Teachers of Mainstream and Special schools and CBR workers and with community members.	28
7. Description of the sample of data collection	29
7.1. Geographical description of sample of survey and in-depth interviews of parents.	30
7.2. Gender breakdown sample of survey and in-depth interviews with parents	30
7.3. Description of focus groups and semi-structured interviews with key informants, educational staff and community members.	31
SECONDARY SOURCES: FINDINGS OF THE DESK REVIEW	32
GENDER ANALYSIS RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE DATA	36
1. Analysis of sample: Gender and disability	36
1.1. Parents' gender breakdown sample	36
1.2. Children's gender and disability breakdown sample	36

1.3. Types of disability of children	37
1.4. Level of autonomy of children with disability	39
2. Access to disability diagnosis and assistive devices	39
2.1. Disability diagnosis by gender	39
2.2. Assistive devices by gender	39
3. Schooling situation: enrolment, drop-out and types of schools	40
3.1. Comparison of children with disability by gender	40
4. Reasons behind drop-out and out-of-school status	42
5. By distance learning during COVID by gender	47
6. Perceptions, norms, attitudes and practices towards gender	51
6.1. Level of disability (alone)	54
6.1.1. Laws, policies and institutions:	54
6.1.2. Patterns of power and decision making:	55
6.2. Level of gender (alone)	55
6.2.1. Laws, policies and institutions:	55
6.2.2. Cultural norms and beliefs:	56
6.2.3. Gender roles, responsibility and time use	57
6.2.4. Access to and control over assets, services and resources	59
6.2.5. Patterns of power and decision-making	60
6.3. Intersectional level	61
6.3.1. Laws, policies and institutions:	61
6.3.2. Gender roles, responsibility and time use	62
6.3.3. Cultural norms and beliefs:	63
6.3.4. Access to and control over assets, services and resources	68
6.3.5. Gender based violence	69
6.4. Conclusions of perceptions, norms, attitudes and practices towards gender	71

GENDER ANALYSIS RESULTS: QUALITATIVE DATA 74

1. Analysis of sample: Gender and disability	74
2. Access to disability diagnosis and assistive devices	77
3. Schooling situation: enrolment, drop-out and types of schools	77
4. Reasons behind drop-out and out-of-school status	78
5. Barriers to inclusive and gender responsive education according to parents	80
5.1. Lack of adapted and safe transportation	81
5.2. Financial hardship of parents.	82
5.3. Peers and community harmful behaviours, including bullying and sexual violence.	83
5.4. Lack of adaptation of education system including schools infrastructure, methodology and teachers skills.	84
5.5. Lack of awareness / empowerment of parents.	86
5.6. Gender Roles, Responsibility and Time Use	87

5.7. Access to education during COVID-19	88
6. Barriers to inclusive and gender responsive education according to key informants from Education and Protection Clusters, educational/CBR staff and community members	90
6.1. Gender and disability based barriers in the Palestinian Education system	90
6.2. Political and economical barriers: Israeli occupation and poverty	93
6.3. Cultural barriers: Community beliefs, norms and stereotypes on gender and disability	94
6.4. Institutional barriers: Educational policies, infrastructures, capacities, equipments and mechanisms	96
6.5. COVID-19: a new barrier at play	99
CONCLUSIONS	100
GLOSSARY	107
BIBLIOGRAPHY	109

ACRONYMS

Community Based Organization	CBO
Community Based Rehabilitation	CBR
Civil Society Organisation	CSO
El-Amal Rehabilitation Society	ERS
Gender Based Violence	GBV
Gaza Strip	GS
Humanity and Inclusion	HI
Al-Maghazi for Community Rehabilitation Society	MCRS
Ministry of Education and Higher Education	MoEHE
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	MoFA
Non-governmental Organisation	NGO
OPEC Fund for International Development	OFID
Palestinian Authority	PA
Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics	PCBS
Palestine Avenir for Childhood Foundation	PACF
United Nations	UN
United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund	UNICEF
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine	UNRWA
West Bank	WB
GAZA STRIP	GS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

According to the 2018 UNICEF Country Report on out-of-school children, 36,6% girls with disability between the age of 10 and 15 are out-of-school compared to 26,3% boys with disability. PCBS provides the figure of 23,8% of girls with disability who are out-of-school compared to 29,9% of males in the same situation. Besides, several thousand children with disability are not registered and stay therefore out of screening and deprived from services including education.

Due to its limited extension, the survey conducted in the framework of this gender study doesn't provide demographically representative evidences of a gender gap in access to education. Although parents surveyed have mostly declared to be supportive of school enrolment of all children equally, educational and CBR staff testimonies indicate that in a context of economic shortages, parents will prioritize the education of children without disability over children with disability on one side, and the enrolment of boys with disability over girls with disability, especially from the sixth grade, on the other side.

In order to ensure that children with disability of both genders enjoy their right to education and to gender equality, it is of high interest to understand how gender and disability interplay to restrict or limit the right to inclusive and gender transformative education. In this sense, the reasons behind the drop out of girls and boys with disability or the fact that they have never attended school have been assessed in this study, which implies to capture all factors at play, including those that end up marginalizing girls with disability because they are girls who have one or several difficulties.

Beside this objective, the present research has analyzed policy, institutional, financial and cultural barriers at play for girls and boys with disability and without disability. Primary sources were collected through 64 surveys and 15 in-depth interviews with parents of children with and without disability in Bethlehem Governorate and the three governorates of Gaza Strip. Moreover, the qualitative data were collected in semi-structured interviews and focus groups with key informants from Education and Protection clusters, educational and CBR staff and community members from West Bank and Gaza. The main conclusions of this gender study are as follows:

Barriers to education and reasons for drop-out

1. The main barrier faced by children with disability to attend schools most frequently invoked by surveyed parents are by order of importance: 1) the parents' fear that the child with disability will be the target of bullying or jokes by other children (25,26% for girls and 23,44% for boys); 2) their fear that their daughter with disability will be sexually abused (21,05%), a barrier that comes only in fifth position for sons (11,46%); 3) the lack of public transportation to and from school (15,79% for girls with disability and 18,23% regarding boys with disability); 4) the lack of special education schools (13,16% for girls and 17,19% for boys); 5) the lack of adaptation of mainstream education system (13,16% for girls and 13,02% for boys); 6) the need of the child's financial support of the family through paid work (7,81% for boys and 2,11% for girls); and 7) the feeling that he/she doesn't progress (4,74% for girls and 4,17% for boys).

This shows that after the fear of their child being bullied or harassed by other children or being or sexually abused, and except the need of economical income through the child's work, most reasons invoked are institutional and could be solved through increased adaptation of the educational system to children with disability, including through free and adapted transportation.

Besides, all reasons had a similar weight for boys and girls and followed the same order of importance, except for two of them: 1) the fear that the child will be sexually abused which is the second main barrier to education for girls with disability, mentioned by one out of five parents, and the sixth barrier for boys, selected by one out of ten parents; 2) the need of income from the child's work comes in 6th position for boys with disability compared to 7th position for girls.

2. When it comes to the reasons invoked by parents of out-of-school children with and without disability, the institutional/policy related factors come at first, before the cultural motives. The three first main reasons for drop-out are actually: 1) education is useless as he/she doesn't progress, 2) mainstream school is not prepared to host children like him/her or 3) there is no special education school.

After come the financial reasons either because 4) they cannot afford the cost of education or 5) they need their child to work to support the family. This kind of reasons was most often selected in Gaza (75% of all families who invoked financial reasons). Less frequently, cultural reasons linked to social relations are also mentioned as main reasons that lead to the drop-out: 6) regarding boys who had problems with other children, 7) girls with disability who were targeted of mockery and 8) a girl without disability who had a problem with the teacher.

While the need of the child's work is only mentioned regarding boys without disability, the lack of special education school is only mentioned for girls with disability. As well, problems with other children were mentioned by parents of out-of-school boys with and without disability but mockery and insults by other children were only selected by parents of out-of-school girls with disability, showing parents' gendered interpretation of social rejection by peers .

The high rate of children with disability out of school is mainly linked to the lack of adaptation and inclusiveness of the education system, followed by financial hardships that families go through in the current crisis, especially in Gaza, and finally the lack of skills of educational staff or lack of effectiveness of education to ensure the progress of children and their insertion and acceptance by other children.

3. In in-depth interviews with parents of children out-of-school, the main reasons for the child's drop-out or never attending school mentioned were, firstly, the financial hardship that made impossible paying fees to enrol their child in private special school and/or affording the cost of transportation to school. In second position comes the level of intellectual disability of the child or his/her lack of attainment / progress, which in reality may be interpreted as a result of the lack of adaptation of the education system.

Regarding the first of these reasons, it must be considered that most families interviewed are undergoing economic hardship. Poverty and extreme poverty situations of parents of children with disability have been observed, especially in GS. The lack of opportunity to continue studying after 4th grade in the very few mainstream schools equipped with resource rooms is also a reason for drop-out of children with disability.

4. Key informants have confirmed that the lack of financial resources to pay for transportation, the lack of adaptation of most mainstream schools including the need of development of teachers' skills, equipment and infrastructures to accommodate to children with disability, and the fees to enrol in private special education schools, constitute children with disability's main barriers to education.

They also mentioned reasons for drop-out that were not declared by parents: political obstacles on one side, like the practices of Israeli army and settlers and the political division between Gaza and West Bank, and cultural barriers on the other side. Among the last ones, parents have enunciated the belief still widely shared in the community that education of children with disability's is useless; the stigma and shame surrounding disability that lead parents to hide them from the community, especially girls due to the stereotype that disability is hereditary; and the priority given to children without disability and to boys over girls due to the traditional breadwinner role assigned to males.

5. All in all, barriers to education stem from the severe situation created by Israeli long-lasting occupation, blockade and war on West Bank and Gaza and the economic difficulties that Palestinian families are experimenting; part are institutional gaps under the responsibility of the MoEHE and other stakeholders; and part are of cultural nature and lie mainly under traditional community beliefs and attitudes.

The following paragraphs will detail more in depth the institutional and cultural barriers. The financial barriers represented by the cost of transportation and the fees for special education can be considered as pertaining to the duty of the Education system to be accessible to all children, gender responsive and inclusive. They are therefore addressed in this set of barriers.

As far as it has been mentioned as one of the main obstacles to education, gender based and sexual violence will be addressed as a separate barrier, although it must be considered as a cultural phenomenon and it might be eliminated or countered through institutional and policy measures. As well, due to its circumstantial nature, COVID-19 context is also addressed separately in spite of being a mix of financial and institutional barrier.

Barriers pertaining to policies, regulations and institutional practices of the Education system

6. There is a need of collection and dissemination of detailed data on gender, disability and age in education. This may be done through a gender sensitive nation-wide survey on disability and education or, failing that, through systematic gender, disability and age breakdown of children's enrolment and drop-out data in all governorates.

7. The education system is not perceived as inclusive and gender responsive or transformative by parents. 90 % of surveyed parents have the perception that children with disability do not have full access to public schools. Only 50% know that Palestinian authorities have an increased obligation towards girls and children with disability, showing the continued need to raise awareness of community. Regarding gender, 28,1% parents considers that gender equality is not being enough promoted by MoEHE. Gender equality promotion is perceived as a major gap to be filled in teachers' skills for 37,5%, in similar proportions as their competences in inclusive teaching (35,9%).

8. Parents are divided when it comes to select the best schooling option for children with disability. While 67,2% declare to be ready to pressure the school principal to allocate funds for inclusive education, 25% think that is better if children with disability attend special schools or, even in some cases, stay at home with their family. This percentage is much higher when asked about the best option for children with a concrete disability: 75% answered that both girls and boys with full visual disability shall attend preferably special schools.

In this sense, several parents declared, in-depth interviews that they ended up enrolling their child in a special school because the public one was not prepared for them or because he/she did not progress. They mentioned the lack of preparedness of teachers but also the lack of adapted equipment and infrastructures. The crowded classes were also invoked. A mother even explained that the teacher refused to enrol her daughter with intellectual disability and referred her to a special school.

9. On the level of policies, the Palestinian Authority has enshrined inclusive education for children with disabilities within its policies and in the Education Strategy 2019-2022. As well, the MoEHE has adopted a policy Palestine Inclusive Education Policy, 2015 and its operational Plan adopted in 2017. In spite of those eefforts made at the policy level, these achievements still need to be translated into practice in all the system. Also we have to regret a lack of intersectional perspective regarding gender and disability in the Palestinian Authority's policies on inclusive education.

10. Overall structural problems of education system in West Bank and Gaza, which are linked to the political and economical crisis created by Israeli occupation, have a worse impact on children with disability and among those, particularly on girls with disability: gaps in education quality standards; lack of follow up of children at risk of drop-out; scarcity of schools, classrooms and professors, which leads to groups of 50 in one class; old didactic methods; and lack of resources and IT; low motivation of teachers due to bad salary and working conditions (some did not receive their salary during months in GS), violent attitudes towards children in spite of being forbidden by law.

For children with disability, these challenges like the lack of availability or negative attitude of teachers may end up with the dropout of the child. Having 40 children in a classroom may also leads to school headmasters or teachers' refusal of the child with disability and his/her referral to special education schools.

11. The overall system available to children with disability is still deficient. Made of private pre-school centres, public, UNRWA and private primary and secondary schools, private special education schools and CBR programs. The number of mainstream schools equipped with resource rooms, which admit children with disability, is very low: 1 out of ten. Besides, they are prepared to receive only children with simple and light disability, while the system still presents loopholes for children with moderate, severe and multiple disabilities, especially those with cognitive difficulty.

As well, those children with disability integrated in mainstream public schools cannot continue learning after 4th grade. When this occurs, and for all children with severe, multiple or cognitive disability, the cost of enrolment fees in special schools, all of them private, is a new barrier at play, as there are only a few free access special education centres run by nongovernmental organizations.

12. At the level of infrastructures and equipments, in the last five years, efforts have been deployed to reform mainstream schools and eliminate physical barriers in the new buildings. But the current landscape is that schools still lack ramps, elevators, accessible toilets, etc. Except some Braille and hand language educative materials, mainstream schools generally lack of assistive devices and technological educative resources. While disability screening and referral to clinics deployed in UNRWA schools allows providing assistive devices excepting mobility support devices (wheelchairs, crutches), special education schools have mostly adapted to the needs of children with disability both at the level of infrastructures and equipments.

13. The biggest gap regards the level of knowledge, i.e teachers skills development, and the need to provide continued training on how to deal and communicate with children with disability and implement adapted and inclusive methodologies. Some organizations are training teachers to be skilled and prepared to take care of children with disability and integrate them in the class. These efforts shall be encouraged. Besides the need of technologic equipments to ensure inclusive education (programs, special computers, tablets, etc.) and the basic training of all educational staff, the MoEHE shall increase the number of special education teachers and equip resources rooms over the all education public system.

14. But it is concerning gender equality where the lack of awareness and capacities to ensure a gender transformative education is most needed. In this sense, teachers shall receive awareness and training on gender equality, transformation of gender roles and how to prevent gender based violence in all its forms. Women's organizations have made some training and awareness rising but they need the full endorsement and support of MoEHE to outweigh cultural resistances.

15. As well, at level of curricula, contents, training and methods shall be reviewed to mainstream gender equality and disability following CSO's recommendations. Contents of educative materials shall be also upgraded and reedited according to gender and disability reviews to ensure that females and males are equally represented in productive and reproductive roles and that women and girls with and without disability are portrayed in leading positions, challenging both "glass walls and ceilings" and contributing

to modifying gender roles and eradicating stigma and stereotypes on disability.

Moreover, methods centred on individualized development, creativity and empowerment of every child shall be promoted and adopted with the participation of experts and civil society organizations, including HI. In this respect, to build on these efforts, all teachers and counsellors should be trained both on disability inclusiveness and on gender equality to ensure full implementation of curricula upgrading.

16. At the level of services, adapted buses equipped with ramps and provided with CBR worker or a female teacher shall ensure transportation of children with disability from home to school. Free transportation shall be provided to children with disability from families with economic shortages when individual family assessment shows that she/he is at risk of dropping-out.

Barriers pertaining to cultural norms, roles and beliefs regarding gender and disability

17. Much work has been done to raise awareness and change attitudes and mentality regarding persons with disability in West Bank and Gaza. Nonetheless, there is still much to do to eradicate stereotypes and stigma on children with disability, especially girls with disability.

Part of the community still considers that it is useless to educate children with disability and that they shall be enrolled in special education schools or stay at home, especially for girls. These stereotypes feed their drop-out from mainstream school.

18. Parents usually declare that education is equally important for boys and girls. One out of ten (89,1%) has the perception that parents make no difference between girls and boys in terms of sending them to school. This is in spite of the better results obtained by girls, provided that 65,5 % believe that girls are more performing in education, while no parent declared that boys are better students. 73,4% of parents declare to be supportive of straightening gender unfair distribution of resources and space at school between girls and boys.

19. At the same time, they feel that the community values more a boy (32,8%) than a girl (14,1%) who has completed secondary education. This shows that social expectations are still in favour of investing in males' education. Although this was not openly acknowledged by parents, resources persons have indeed reported that many families will think that it is better to give the opportunity to the boy as he will be the breadwinner and must therefore be more skilled to get a job. As well, conservative values largely that the girl destiny is to get married and that she won't have the same need of a professional career are still admitted in the community.

20. Parents are supportive of traditional gender roles assigned to girls and skills to be acquired to fulfil the gendered division of tasks. A scarce 7,8% of parents consider that all professions shall be accessible to both genders with no exception. On the contrary, 31,3% consider that women shall not aspire to same professions as males, as it is not compatible with their duty as mothers. These norms have an impact on the expectations of parents regarding education: 78,1% parents consider that school shall teach girls

specific skills linked to traditional gender roles, while only 15,6%, especially mothers, consider that it is not the role of school. According to 37,5% parents, the reproductive or “domestic” tasks shall be more enforced on girls with disability.

21. Especially in the GS and in rural areas and in Bedouin communities, girls’ early marriage is still frequent and perceived as a solution for the incapacity of parents of large families to rear, feed and educate all their children. This leads to the drop-out of girls since 5th or 6th grade¹.

These views about acceptability and irreversibility of dropouts triggered by early marriage are also shared by educational staff. Usually, no action is taken from schools to prevent these marriages and avoid the drop-out.

The pressure of early marriage is even higher for girls with disability as it is seen as a great opportunity that might not happen again. 51.6% parents think it is more difficult for a girl with disability to get married and 50 % declared that they would be ready to marry their girl with disability under the age of 16 years old, with a higher percentage in Gaza (65,91%).

22. The other reasons behind the dropout of girls based on gender apply also more on girls than on girls with disability: the preference of keeping them at home to support in household tasks and learn skills considered necessary and the fear of exposing her to sexual harassment or sexual abuse have an aggravated effect on girls with disability’s access to education and rehabilitation services.

23. Additionally, there is a cultural barrier that applies only and exclusively to girls with disability, being a clear example of intersectional discrimination. The traditional belief that disability is hereditary casts stigma on all the females of the family. This belief may end up with the daughter with disability kept at home, hidden from the community, to avoid stigmatization of her and her sisters wrongly seen as potential future mothers of children with disability, reducing in this way their marriage opportunities.

24. On the contrary, the main gender based reason for boys’ drop-out, which is remunerated work, doesn’t have the same impact on boys with disability, who are viewed as having fewer possibilities to find a job and support their family.

25. Parents shall be empowered and provided psychosocial support, especially mothers who carry quite all the burden of care of children with disability. Co-responsibility shall be promoted in families and fathers shall be encouraged to share the care chore of children with and without disability by schools, special education centres, CBR and CSOs.

Barriers pertaining to gender based violence including sexual harassment and abuse

26. There is also a largely shared perception that children with disability are weak, powerless and vulnerable and that they will be the target of attacks, insults and bullying. This perception is at play as barrier to

¹According to MICS 2019, about 13% of women aged 20-24 years got married for the first time before reaching the age of 18 years; about 11% in the West Bank compared to about 17% in the Gaza Strip. See: <https://palestine.unfpa.org/en/news/palestinian-multiple-indicators-cluster-survey-pmics-2019-2020-announced>

education and a reason for drop-out, as 31,3 % of parents think both boys and girls with disabilities will be more secure at home. 65,6% think that they will be more secure if they attend schools and develop skills. These perceptions affect more girls than boys, who are seen as more capable of defending themselves.

27. As mentioned above, the second main barrier to education of girls with disability is their parents' fear of being sexually abused or harassed. Although 70,3% consider that both children with disability are more exposed to sexual abuse when they are away from home, 17,2% declared that girls with disability are especially exposed to this kind of violence. Only 12,5% consider that children are more exposed to sexual abuse from the family or individuals closed to the family. Showing how public sphere, including school, is perceived as a dangerous place for children with disability.

28. At the level of safety and protection of children against violence including GBV and sexual violence, parent's fear that both boys and girls will be victims of violence and bullying is a barrier at play that must be addressed in a clear, transparent and effective way. Protocols against harassment, violence, bullying and gender based violence including sexual abuse and harassment shall be adopted, disseminated and enforced in public and private schools to deconstruct this barrier that impacts especially on girls with disability.

29. GBV at home and domestic violence on children is also a reason for drop-out. This is why it is considered very relevant to put in place case management interventions with the all family and with different actors involved in protection of children and women victims of GBV when a potential case is detected.

Barriers linked to COVID-19 and by distance learning

30. More than half of the children surveyed (56,48%) could not follow on-line classes and/or make their exercises by distance. One out of four children (25%) did not succeed to follow classes due to the fact that they have no internet connection. More than one out of five (21,30%) neither could do it because he/she did not receive classes or didactic support from school.

31. No gap based on disability could be assessed in the access to remote educative contents and activities, but for those who did not receive any instructions from school, a higher percentage of parents tried to compensate this gap towards children with disability than with others.

32. On the contrary there is a clear gender gap in access to by-distance learning. 64,91% of girls could not make her exercises during school closures compared to 47,06 % of boys. While boys without disability had better access to remote education than those with disability, the most deprived from education during COVID-19 were girls without disability: 70,37% compared to 60% of girls with disability. Again, it must be mentioned that due to the size of the survey, this trends cannot be considered demographically representative of all Palestinian children.

33. The previous conclusion is reinforced by the confirmation that access to computers is more restricted

by gender (girls have less access) than by disability. 76,6% consider that children with disability shall be ensured access computers just as other children. 18,8% are aware that girls usually have lower access to computers and that girls with disability shall be especially considered. 17,2% declare that boys usually tend to use more the computers and have therefore ensured during COVID-19 that at home both genders had an equal access to this resource.

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. Context of the assignment

The consultancy is part of a 2-years inclusive education project which is being implemented in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with the support of the Government of Canada. The project in which the assignment took place is aimed at improving learning outcomes for women and girls in The Gaza strip and West Bank. With the support of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) of Luxemburg in the West Bank and by the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, HI is also working on capacity building of teachers and staff from target schools, the development of accessible school infrastructures, the provision of assistive devices and technologies and the enrichment of adapted educational materials.

Children with disabilities face multiple forms of discrimination, leading to their low level of schooling. The lack of adaptation of the educational system (which includes infrastructures, materials, contents, curricula, methods and teachers' skills), and stigmatizing and discriminatory attitudes of educational staff, other children, parents and community toward children with disabilities are the main challenges in their accessing education.

Regarding the duty holders, it must be said that the incapacity of the Palestinian Authority education system to ensure inclusiveness of children with disabilities may end creating barriers to their right to education. On the other hand, Israeli occupation and violations of Human Rights International Law undermine the right to education of Palestinian children, with a special impact on children with disabilities' access to education.

As highlighted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), almost half of Palestinian children with disabilities (46%) aged 6-17 years were not enrolled in education in 2017. These rates varied between West Bank 51% and Gaza Strip 43%. Generally, as UNICEF has affirmed in its Out-of-School Report published in 2018, the out-of-school rate is higher among girls with disability, showing that gender is also at play as far as schooling is concerned. This indicator could not be found for West Bank and Gaza in the PCBS Population Census of 2017, showing the need to mainstream gender and disability in statistics, census and reports².

Gender-based discriminations in the field of education, which are linked to gender stereotypes, norms

² This data will be requested to PCBS during the field data collection.

and roles, are aggravated by Israeli military attacks, blockades and harassment to Palestinian civil population. While Israel military attacks have increased the rate of children with disabilities linked to injuries, with more emphasis among boys³, the complex interplay of gender and disability compounds specific impairments to girls with disabilities' access to education and reinforce discriminations and stigmatization.

As well, other hypothesis have been addressed through this gender analysis, like the fact that boys are more likely to drop-out from school to support their families income while girls might do in order to assist mothers in reproductive work at home or grounded in parents' fear about their daughter being sexually abused or behaving in a manner which is socially considered improper for girls, or even as a consequence of myths related to a supposed congenital nature of disability.

Contextualized and adapted community awareness and teacher's capacity building can contribute to reduce gender and disability bias and improve inclusive education. Actions shall be informed by update, reliable and comprehensive data to strengthen HI's gender and disability analysis of barriers to education. This is the main purpose of this gender study.

2. Objectives, outcomes and expected results according to the ToR

The objective of this study is to conduct a gender equality study, analyzing gender barriers and their interaction with disability and age-related barriers on access to education. It is aimed at informing the design and fine-tuning of the above mentioned project activities, methodologies and tools.

This study investigates barriers to education that stem from gender issues and it interacts with disability and age in terms of further exclusion and vulnerability of girls and boys with disabilities. The study also provides information and evidence to other humanitarian actors to develop gender and disability-transformative education intervention responses.

In this aspect, the study has been conducted with the participation of HI partners in Gaza and West Bank and the collaboration of other actors, including the Ministry of Education (MoE), UNRWA, the Education Cluster, the Protection Cluster and other social and institutional actors active on education, disability and gender in West Bank and Gaza.

It contributes to the following logical framework outcomes of the project: The intermediate outcome: "Parents of girls and boys with disabilities, teachers,

education staff and other key community members champion non-traditional gender and disability inclusive behaviour that are outside the "ideal man box" and "ideal woman box", thus supporting an enabling educational environment for girls and boys with disability in Palestine, both in the Gaza Strip and West Bank".

The immediate outcome: "Increased ability of parents of girls and boys with disabilities, teachers, educa-

³As shows the population Census of 2017 published by PCBS, 5280 Palestinians (4525 males and 655 females) have a difficulty/ disability due to any attack by the Israeli army or the settlers, the beating, shooting or other attacks (PCBS, Population, Housing and Establishments Census 2017 pp. 36 and 209).

tion staff and other key community members to recognize, respond to and critically reflect on their own gender and disability stereotypes”.

The gender equality study looks at:

- the conceptual frameworks followed by the Palestine’s education system to ensure the access of all learners, regardless of their gender, disability and age and how the current laws and policies impact differently on girls and boys in terms of their education;
- the specific gender norms, roles or relations of the community in question that may increase the risk for vulnerability or exclusion from education (how do they affect boys and girl to go to schools and mothers’ or fathers’ willingness or ability to recognize and take control over resources influencing their female and male children’s access to education);
- the specific types of financial or social vulnerability that may affect their ability to access and use education services;
- the individual, indirect costs related to accessing education services, such as transport or child care, that may affect boys, girls, women and men differently;
- how progress/success in education and learning opportunities differ based on gender;
- the community support for access to education and learning differ based on gender;
- the actions and responses needs to be taken, and perceived as feasible to be taken, by mothers, fathers, community members, education stakeholders to respond to the gender needs in education.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in the international framework on gender equality, human rights and disability and gender and intersectional approach.

This gender study is also entrenched on Humanity & Inclusion’s policy on Disability, Gender and Age, where it is acknowledged that:

- Disability, gender and age as socially constructed norms can be observed in any human group, within which produce different outcomes between people;
- Disability, gender and age are key factors to understanding different people’s capacities, needs, and exposure to risks in any context or crisis.

HI therefore commits to paying systematic attention to disability, gender and age-based inequalities in its analysis and to how they interact with other inequality-generating factors.

Consequently, the HI network develops programmatic strategies that allow people encountering discrimination on the grounds of disability, gender and age to benefit from humanitarian action and development opportunities on an equal basis with others.

To this end, participation, equality and non discrimination, accessibility and safeguarding are 4 guiding principles of HI action, As well, HI promotes a two-pronged approach: 1. To be disability-, gender- and age- responsive in all areas of HI work. 2. To be transformative wherever possible in order to achieve effective inclusion.

Different levels of programming	
Unaware	Programming ignores norms, roles, relations and needs related to disability, gender or age. This type of programming can actually reinforce inequalities.
Aware/sensitive	Programming considers norms, roles, relations and needs, and indicates awareness on disability, gender and age; however actions are not adapted to ensure equal benefit from interventions.
Responsive	Programming ensures that people who are discriminated against on the basis of disability, gender or age benefit equally from actions.
Transformative	Programming addresses root causes of inequalities or systemic barriers where disability, gender and age intersect, fostering lasting changes

In this vein, the study has embraced three main conceptual pillars to assess barriers at play and obstacles to enjoyment and exercise to equal right to education in West bank and Gaza.

1. Inclusive education

As stated in HI, disability is an evolving concept which “results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.

Attitudinal and environment barriers are at play to restrict access to education of girls and boys with disabilities enshrined in Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which was ratified by Palestinian Authority in 2014.

A more inclusive education is therefore not only an issue of improving the access to schools infrastructures and to support services, including assistive technology. It is also an issue of putting in place non-discriminatory and accessible didactic contents, methods and practices, including eliminating social barriers such as stereotypes, stigma and bullying against children with disability.

Taking into consideration the described levels of programming entrenched in this conceptual framework, inclusiveness is not only a question of ensuring that children with disability benefit equally from education (responsive). It must be viewed as a strategy to address root causes of environment and attitudinal barriers against children and adults with disability, and foster lasting changes (transformative).

2. Gender equality and education

HI defines gender as “the social and political roles, behaviours and attributes which are constructed for men and women by a given society and which each given society considers most appropriate and ‘valued’ for men and women. These constructs are learnt, they shape how people define themselves and

how they are defined by others. Gender norms can change over time and vary within and between societies. Gender is to be distinguished from sex, in the biological sense, which refers to the physical and biological characteristics that distinguish males and females”.

Equality is also defined as the situation “when people enjoy rights, opportunities and resources on an equal basis with others, irrespective of disability, gender or age. So equality means that enjoyment of rights and opportunities are not limited by whether people are born female or male or whether they have a disability or belong to a particular age group”.

Regarding the international framework on gender and education, Article 10 of CEDAW calls on States parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure that they enjoy and exercise equal rights with men in the field of education.

In this study, equal rights in the field of education is understood as embracing the right to education, rights within education and rights through education. In this concern, education not only plays a pivotal role as empowering tool for women and girls: it is also a powerful transformative instrument to promote gender equality and disability inclusion.

This is why, the understanding of gender equality in education is not limited to ensuring that both girls and boys benefit equally from education but also to foster lasting changes towards real equality removing gender roles, norms, attitudes and stereotypes that put obstacle to full gender equality.

Gender and education is a field of research and policies which has been widely explored and policed. First the access to education has been for long vetoed or restrained to girls. Furthermore, education has also been a tool of engendered socialization of girls and boys, which may reproduce or, on the contrary, eradicate gender inequalities. This is why the concept of gender responsive education has been developed.

In its Education Kit Handbook. Guidelines for Training of Trainers (2013), UNICEF defines gender responsive education as an education that:

- promotes equity and equality between boys and girls in schools.
- deals with the needs of girls in particular and other vulnerable children.
- guarantees girl-friendly facilities, curricula and teaching and learning processes.
- socializes girls and boys in a non-violent environment.
- addresses issues of sexual harassment.
- promotes female educators as role models (p. 12).

In its Guidance for Developing Gender-Responsive Education Sector Plans (2017), the Global Partnership for Education, UNGEI and UNICEF have stated that defined gender-sensitive or gender aware “means that a policy or program recognizes the important effects of gender norms, roles, and relation

“refers to a policy or program which fulfils two basic criteria: a) gender norms, roles, and relations are

considered and b) measures are taken to actively reduce the harmful effects of gender norms, roles, and relations - including gender inequality” (p.4).

On another hand, although UNESCO also uses the term “gender responsive” when referring to education programming and methodology which promotes gender equality, it has ultimately introduced the concept of gender transformative.

Definitions of the three levels of gender sensitive, gender responsive and gender transformative can be found inter alia in the Gender in Education Network in Asia-Pacific (GENIA) Toolkit. Promoting Gender Equality in Education (2017), a handbook which nonetheless maintains the use of gender-responsive education concept

Gender sensitivity	Gender sensitivity means acknowledging that differences and inequalities between women and men require attention.
Gender responsive	Gender responsive is being gender sensitive and articulating policies and initiatives which address the different needs, aspirations, capacities and contributions of women and men. For example, in communities where women are faced with social constraints that prevent them from being out of their homes in the evening, a gender-responsive intervention would be to offer training to these women only when they are able to attend training sessions. This kind of intervention therefore addresses women’s needs (of training), but it does not challenge the discriminatory idea that women cannot be out of their homes during certain hours of the day/night.
Gender transformative	Gender-transformative policies and initiatives challenge existing and biased/discriminatory policies, practices, programmes and affect change for the betterment of life for all.

In order to stay aligned with HI terminology, the term gender-responsive education will refer to education that ensures that children who are discriminated against on the basis of gender, benefit equally from services while gender transformative education will be understood as an education that addresses root causes of inequalities or systemic barriers based on gender and fostering lasting changes so that girls and boys benefit equally from services.

Regarding the levels to be taken into consideration to ensure that education is gender responsive, and also gender transformative, UNICEF invites educators to be

aware and correct the gender bias in education by taking into consideration the following levels of analysis and its corresponding gaps and threats:

(Source: UNESCO, Gender in Education Network in Asia-Pacific (GENIA) Toolkit. Promoting Gender Equality in Education, 2017, p.5-6.

Awareness of gender bias in education: Instructors, caregivers and teachers are expected to be aware of the gender biases that are present in education. There are several factors that promote gender bias in education. Among them are:

Culture	Some cultures perceive women and girls as secondary to men and boys and this affects the roles and responsibilities that are assigned to them. For example some cultures do not encourage girls to pursue an education because they perceive the role of girls and women as limited to marriage, motherhood and the domestic realm, and in such roles a 'formal education' is not necessary.
Teaching and learning methods	Some methods are not 'girl friendly.' For example some caregivers prevent girls from playing with toys that are perceived to be only for boys such as cars and tractors or prevent boys from playing with toys that are perceived to be only for girls, such as dolls.
Teaching and learning resources	Some textbooks are gender biased, in terms of pictures and language used. For example doctors are always represented as male figures. This implies the wrong message that only boys can become doctors.
Language	Some language used by teachers in classrooms promotes gender stereotyping. For example referring to household duties such as cooking or cleaning as an exclusive female responsibility.
Infrastructure	Lack of and inappropriate infrastructure, such as toilets, water points, classrooms and desks. It is a fact that girls regularly drop out of school during their menstrual periods for lack of adequate infrastructures.
Knowledge and skills	There may be an inadequate knowledge of biological and socially-constructed differences between girls and boys. For example driving is a skill often related only to boys.
Role models	Lack of/inadequate number of female teachers to act as role models in schools, particularly rural schools. In many contexts male teachers outnumber female teachers.

The previous table, which was built on the UNICEF Education Kit Handbook, displays the different levels where gender interplays with education. For instance, regarding culture it may be noticed that, in a similar way as the “caregiver” gender role for women may prevent girls from pursuing their education, the

(Source: compilation table based on UNICEF Education Kit Handbook, Guidelines for Training of Trainers, 2013, p.13).

“breadwinner” gender role attributed to men might be a reason for boys to drop out from schools and support financially their families due to economic hardships.

As well, regarding role models, provided that teaching is not a well paid duty in public primary schools in WB and GS, and almost a voluntary work even in some special schools, education has remained unvalued and not attractive to males. As well, the conciliation has reinforced the fact that is a feminized working sector. We may also add to the fact that gender bias is also present in the curriculum itself as well as the didactic contents and supports (books, pictures, etc.).

Besides, other levels of analysis have been considered relevant to be addressed by this gender study in West Bank and Gaza.

Accessibility	There may be large distances from home to schools or a lack of public transportation which has a gender bias. Special attention shall be paid to the safety of access and transportation means as regards to exposition to risks of sexual violence.
Institutional policies	Lack of Gender Equality Plans, protocols against sexual abuse and harassment, etc.
Institutional structure	Lack of gender unit or focal point, low representation of women among school principals and directors.

3. Intersectional approach

In order to guide HI goal to implement cross-cutting and integrated responses to address disability, gender and age-based inequalities at all levels of its work and through the work of its partners, the approach to address the interaction of gender and disability in the field of education is the intersectional approach. Intersectionality feminist theory, which was developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw⁴, has allowed detecting, understanding and challenging the way how other factors of discrimination, like disability, interact with structural gender inequality, creating specific situations which cannot be considered equivalent to the sum of discriminations and requiring a response adapted to the specific needs that these combinations create.

Intersectional discrimination in access to education resulting from the combination of gender and disability in the field of education shall be addressed not only as a complex restraint to the right to education, especially in the context of Israeli military occupation and blockades, but also as an opportunity to challenge stereotypes and transform roles and norms that lead to these complex inequalities.

⁴Crenshaw, Kimberlé (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. University of Chicago Legal Forum 1989, n° 8, 139-67. Crenshaw, Kimberlé (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color, Stanford Law Review, n° 43, 1241-99.

These are aspects that are part of this gender study, which objective is to produce a contextualized analysis of gender and disability barriers at play in the West Bank and Gaza. This is why the gender-based analysis has incorporated gender and disability categories to produce useful quantitative and qualitative data.

This is why gender and disability categories are analyzed separately and in conjunction. This means that the data collection looked at gender barriers on one side, at disability-based obstacles and at the specific impairments at play to exclude, restrict or limit the equal rights of all children to education.

As well, other categories deemed relevant from an intersectional and socially contextualized approach. This is why in the survey and in-depth interviews of parents, the following categories were added: age of parent, age of child, rural/urban, Gaza/West Bank, economic difficulty, employment situation and civil status. This intersectional approach looks at how gender and disability interact in perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that highlight social norms and dynamics of households, schools and communities. It also looks at how these other sociological aspects may influence gender norms, stereotypes, roles and relations.

Gender is a ground for one of the gravest human rights breaches: gender-based violence (GBV) including sexual violence and harassment. To make matters worse, girls and women with disabilities have demonstrated to be at higher risk of gender-based violence (GBV) than women and girls without disability . Sexual gender based violence, including the risk of being exposed to it, might be an added barrier to accessing and exercising the universal right to education.

Hence, besides the widely accepted five domains of gender analysis (1. Laws, Policies, Regulations, and Institutional Practices; 2. Cultural Norms and Beliefs; 3. Gender Roles, Responsibility and Time Use; 4. Access to and Control over Assets an In West Bank and Gaza, as highlighted by the 2019 Violence Survey in the Palestinian society (PCBS), 37% of the currently married or ever married women with disability experienced 'at least once' a form of violence such as (psychological, physical, sexual, social or economic violence) by their husbands in Palestine throughout the 12 months preceding the study compared to 29% for all women. While information is not available on sexual violence or harassment by gender and disability in the Survey, studies conducted in other countries have shown that girls and women with disability are more exposed to it (see: Thematic study on the issue of violence against women and girls and disability of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights A/HRC/20/5, 30th March 2012). On the other side, non gender-based violence, especially physical violence, exerted on children by parents or other members of the family and at school may target more boys than girls. As per the mentioned

In West Bank and Gaza, as highlighted by the 2019 Violence Survey in the Palestinian society (PCBS), 37% of the currently married or ever married women with disability experienced 'at least once' a form of violence such as (psychological, physical, sexual, social or economic violence) by their husbands in Palestine throughout the 12 months preceding the study compared to 29% for all women. While information is not available on sexual violence or harassment by gender and disability in the Survey, studies conducted in other countries have shown that girls and women with disability are more exposed to it (see: Thematic study on the issue of violence against women and girls and disability of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights A/HRC/20/5, 30th March 2012). On the other side, non gender-based violence, especially physical violence, exerted on children by parents or other members of the family and at school may target more boys than girls. As per the mentioned survey, in West Bank and Gaza, 36% of male teenagers between 12 and 17 years old have experienced violence at school, compared to 15% of girls,

survey, in West Bank and Gaza, 36% of male teenagers between 12 and 17 years old have experienced violence at school, compared to 15% of girls, Resources (in this case, Education; 5. Patterns of Power and Decision-making), a sixth domain was added: gender based violence including sexual abuse and harassment.

METHODOLOGY FOLLOWED

1. Criteria, dimensions and domains of analysis.

The gender analysis tools and data collection techniques were developed to bring out relevant and detailed qualitative and quantitative information around the categories, dimensions and domains enunciated below.

Categories of analysis:

1. Gender: Male-female .
2. Disability: Following the classification of the Washington Group, the identification of children with disability has adopted the following types of difficulty: 1. seeing (even if wearing his glasses or lens); hearing (even if wearing hearing devices); 3. Speaking; 4. walking or moving (without walking assistance or wheelchair) or feeding and/or dressing himself; 5. understanding, remembering, concentrating and/or learning; 6. making friends, controlling his anger and/or relaxing from anxiety and depression; 7. performing several of the actions aforementioned; 8. performing one or several of these actions due to illness (this aspect was added after the pilot stage based on the observation that some of these difficulties were the result of illness and that it was interesting to differentiate disability from illness).
3. Age.
4. Residency: West Bank (Bethlehem area) and Gaza (3 areas: Northern, Middle and Southern).

Dimensions of analysis:

1. Knowledge
2. Perceptions
3. Beliefs
4. Attitudes
5. Practices.

Domains of analysis:

1. Laws, Policies, Regulations and Institutional Practices,
2. Cultural Norms and Beliefs,
3. Gender Roles, Responsibility and Time Use,
4. Access to and Control over Assets and Resources (in this case, Education, but also assistive devices),
5. Patterns of Power and Decision-making, and
6. Gender based violence including sexual harassment and abuse

See comment on concept of gender adopted in this gender study, p. 9.

The analysis of intersecting categories combined with the domains and dimensions of analysis has led to disentangle how, for instance, stereotypes towards girls with disabilities is linked to cultural norms and the impact it has on empowerment. For this intersectional complex and contextualized analytical purpose a matrix of crosscutting categories, dimensions and domains was set up and exploited.

In order to assess gender and disability barriers in education from an intersectional approach, knowledge, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and practices that may hinder equal right to, in and through education were systematically analysed against gender (male-female) and disability (with disability – without disability), which must be considered as the two main categories of analysis. Residency and age are highlighted when a clear difference was observed in quantitative or qualitative data collected.

Being framed under an intersectional gender approach, these categories were assessed separately and jointly in order to detect where some belief, attitude, perception or practice might affect only girls or boys with disability, or girls or boys without disability.

As well, the domains where the barriers based on gender and disability, separately or jointly, materialize have been analyzed also in combination with the dimensions of analysis. For instance, the gender study paid attention to the level of parents' knowledge of laws, policies and regulations, attitudes and practices regarding gender roles, beliefs concerning access to education, practices regarding gender-based violence, etc. Where a difference could be found among males and females or towards males and females or towards children with disability or without disability, it has been mentioned as far as possible.

Due to the complexity and unprecedented nature of this study, a combination of quantitative, qualitative and mixed techniques was adopted and a huge amount of data were collected and thoroughly analyzed and treated. The findings of the study are displayed following the techniques followed to obtain them. The contrasted conclusions are inserted at the end of the report.

2. Methodological safeguards

Taking into consideration the sensitiveness of aspects analyzed and the bias than may emerge when asking about gender and disability barriers to education, especially in a politically complex context, the research team adopted a set of methodological safeguards.

In the field of research regarding disability, a set of recommendations were adopted from the Guide for interviewers of the Washington Group Child Functioning Module, some safeguards to ensure beneficiaries' adherence to the process, the reliability of data and non-stigmatizing attitudes have been adopted by the research team during the primary sources data collection activities:

- Introducing well the team, the project and the analysis rationale;
- explaining that interviewees and surveyed individuals are free not to respond;
- explaining that there are not “good” or “bad” answers;
- avoiding or at least reducing the use of the term “disability” and refraining from any superior or den-

- igrating or patronizing attitude;
- using neutral introductions to avoid biasing responses and not showing disapproval nor qualify their answers;
- providing clarification but without influencing answers;
- being pleasant and assertive;
- offering translation in Arabic to all non-English speakers;
- using recreational, participatory, didactic, inclusive and non-stigmatizing tricks with children, especially in workshops with them;
- reading slowly, loudly, emphasizing key words and repeating answers and questions as many times it is needed for the interviewee to understand it;
- offering alternative communication channels for persons with hearing impairment, or that are blind; adapting the introduction and communication to the respondent;
- providing feedback and encouraging them;
- not skipping questions nor assuming responses from the situation or from answers they provided to other questions; etc.

As well in order to avoid denial of gender based inequality, instead of asking parents directly about gender based discriminations, a set of questions were formulated in the survey questionnaire to assess beliefs, roles, norms or attitudes towards both genders in a similar context and identify gender gaps through comparing their responses when concerning girls or boys.

Besides, the combination of the survey with the in-depth interviews allowed detecting gender barriers at first denied or silenced. As far as the qualitative data collection tools were built following a similar structure as the survey, it provided an enhanced opportunity for the data collectors to further inquire about some elements of responses provided by parents which were relevant from the gender perspective.

If inequality is a sensitive subject in West Bank and Gaza in general, it was likely that the research team would encounter stronger resistances among parents to acknowledge discriminations towards girls with disabilities. This is why this intersection has been strategically assessed circumventing parents' denial of gender discriminations on girls with disability, by the mean of indirect questions, like "Would you think or behave in the same way if s/he was a girl/boy with this difficulty?"

3. Adapted methodology due to COVID-19

Due to restrictions placed on movements and social meetings produced by the COVID-19 pandemic, the data collection and the overall gender study methodology had to be adapted. The design and timeline of the stages of the study were reviewed in several occasions.

The two international consultants had to cancel their field-work in Gaza Strip (GS) and West Bank (WB) because of the persistent Israeli ban on international travels and the declaration of State of Emergen-

cy by the Palestinian Authority (PA). As well, schools were closed for weeks in several occasions, which made more difficult the sample definition and the identification of parents.

A first review of the gender study methodology was submitted and approved by Humanity and inclusion (HI) in May 2020. As it became unclear when the schools would be opened and whether it would be secure to conduct face-to-face meetings with children, parents and staff, the data collection tools purpose and design were modified.

Workshops with children were cancelled and family in-depth interviews in home visits were replaced by on-line data collection methods. A more detailed survey questionnaire was developed in order to collect more qualitative information on children with disability's experience and parents' beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and practices.

As well, regarding the method of data collection, face-to-face surveys, interviews and focus groups were replaced by on-line data collection in Gaza, where it was considered more secure to hold them remotely to avoid propagation of COVID-19.

4. Other constraints

Besides obstacles faced due to COVID-19 pandemic, HI had to rely principally on its non-governmental local partners, to provide contacts of parents and teachers to be surveyed and interviewed.

Besides, some constraints regarding the sample participants' profiles, the organization of appointments, the availability of respondents and the poor internet connection added some delay in the data collection process in the GS.

Another obstacle appeared regarding the focus groups with key informants of Education and Protection Clusters. Due to some technical problems and lack of availability of some resource persons, the participation was lower than scheduled. The absence of MoEHE administrative and educational staff in the data collection must also be regretted.

5. Timeline of the study

A pilot stage of the survey was conducted by Skype with 4 parents in GS at the end of July and the questionnaire was finalized according to the results of this testing phase. Due to the constraints described above, the data collection could not be launched till November 2020.

The 40 parents' surveys and 11 interviews were conducted in Arabic by the local consultant Dr Manal Awad between 16th November 2020 and 10th January 2021 by Skype and phone, with the kind logistical support of HI partners.

In Bethlehem area, on-site data collection activities were performed by the local consultant, Mrs Najm Yari. Thanks to HI local partners and engaged CBR workers on the ground, interviews, surveys and focus groups were conducted in Janata Municipality and in the Village Council of Wadi Foukin between 30th

November and 10th December 2020.

Besides, part of the in-depth interviews and focus groups with key informants (professors, staff, clusters and community members) were conducted by distance in English by the leading researcher Dr Magaly Thill. In some occasions, HI partners volunteered to make translation from and into Arabic.

The data collected were treated in February and March 2021.

6. Description of data collection techniques and tools

The following techniques to collect data from primary sources were selected taking into consideration the profile of every category of sources: parents of in school and out-of school children with and without disability; educational, CBR and school staff; Protection and Education Cluster members; and community members (taxi drivers, CBOs, women's associations).

Quantitative data about children situation (disability, diagnosis, assistive devices, schooling, access to public place, etc.) and parents' perceptions, attitudes and practices were collected through surveys of parents.

These data were complemented and contrasted by qualitative data through in-depth interviews with a reduced number of parents. As well, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were held with key informant individuals. The data collection techniques and processes are described below.

6.1. Secondary data collection: Desk review

The first stage of data collection consisted in a desk review of the project documentation, national reports and statistics produced by the Palestine Authority or other Palestinian institutions including Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), key UN, HI and other NGOs reports and/or surveys, and all other relevant documents on gender, disability and education in West Bank and Gaza.

During the phase of desk review, the following HI has shared the following documents, which have read and analyzed by the consultancy team:

- Project description: MHD Full Proposal (Complex Humanitarian Situations/Annual Funding). Promoting the inclusion and access of girls and boys with Disabilities to gender and disability responsive inclusive education in the emergency context of OPT (2019, Complex Humanitarian Situations / Annual Funding Mechanism, occupied Palestinian territories, Education), Humanity & Inclusion, OPT.
- HI Code of conduct (CC): Prevention of abuse and safeguarding.
- HI Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).
- HI Child Protection Policy (CPP).
- HI Policy on Disability, Gender and Age.
- HI Barriers assessment. Opportunities and Potential for Children with Disabilities to Access Education in Gaza and Rafah cities (2015).
- HI Data Analysis Report: Development of an Inclusive Education Practical Manual for Teachers (2018).

Similar study to Barrier Assessment in 3 primary schools in Hebron.

- HI Technical Guide: Inclusive good practices in schools within the projects “Improved Access to Essential Services for Persons with Disabilities in Highly Marginalized Areas of occupied Palestinian territory”, and “Improved Access to Essential Services for Children and Adults with Disabilities in Highly Marginalized Areas of Palestine”.
- HI Desk study on the intersection of Gender and Disability in international development cooperation, by Stephanie Ziegler (2014).
- As well, three Skype meetings with HI staff have been held to gather information on the activities of the project and to program the field data collection:
 - Kick-off meeting with Gaza, Ramallah and Jerusalem branches involved team (11th February 2020).
 - Thematic meeting on the project implementation in WB (3rd march 2020).
 - Re-programming Skype meeting to discuss the situation caused by Covid-19 contention measures (11th March 2020).
- Besides, the consultant team analyzed studies, guidelines, policies and statistics from other agencies and PA institutions. The following publications deserve to be mentioned:
 - UNICEF and Ministry of Social Affairs report: Every child counts: Understanding the needs and perspectives of children with disabilities in the State of Palestine, authored by Nicola Jones, Bassam Abu Hamad, Kifah Odeh, Paola Perezniето, Ola Abu Al Ghaib, Georgia Plank, Elizabeth Presler-Marshall and Mohammed Shaheen and published in December 2016.
 - PA’s Palestine Inclusive Education Policy, 2015.
 - PA’s Operational Plan adopted in 2017.
 - PA’s Education sector strategic plan 2017-2022.
 - Second Country Gender Action Plan (C-GAP II) for Palestinian Territories (FY2018-2021).
- This inception appraisal constituted the blue-print for the development of analytical tools to be used during the stage of primary data collection. It has also allowed assessing some first insights of the study, which will be enounced .

6.2. Survey to parents of children with and without disabilities.

The surveys were conducted based on an on-line questionnaire composed of 113 multiple-choice questions (See Annex 1). As detailed in the table below, the questionnaire was divided in two main parts: one more descriptive of the situation of their sons and daughters in terms of disability and education; and another about their knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, norms and practices with regard to gender, disability and education.

1st part: Education situation of children according to gender, disability, socioeconomic and family situation (Questions 1-46).

- Interviewee: gender, age, social, economic and family situation (Questions 1-10).
- Sons: disability, assistive devices, schooling; factors for drop-out or not attending classes (Questions 11-46).

- Daughters: disability, assistive devices, schooling; factors for drop-out or not attending classes (Questions 47-82).
- 2nd part: Parents' knowledge, perceptions, attitudes and practices with regard to gender, disability and education (Questions 83-113).

The surveys were conducted in Arabic by local consultants to provide all necessary explanations and ensure that all questions were fully understood, completely answered and correctly filled on an English on-line questionnaire in Google form.

Regarding the technique used, while in GS, Skype calls with cams and phone calls (when not possible for the parent to connect to internet or visit the partners' offices) were used to collect data, face-to-face surveys were conducted in Janata and Wadi Foquin municipalities halls in WB.

6.3. In-depth interviews with parents of children with and without disabilities.

A reduced number of in-depth interviews (IDI) with parents of children with and without disability in and out-of-school were conducted based on a list of 44 questions (See Annex 2).

The method followed allowed for open discussion and qualitative appraisal of perceptions, beliefs, practices, norms, practices, etc. as regards to gender, disability and education. Compared to survey, the in-depth interview gave more time and space for disclosing the rational of parents' answers. These IDI were conducted with the support of the questionnaire and structured as described in the table below.

- General description of family and interviewed person (Questions 1-9)
- Situation of children with or without disability (kind of disability, diagnosis, assistive devices, need of support, enrolment, etc.) (Questions 10-16)
- Access to education including during COVID and reasons for drop-out (Questions 17-22)
- Access to leisure activities (Questions 23)
- Gender roles in education between parents (Questions 24-26)
- Gender roles and norms in education(Questions 27-33)
- Inclusive education including intersectionality (Questions 34-39)
- Cultural beliefs, perceptions and attitudes towards children with disability (Questions 40-41).
- COVID, disability and gender in education (Questions 42-43).

Answers were recorded and later on transcribed by the local consultants. As well as for surveys, they were done by distance in GS and face-to-face in WB.

6.4. Semi-structured interviews (SSI) and Focus-groups (FG) with Education and Protection Clusters members, with Teachers of Mainstream and Special schools and CBR workers and with community members.

A bulk of semi-structured interviews (SSI) and Focus Groups (FG) with key informants were conducted based on a list of 84 questions (see Annex 3). The list of question below was indicative. Interviewees/ participants addressed related issues without the need of making questions concerning aspects that were previously addressed.

Some questions applied to all kinds of participants and other were targeting only some of them, according to their profiles.

- General gender barriers to education (Questions 1-8)
- General disability barriers to education (Questions 9-16)
- Gender and disability in the Palestinian Education system (Questions 17-30)
- Concrete assessment of gender and disability barriers as educational staff (Questions 31-38)
- Level of culture (norms, stereotypes, values and relations) regarding education (Questions 39-59)
- Level of infrastructures (Questions 60- 65)
- Level of educational contents, activities, methods, resources and materials (Questions 66-71)
- Level of knowledge (Questions 72-73)
- Level of language (Questions 74-75)
- Level of institutional policies and structures (Questions 76- 84).

FG and SSI with educational staff focused more on their own context of work, where their experience as professionals was conveyed. The FG and SSI with the Education and Protection clusters outline more strategic challenges and gaps for a more inclusive and gender responsive education system.

The same techniques were used with selected members of the community, including social workers, taxi or bus drivers, grassroots organizations (women's associations, cultural associations, etc.) and community leaders. These were aimed at assessing perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and practices of the community towards children with disability, gender equality and education.

7. Description of the sample of data collection

The sample of parents of children with and without disability was provided by HI through its partners. The list of parents was provided based on the following criteria: gender (male-female), disability (with and without), enrolment (out-of-school-enrolled) and geographic area (WB, North, Middle and South Gaza) requested by the research team. A total of 64 surveys and 15 in-depth interviews with parents were held.

While the sample was requested to be gender balanced regarding children, for parents to be surveyed and interviewed, a minimum of 25% fathers was suggested. In order to identify specific barriers and constraints to which children with disability are exposed, a minimum percentage of 30-40% children

without disability was included in the sample.

As well, in order to identify the reasons behind drop-out, the research team asked to get a minimum percentage of 40-50% of children out of school. Finally, at least half of parents shall be from Gaza, being more or less equally distributed among the three regions (Northern, Middle and Southern Gaza). In Bethlehem area, two villages were selected (Janata and Wadi Foqin) to be the places where to conduct data collection activities.

Regarding the semi-structured interviews and focus groups with key informants, the resource persons were contacted through HI in both territories (WB and GS) and based on their pertaining to the following categories: education cluster, protection cluster, educational and CBR staff and community members. No gender criterion was suggested. A total of 25 individuals took part in these activities.

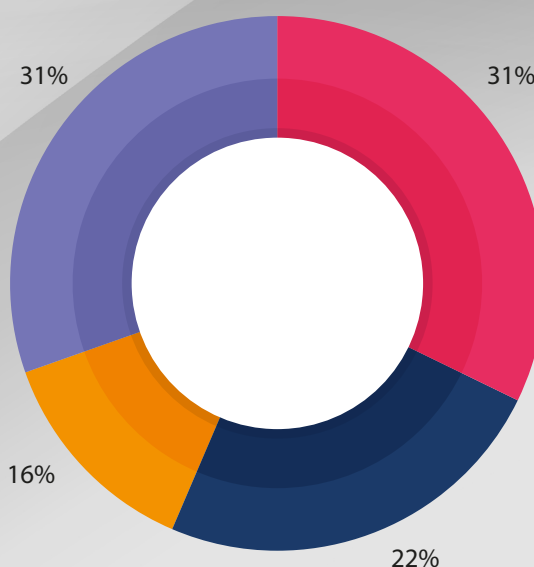
7.1. Geographical description of sample of survey and in-depth interviews of parents.

The geographical areas and distribution of the survey and in-depth interviews of parents and for focus groups and semi-structured interviews of CBR/educational staff sample and community members over four areas, was defined to reflect the geographical and demographical scope of HI project.

The Gaza Strip was segmented into 3 areas: South, Middle and Northern. In Bethlehem area, two out of 4 municipalities were selected to be representative of size and kind of villages targeted by the project (Waddi Foudin and Janata). In surveys and interviews with parents, a quantitative emphasis was put on Gaza Strip due to the higher level of work implemented in this area in the frame of the project.

Geographical distribution of parents survey

- Geographical distribution of parents survey
- Southern Gaza Strip
- Middle Gaza Strip
- Northern Gaza Strip



7.2. Gender breakdown sample of survey and in-depth interviews with parents

For the gender study, a total of 64 surveys and 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with parents in West Bank and Gaza. Regarding the gender of parents consulted, although 25% of fathers were required by the research team, a very lower percentage of males took part in the sample.

This can be explained by gender roles assumed by parents of both gender. Indeed, as highlighted in the interviews, mothers are assigned the bulk of education of children, being very limited the scope of rearing activities hold up by fathers. Local data collectors even reported that in some cases, although they were provided a male name, they ended making the interview or survey with the mother on the phone or on Skype, as the mother was the one who had showed up.

For the survey, there were only 1 father (5%) compared to 19 mothers (95%) in WB and 8 males (18,18%) compared to 36 females (81,82%) in GS. This means 14,06% males and 85,94% females for the survey sample.

Regarding parents' in-depth interviews, the rate of males was higher: 1 father (25%) and 3 mothers (75%) made the sample in the WB and 4 males (36,36%) compared to 7 females (63,64%) in GS, which represents a total of 33% of males and 66,67 % of females in the in-depth interviews sample.

In total, the sample of parents was made of 14 fathers (17,72%) and 65 mothers (82,28%). Below is included the description of the gender breakdown sample of parents by activity:

SURVEY	GS	WB	TOTAL	IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS	GS	WB	TOTAL	TOTAL
mothers	36	19	55	mothers	7	3	10	65
%	81,82%	95,00%	85,94%	%	63,64%	75,00%	66,67%	82,28%
fathers	8	1	9	fathers	4	1	5	1
%	18,18%	5,00%	14,06%	%	36,36%	25,00%	33,33%	17,72%
TOTAL	44	20	64	TOTAL	11	3	15	89

7.3. Description of focus groups and semi-structured interviews with key informants, educational staff and community members.

A total of 17 female and 8 male key informants were consulted through semis-structured interviews and Focus groups, by distance and face-to-face during November and December 2020 and January 2021.

This gender composition 68% women- 32% men exemplifies the high level of feminization of inclusive education sector, especially when it comes to educational staff, where 6 out of 7 special education teachers and CBR workers interviewed were females.

	GAZA				WEST BANK
	Dates and Participants	Gender	Dates and participants	Gender	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,
Education Cluster KEY INFORMANT FOCUS GROUPS	29/11/2020 Asa'd Ashour, (Project Coordinator of Education at Norwegian Refugee Council).	1 M	24/11/2020 3 from Save the children: Abeer Abu Sneineh, Jamileh Abu Duhouh, and Lubna Iskander .	3 F	1 M + 3 F
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS	12/11/2020 Baha Al Shastali, Sub-coordinator of the Education Cluster, responsible for GS (UNICEF)	1 M	24/11/2020 Fadi Baidoun, Education Cluster Coordinator (UNICEF)	1 M	2 M
Protection Cluster KEY INFORMANT FOCUS GROUP	03/12/2020 Majda Al-Saqa (CFTA) and Amira Mohanna (UNFPA)	2 F	23/11/2020 Randa Siniora (WCLAC), Jalal Khader and Ohaila Shomar, (SAWA)	1 M + 2 F	1 M + 4 F
Educationnal staff KEY INFORMANT FOCUS GROUPS			08/12/2020 Special education teachers and CBR workers hold at Wadi Fouquin	3 F	3 F
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS	11/12 and ,2020/11/18 2021/01/07 Wafa Abu Mashaikh (MCRS), Amal Abu Rekab (RS), Alaa ElBaba (PACF), Mahdyia Abo Dalal (UNRWA)	1 M + 3 F			1 M + 3 F
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS Community members KEY INFORMANT FOCUS GROUPS			10/12/2020 2 social counselors at school and 2 municipality members at Janata	2 M + 2 F	2M + 2 F
Community members KEY INFORMANT FOCUS GROUPS	01/06 ,01/13 and 2021/01/11Raed Bashir Al-Nadim, driver at PACF, Kholoud M. Jwefi, Aysha association, Majda Al-Saqa, CFTA.	1 M + 2 F	1 M + 2 F		
Total		4 M + 7 F		4M + 10 F	8M + 17 F

SECONDARY SOURCES:

FINDINGS OF THE DESK REVIEW

From the desk review stage, the following preliminary conclusions and methodological safeguards were outlined:

According to the Barriers assessment conducted by HI in GS in 2015, the negative attitudes towards children with disabilities constitute the main barrier to inclusive education, as well as the main reason for drop out of children with disabilities from schools.

Among teachers and schools staff, more than 80 % of respondents agreed to different extents that children with disabilities are facing negative attitudes which could be considered as a barrier preventing them from going to school. As well, 80,6 % of school teachers and head teachers agree that parents of children with disabilities do not send their child to school because of negative attitudes or behaviours towards them (discrimination, bullying, nicknaming, imitation or violence). The majority of schools staff indicated that the children with disabilities are surrounded and exposed to many different negative attitudes and behaviours which may affect their social life and the way they deal or respond to others. Around 80% of respondents to different extents said they had witnessed negative behaviour such as “laughing, teasing/ taunting, nicknaming, rejection/social isolation, and violence” towards children with disabilities.

Among parents or other caregivers of children with disabilities, the barriers most widely considered are negative attitudes: 58,1% think that children with disabilities do not go to school because of negative attitudes or behaviours towards them (discrimination, bullying, nicknaming, imitation; violence), and 56,5% consider that parents of children with disabilities do not send their child to school because of negative attitudes or behaviours towards them (discrimination, bullying, nicknaming, imitation; violence). Other important barriers for most parents are the limited opportunities of teachers to develop skills (45,2%) and the lack of adaptation of materials or assistive devices to the needs of children with disabilities (special chair in the classroom, crutches, wheelchair, Braille, sign language) (43,6%).

Among children themselves, 79.2% of children thought that children with disabilities do not go to school because of negative attitudes or behaviours towards them. 70.8% said that teachers have limited opportunities to learn new skills to teach them. 62.5% disagreed with the statement that “parents of children with disabilities think that their children cannot succeed in school”.

The majority of schools staff indicated that children with disabilities are surrounded and exposed to many different negative attitudes and behaviours which may affect their social life and the way they deal or respond to others. Around 80% of respondents to different extents said they had witnessed negative behaviour such as “laughing, teasing/ taunting, nicknaming, rejection/social isolation, and violence” towards children with disabilities.

Among organisations representing persons with disabilities (DPOs) staff, 60% strongly agree that the negative behaviours and attitudes are the main reasons why children with disabilities don't go to school and 80% of respondents believe that parents don't send their child to school because of negative atti-

It was not possible to hold the FG. One participant had microphone problem, another connection problem and a third one was on her week-end.

An email with questions was sent and one participant answered.

Abeer Abu Sneh is StC Youth Healthy Development Program Officer, Jamileh Abu Duhouh is Gender Adviser and Lubna Iskander is Child Right Governance.

tudes or behaviours they may face in the schools (discrimination, bullying, nicknaming, imitation; violence). As mentioned in the report, these negative impressions were engendered because of the way that communities reacted to children with disabilities, but no further explanation is provided regarding this aspect. All respondents agreed that there is a lack of support at school with personal issues. The economic situation, lack of accessible transportation and adapted materials are also considered as barriers but not in the same measure.

A similar conclusion arise from the HI Data Analysis Report: Development of an Inclusive Education Practical Manual for Teachers (2018), conducted in 3 primary schools in Hebron.

There is currently a lack of data about the complex barriers that stem from the intersection between gender and disability related to children's right to education and to other fields that can be addressed by the educational system and actors. Most studies on disability and education, including the barriers assessment made in Gaza by HI lacks a gender approach to highlight the specific barriers faced by girls with disability in their access to and enjoyment of equal education.

As well, there is a lack of intersectional perspective in the Palestinian Authority's policies on inclusive education . Since the effect of gender roles, stereotypes, norms and relations on the rights of women and men with disabilities, especially on girls and boys, have not been assessed in the Palestinian context, logically it was not possible to outline specific measures to redress gender bias in accessing and exercising their rights, including but not only to education.

This gender study will therefore be relevant to outline policies to ensure a more inclusive and gender transformative education in West Bank and Gaza.

Nonetheless, some recent publications have raised interest on the intersection between gender and disability, by mainstreaming gender in researches on disability. Although they do not mainstream gender in a specific neither systematic way, these efforts have shown that women and girls with disabilities, their mothers and female relatives , are more likely to suffer discrimination than males individuals, and that the forms of discrimination children with disabilities suffer are different according to the their gender.

In West Bank and Gaza, the consultancy team has identified one study which includes gender not only as an analytical category but also, as a theoretical perspective by trying to understand the engendered causes of specific discriminations or barriers faced by women and girls with disabilities. This is the case of the UNICEF-Ministry of Social Affairs Study "Every child counts: Understanding the needs and perspectives of children with disabilities in the State of Palestine", authored by Nicola Jones, Bassam Abu Hamad, Kifah Odeh, Paola Pereznieto, Ola Abu Al Ghaib, Georgia Plank, Elizabeth Presler-Marshall and Mohammed Shaheen and published in December 2016.

In the field of gender and disability, this study highlights on one side the low awareness or perception regarding discriminations committed by service providers towards children with disabilities due to their gender (6.9% in Gaza and 3 % in West Bank) compared to other grounds of discriminations like the type of disability (24% in Gaza and 16% in West Bank), age (12,3% in Gaza and 5,3% in West Bank) or socio-economic status (19% in Gaza and 10% in West Bank). This low perception of gender based discriminations against girls with disabilities is challenged by the study conclusions which highlight the existence of double vulnerabilities for girls with disabilities.

The study highlighted how gender norms curtail more intensively the freedom of movement of girls with disabilities and deprives them from education in this way: “The restrictive gender norms of the broader community mean they are often denied their right to an education, and the extreme stigma directed at disability, which plays into notions of family honour and can prevent their siblings without disabilities from finding marriage partners, means they are often hidden even within the family. Risks are also multiplied where families have several children with disability, which we found to be quite common” (p.88). A testimony also shows how girls who do not abide by engendered dressing codes and other behavioural norms are more eager to be not only considered as mentally impaired, but also submitted to gender based violence, being a form of intersectional GBV (p.75).

One of the goals identified by this UNICEF report in order to ensure universal access to services for children with disabilities in West Bank and Gaza is to “address the gender dimensions of disability and disability-related care”. It says that “girls with disability, sisters of children with disability and mothers of children with disability often face gender specific vulnerabilities. Adolescent girls with disabilities are especially unlikely to attend school or be allowed to socialize, given the risk of sexual assault and its associated threat to family honour, and those same girls—and their mothers—are at high risk of intrafamilial violence. We suggest more community awareness through communication for development and home visiting by nurses, social workers and disability officers, who should be trained to identify those at risk and refer them to adequate services. Emergency shelters should take account of the needs of those dealing with disability. Currently, referral mechanisms in cases of child abuse are lacking, so these need to be developed—with the support of UNICEF—and take specific account of children with disability’s needs” (p.92).

Since this information needed to be updated through in-depth interviews with key informants (Protection Cluster and Education Cluster), this aspect was included in the questionnaire for Key informants interviews.

Related to the overall lack of intersectional perspective in Inclusive Education policies in West Bank and Gaza, summed to the social taboo existing on sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment and the stigmatization of its victims by society, apparently no protocols to prevent and curtail these forms of gender based violence and violations of the rights of the child are in place in public schools, transportations and

Caregivers but not only. Also for instance their sisters who might be considered as potential bearers of children with disabilities.

other services.

HI has adopted policies aimed at preventing, protecting, safeguarding and punishing these behaviours and could definitely bring about the adoption of such regulations and protocols on this issue by the Palestinian Authority and services providers in order to create a safe environment free of GBV and sexual violence, abuse and exploitation in public education.

For this reason, the gender study has assessed the impact of beliefs and fears related to sexual abuse have on girls' access to education. Doing so, the researchers were cautious to circumvent resistances to talk about this sensitive but important factor of girls with disabilities' drop-out. As well, the barriers to education linked to other forms of gender based violence (GBV), like domestic violence and early marriage, have been assessed in in-depth interviews with key informants and in-depth interviews with parents.

GENDER ANALYSIS RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE DATA

1. Analysis of sample: Gender and disability

1.1. Parents' gender breakdown sample

In total, 64 parents were surveyed: 55 women (85,94%) and 9 fathers (14,06%). This gender composition of the survey sample, in spite of the research team's request of having at least 25% of fathers, is a clear manifestation of gender roles distribution within families.

	TOTAL fathers	% fathers over total parents	TOTAL mothers	% mothers over total parents	TOTAL Parents	% Parents over total
West Bank, Bethlehem Governorate	1	5,00%	19	95,00%	20	100,00%
Southern Gaza Strip	4	28,57%	10	71,43%	14	100,00%
Middle Gaza Strip	1	10,00%	9	90,00%	10	100,00%
Northern Gaza Strip	3	15,00%	17	85,00%	20	100,00%
Total Gaza Strip	8	18,18%	36	81,82%	44	100,00%
TOTAL	64	85,94%	55	14,06%	64	100,00%

Women are those who take the responsibility of education of children and care of dependents. In the interviews it has been noticed that mother's dedication and protection of children with disability is even higher because they are in special need of care.

1.2. Children's gender and disability breakdown sample

The total of children whose parents were surveyed amounts to 168. The sample of children is gender balanced as girls represent 48,21 % of total of children assessed.

As far as disability is concerned, only 14 out of 64 parents surveyed had no child with disability. Nonetheless the amount of children without disability is higher as most parents with at least one child with disability have (an)other child(ren) without disability.

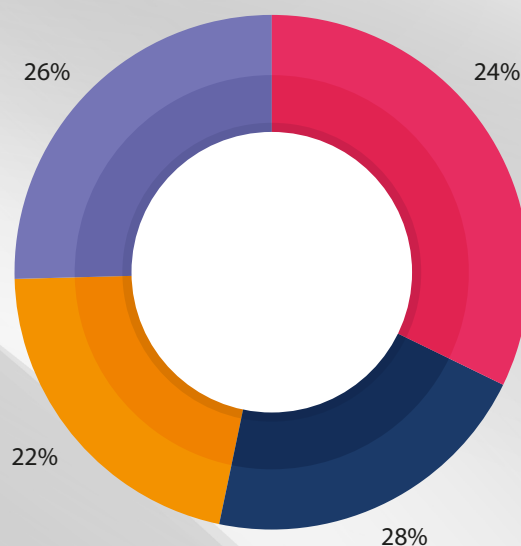
Both boys (27,98% of sample) and girls without disability (26,19%) exceed a little the number of boys (23,81% of sample) and girls with disability (22,02% of sample), being the difference between children with and without disability lower than 9 % of the total amount of children, all together and by gender. In total, there is a rate of 45,83% children with disability and 54,17% without disability (34,17%).

This homogeneity is an advantage to identify trends based on disability, on gender and on both factors.

Boys with disability	Boys without disability	Total Boys	Girl with disability	Girl without disability	TOTAL Girls	Total Children with disability	Total Children
40	47	87	37	44	81	77	168
23,81%	27,98%	51,79%	22,02%	26,19%	48,21%	45,83%	100,00%

Children sample yby gender and disability

- Boys with disability
- Boys without disability
- Girl with disability
- Girl without disability

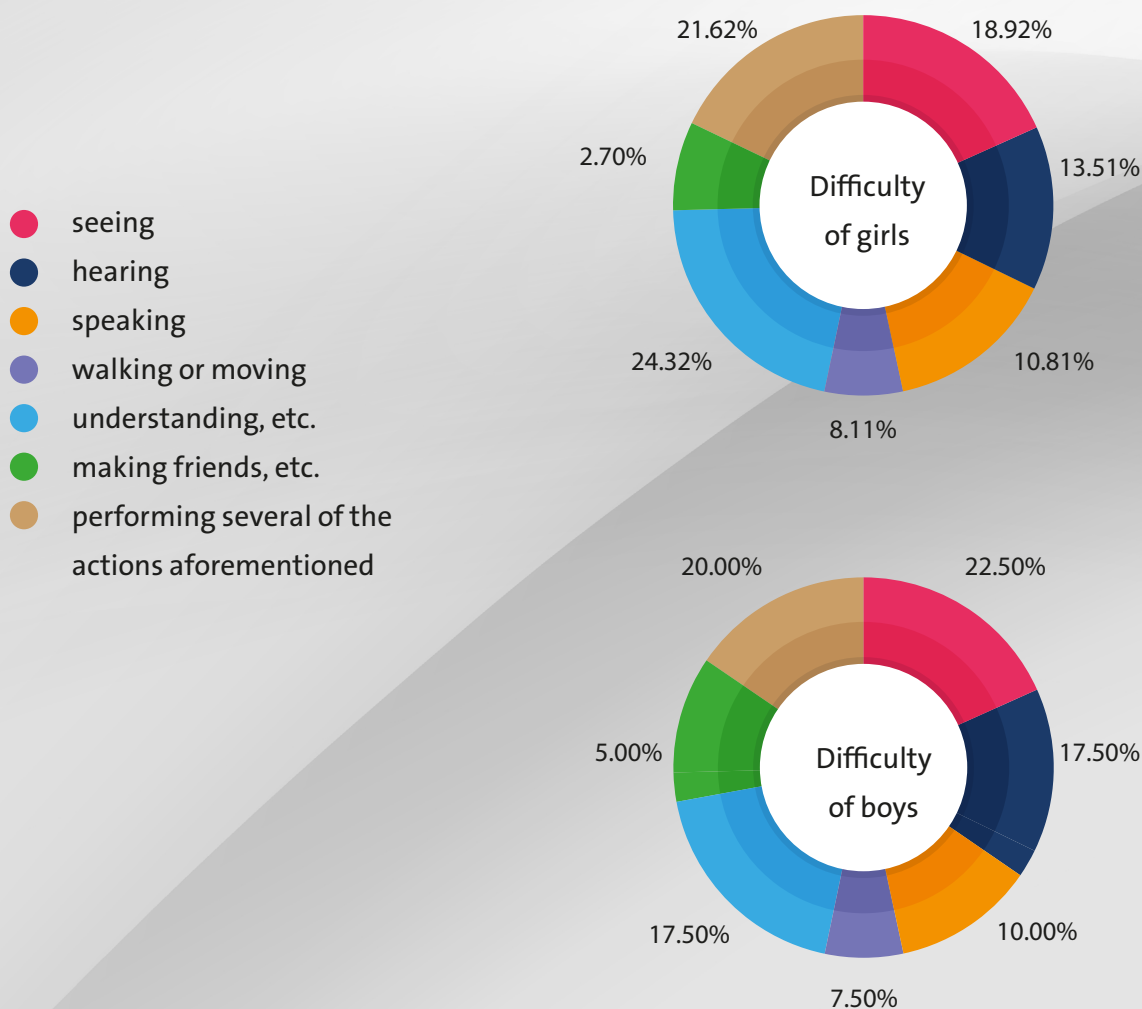


1.3. Types of disability of children

Out of the total of children with disability assessed, 40 are boys with disability and 37 girls with disability , being quite representative of the several kinds of disabilities.

Kind of difficulty of the child	Boys	%	Girls	%
(Seeing (even if wearing his glasses or lens	9	22,50%	7	18,92%
(Hearing (even if wearing hearing devices	7	17,50%	5	13,51%
Speaking	4	10,00%	4	10,81%
Walking or moving (without walking assistance or wheelchair) or feeding and/or dressing himself	3	7,50%	3	8,11%
Understanding, remembering, concentrating and/or learning	7	17,50%	9	24,32%
Making friends, controlling his anger and/or relaxing from anxiety and depression	2	5,00%	1	2,70%
Performing several of the actions aforementioned	8	20,00%	8	21,62%
TOTAL CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY	40	100 %	37	100 %

Although mobility difficulty is higher among boys and mental disability among girls, the distribution of disabilities by gender is quite similar.



This is again useful for making reliant comparisons between girls and boys with disabilities, as far as the kind of difficulty is quite similar among girls and boys.

As far as children with disability were previously screened by partners of HI, the researchers did not evaluate if the child had disability or not, but only the kind of disability using the Washington Group categories.

1.4. Level of autonomy of children with disability

Concerning the level of autonomy of children, a small gender gap has been detected in the sample: more than half girls were considered in need of help by a third person to perform basic activities, compared to 37,50% of boys in this case. Nonetheless the difference is not so high to undermine the reliance of comparisons of schooling situation and barriers to the right to education.

Need of help for basic activities	TOTAL Boys	% Sons	TOTAL Girls	% Girls	TOTAL Children	% Children
Yes	15	37,50%	19	51,35%	34	44,16%
No	25	62,50%	18	48,65%	43	55,84%
TOTAL	40	100,00%	37	100,00%	77	100,00%

2. Access to disability diagnosis and assistive devices

2.1. Disability diagnosis by gender

Regarding special services and resources, most of children with disability have been diagnosed by a specialist (94,08%) at least once in their life, with a small advantage for girls. 36 girls with disability out of 37 have been diagnosed compared to 37 out of 40 boys with disability.

Need of help for basic activities	TOTAL Boys	% Boys	TOTAL Girls	% Girls	TOTAL Children	% Children
Yes	37	92,5%	36	97,29%	73	94,81%
No	3	7,5%	1	2,71%	4	5,19%
TOTAL	40	100%	37	100%	77	100,00%

This high level of diagnosis cannot be generalized as far as the parents surveyed were selected principally through CBR programmes and special education schools. It means that they have been in contact with specialized services.

In fact there is a segment of marginalized children with disability who have not been screened and who are out of school. This problem has been raised by members of the community in GS during semi-structured interviews.

2.2. Assistive devices by gender

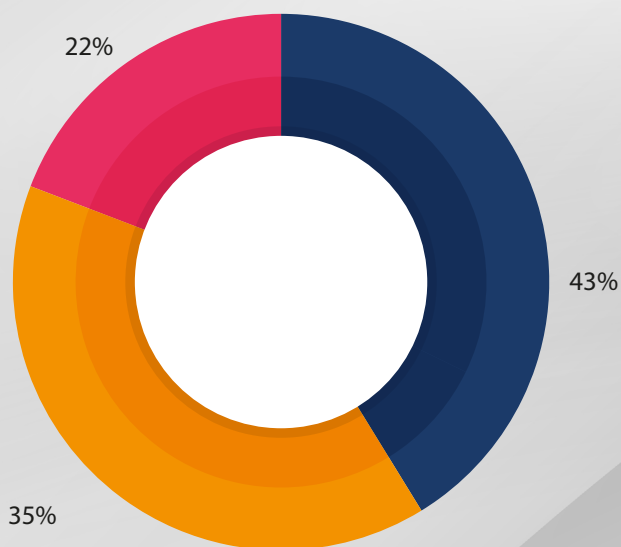
A gender gap appears in the access to assistive devices, which usually represent an expense that families cannot easily afford with. We might deduce from the figures in the table below that a priority is given to boys for the purchase, renting or allocation of assistive devices. Indeed, only 43,24% of girls with disabili-

ity have the assistive devices they need, compared to 60% of boys.

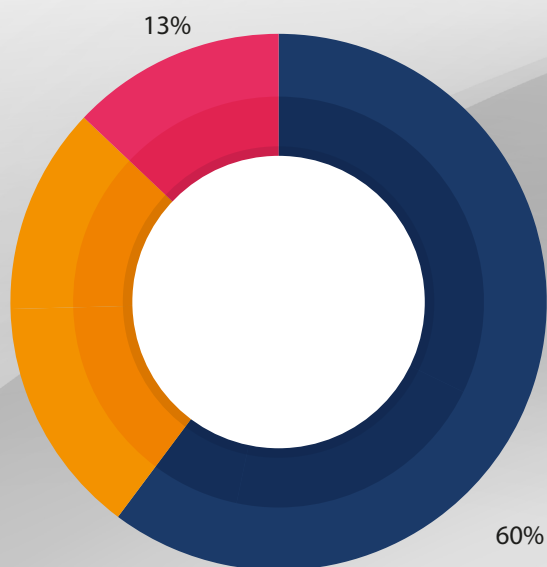
More than a third part of girls do not have assistive devices (35,14%) compared to 27,50% of boys. The remaining 21,62 % of girls with disability surveyed have some devices but those need to be upgraded, renewed or improved, compared to only 12,50% of boys who are in this situation.

	TOTAL Boys	% Boys	TOTAL Girls	% Girls	TOTAL Children	% Children
Yes	24	60,00%	16	43,24%	40	51,95%
No	11	27,50%	13	35,14%	24	31,17%
Some, but should be completed or improved	5	12,50%	8	21,62%	13	16,88%
TOTAL	40		37	100,00%	77	100,00%

Girls' access to assistive devices



Boys' access to assistive devices



- Yes
- No
- Some, but it should be completed or improved

3. Schooling situation: enrolment, drop-out and types of schools

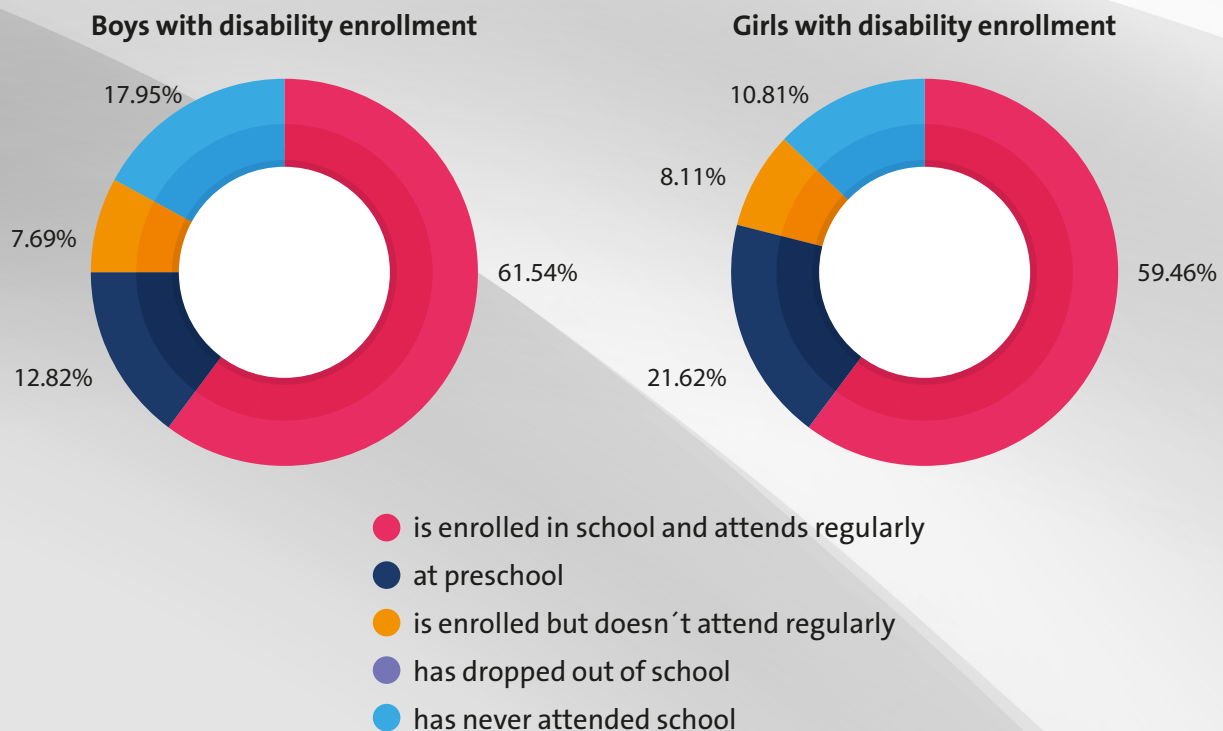
3.1. Comparison of children with disability by gender

The rate of enrolment of children with disability of the sample is slightly in favour of girls with disability: 30 enrolled girls have been summed up (81,08% of total) compared to 29 boys enrolled (74,36%). This difference is principally due to the higher percentage of girls attending pre-school (21,62% compared to 12,82%).

For primary, special and secondary schools, boys with disability who are enrolled and attend regularly amount to 61,54%, compared to girls who make 59,48% of the total of female sample.

Schooling status	TOTAL Boys	% Boys	TOTAL Girls	% Girls	TOTAL Children	% Children
is enrolled in school and attends regularly	24	61,54%	22	59,46%	48	63,16%
is enrolled at preschool	6	12,82%	8	21,62%	12	15,79%
is enrolled but doesn't attend regularly						0,00%
has dropped out of school	3	7,69%	3	8,11%	6	7,89%
has never attended school	6	17,95%	4	10,81%	10	13,16%
TOTAL	39	100,00%	37	100,00%	76	100,00%

While 7 percentage points more boys have never attended school (17,95% compared to 10,81%), girls were a little likelier to drop out, with a rate of 8,11% compared to 7,69%, but again the gap is very low.



This trend is confirmed by the fact that except for pre-school (where 26,67% of girls with disability of the survey are concentrated, compared to only 17,86% of boys surveyed), the male presence is higher at all other levels: primary (60,71% compared to 56,67%), special schools (7,14% compared to 3,33%) and secondary school (14,29% compared to 13,33%).

Type of school	TOTAL Boys	% Boys	TOTAL Girls	% Girls	TOTAL Children	% Children
PRIMARY MAINSTREAM SCHOOL	17	60,71%	17	56,67%	34	58,62%
public school	9	32,14%	11	36,67%	20	34,48%
private school	4	14,29%	3	10,00%	7	12,07%
UNRWA school	4	14,29%	3	10,00%	7	12,07%
SPECIAL SCHOOL	2	7,14%	1	3,33%	3	5,17%
public school						
private school	2	7,14%	1	3,33%	3	5,17%
UNRWA school						
PRE-SCHOOL	5	17,86%	8	26,67%	13	22,41%
public school						
private school	5	17,86%	8	26,67%	13	22,41%
UNRWA school						
SECONDARY SCHOOL	4	14,29%	4	13,33%	8	13,79%
public school	3	10,71%	1	3,33%	4	6,90%
private school	1	3,57%	3	10,00%	4	6,90%
UNRWA school						
TOTAL	28	2	30	100,00%	58	100,00%

The rate of children with disability out of school is relatively high. In the sample, one out four boys with disability (25,64%) and roughly one out of five girls (18,92%) surveyed are out-of-school. It has to be said that the research team specially requested to select parents for this segment of children in order to investigate the reasons behind dropped-out or un-schooled children.

4. Reasons behind drop-out and out-of-school status

In order to investigate the gender and disability bias of reasons behind children's drop-out/out-of-school status, a list of choices reasons were provided and had to be prioritized as main, second and third reason.

This question was made only related to children with and without disability who are out-of-school: 8 boys with disability, 6 boys without disability, 7 girls with disability, 4 girls without disability.

The reasons that the parents surveyed selected to explain why their child was out-of-school were as follows:

Reasons for child being out-of-school	TOTAL BwD	TOTAL BnD	Total Boys	TOTAL GwD	TOTAL GnD	Total Girls	TOTAL CwD	TOTAL CnD	TOTAL Child
1. there is distance from school and it is not safe for him/her					1	1		1	1
4. we cannot afford paying this cost (school fees, books and/or transportation)	3	2	5		2	2	3	4	7
5. education is useless as he/she doesn't progress	2	1	3	2		2	4	1	5
8. there is no special education school				1		1	1		1
9. mainstream school is not prepared to host children like him/her	2	1	3	2		2	4	1	5
12. we need him to work outside the house to support family		1	1					1	1
14. other children would laugh at him/her and/or insult him/her				2		2	2		2
17. he/she had problems with other students	1	1	2				1	1	2
18. he/she had problems with the teacher(s)						1		1	1

It must be mentioned that only 9 out of the 20 reasons available as answers to the question were invoked by parents to explain that their child was out-of-school. If we analyze the bulk of answers selected and compare them with those discarded, the conclusion is that the main barriers to enrolment are:

- Mostly: institutional/policy for a total of 11 families, if we sum a total 5 responded that education is useless as he/she doesn't progress to 5 others considered that mainstream school is not prepared to host children like him/her and 1 who responded that there is no special education school.
- Financial for 8 families: 7 which cannot afford the cost of education and 1 because they need their boy without disability to work to support the family.
- It must be mentioned from the geographical point of view, that the 3 boys with disability and 1 out of 2 boys without disability who are out-of-school as a result of financial shortage among the three main reasons and 1 of the 2 girls without disability who are in the same situation are from Gaza, meaning that 6 out of 8 children who do not attend school for financial reasons live in the GS.
- Less frequently: cultural and linked to social relations for 5 families: 2 boys who had problems with other children, 2 girls with disability who were targeted of mockery and 1 girl without disability who had a problem with the teacher.

The options enounced by the persons who conducted the survey that were discarded by all parents as main reasons for drop out of their child are:

* Boys with disability: BwD; Boys without disability: BnD; girls with disability: GwD; girls without disability: GnD; Children with disability: CwD; Children without disability: CnD.

Problems related to public transportation: distance from school and lack of public transportation, lack of adaptation of public transportation to children with disability (“public transportation is not suitable for him and/or he doesn’t receive support to access it”).

All reasons linked to Israeli occupation (“he/she was jailed”, “to attend school, he/she has to pass by an Israel checkpoint or settlement and it was not safe for him/her”, “another reason related with Israeli occupation”).

Most cultural reasons linked to gender stereotypes and norms (“the priority is/was to marry him/her”, “he/she might be sexually abused on his/her way, at school or after school”, “we prefer him/her not to attend a mixed school”, “my spouse doesn’t want”, “he/she might be sexually abused on his way, at school or after school”).

Most reasons linked to stereotypes against people with disability (“education is useless as he/she won’t get married”, “education is useless as he will never be able to get a job”).

In other words, the main barriers to enrolment of children with disability who If we analyze the bulk of answers selected and compare them with those discarded, the conclusion is that the financial constraints and the lack of adaptation and inclusiveness of the education system, including the lack of skills of educational staff to ensure the progress of children and their insertion and acceptance by other children, are the main obstacles to children with disability’s enrolment which are openly acknowledged by parents in the survey.

are out-of-school may be solved through an improved capacity and enhanced inclusiveness of the educative system. Indeed, the economic reasons stem from the cost of transportation, books and materials, which could be provided by the educational system to cases at risk of drop-out, ensuring that no economic discrimination is made in access to education. As well, by training teachers to behave in an adapted way towards children with disability, the education system

In other words, the main barriers to enrolment of children with disability who If we analyze the bulk of answers selected and compare them with those discarded, the conclusion is that the financial constraints and the lack of adaptation and inclusiveness of the education system, including the lack of skills of educational staff to ensure the progress of children and their insertion and acceptance by other children, are the main obstacles to children with disability’s enrolment which are openly acknowledged by parents in the survey.

are out-of-school may be solved through an improved capacity and enhanced inclusiveness of the educative system. Indeed, the economic reasons stem from the cost of transportation, books and materials, which could be provided by the educational system to cases at risk of drop-out, ensuring that no economic discrimination is made in access to education. As well, by training teachers to behave in an adapt-

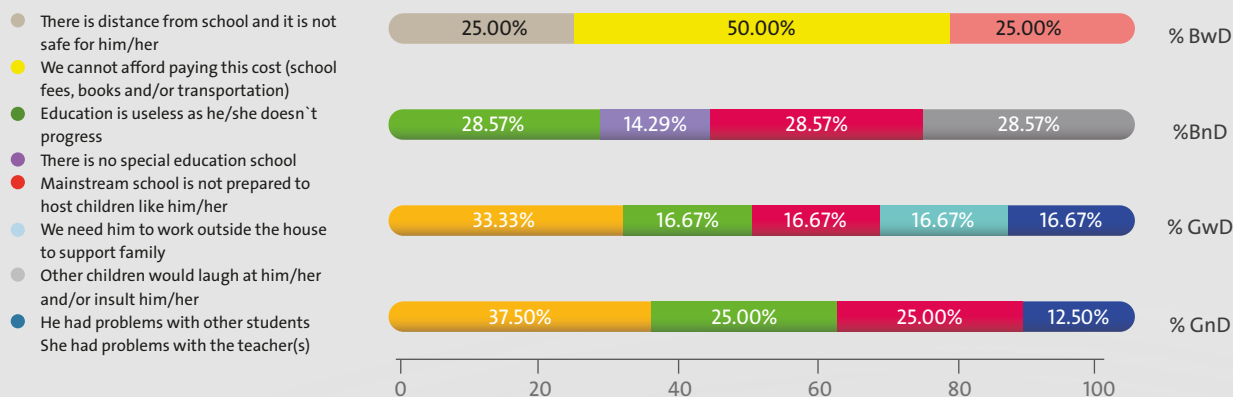
ed way towards children with disability, the education system

would set up examples to be followed and protected children with disability from bullying, mockery and aggressive behaviours from other children.

Looking at gender and disability breakdown, we have classified the answers provided as pertaining to different levels: as financial, policy, institutional, accessibility, infrastructures, human resources (teachers' skills). In the table below, the barriers selected have be systematized as:

- related to gender when applying only to girls or boys without disability based on gender norms or roles;
- related to inclusion when applying to boys with disability and
- related to gender and inclusion when applying to girls with disability (or boys with disability based on gender).

	Gender	Inclusion	Gender and inclusión
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we cannot afford payin this cost (school fees, books and/or transportation) • we need him to work outside the house to support family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we cannot afford paying this cost (school fees, books and/or transportation) 	
Policy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mainstream school is not prepared to host children like him/her 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is no special education school • mainstream school is not prepared to host children like her
Institutional		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mainstream school is not prepared to host children like him/her • education is useless as he/she doesn't progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mainstream school is not prepared to host children like him/her • education is useless as he/she doesn't progress
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is distance from school and it is not safe for him/her 		
Infrastructures		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mainstream school is not prepared to host children like him/her 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mainstream school is not prepared to host children like him/her
Teachers skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She had problems with the teacher(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education is useless as he /she doesn't progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mainstream school is not prepared to host children like him/her • education is useless as he/she doesn't progress • other children would laugh at her and/or insult her
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is distance from school and it is not safe for him/her 		



For boys with disability and without disability, the reasons were quite similar. The reason that was most invoked was the financial shortage (“we cannot afford paying this cost (school fees, books and/or transportation)”), which has been mentioned 3 times for boys with disability and 2 times for boys with no disability. The second most common reason is the lack of progress of the child (“education is useless as he doesn’t progress”), which was selected 2 times regarding boys with disability and once for boys without disability.

At third place, the lack of preparation of mainstream schools was mentioned 2 times for boys with disability and once for boys without disability. Problems with other students (“he had problems with other students”) was the reason for being out-of school for 2 boys: one with disability and one without.

Finally, the need for him to work and support the family was only mentioned for 1 boy with no disability. This seems to indicate that disability might play in favour of boys’ schooling as they might be seen as not “capable” to work or generate income for the family. Asked if their children make some work or selling to support the family income, no boy with disability was in this situation, while 2 boys without disability were working to generate income for the family.

For girls with disability, the main reasons invoked stem apparently more from disability than from gender reasons, as they are mostly related to the lack of adaptation of the education system (“education is useless as he/she doesn’t progress”, “there is no special education school” and “mainstream school is not prepared to host children like him/her”). Bullying, which is the second reason, can be the effect of the intersection between gender and disability (“other children would laugh at him/her and/or insult him/her”).

Regarding girls, reasons alleged are different depending on whether the girl has a disability or not. For daughters with no disability, only 4 responses were registered: while the financial hardship (“we cannot afford paying this cost (school fees, books and/or transportation)”) is mentioned twice, distance from school and lack of safety (“there is distance from school and it is not safe for him/her”) and problems with the teacher are declared once.

From a gender approach, among children without disability, we can see that while work and support of the family is a reason for boys without disability for drop-out or not attending school, safety on the road is a reason which is only mentioned for girls without disability. It must be mentioned that no girl with or without disability was declared as making some work or selling to support the family income.

From an intersectional approach, while problems with other students have been mentioned for boys with disability, the mockery from other children is only mentioned regarding girls with disability. This aspect has also been detected during interviews with parents: it is like there is a perception that girls with disability problems with other children are considered as mockery, harassment and shaming behaviours while socialization challenges of boys with disability are usually viewed as “problems” with other children.

Absence of special education school and problems with the teacher were also only mentioned by parents of girls with disability. While the lack of progress is of heightened relevance among boys with disability, the lack of adaptation and inclusiveness is the most important problem for parents of girls with disability.

These data must nonetheless be complemented and nuanced with the qualitative information collected in in-depth interviews with parents and semi-structured interviews and focus groups with key informants, where cultural stereotypes and stigma and gender roles have been assessed and pointed out as important reasons behind children drop-out/out-of-school situation, especially for girls (early marriage, stigma linked to the belief concerning heredity of disability, etc.).

5. By distance learning during COVID by gender

Taking into consideration that schools were closed and a system of on-line / by distance teaching was set up in West Bank and Gaza, the study has also

encompassed the level of accessibility of children to education during the closure of schools due to COVID-19. One question of the survey was dedicated to measure the level of accessibility, understanding and performance of children and see how gender and disability have influenced this teaching experience at home (“If this child attends school, during COVID-19, did he/she receive some instructions from school?”). Choices 1 to 4 and 6 measured the deficiencies in access to these didactic activities and contents (“1. No, and he/she neither received didactic support from us or another member of the family”; “2. No, but we have been doing some classes together with him/her”; “3. Yes, the schools sent some support and/or homework, but we do not have internet and he/she could not access it”; “4. Yes, she received it, but we could not help him/her and he/she did not do the exercises”; “6. Yes, but his/her disability doesn’t allow her using the computer”). Answers 5 and 7 on the contrary showed different successful possibilities of on-line education (“5. Yes, and we could support him/her to make his/her exercises”; “7. Yes, and he/she made his/her exercises alone”). Answer 8 was for parents who did not know.

The result of this insight, is that more than half of the children surveyed (56,48%) could not follow on-line classes and/or make their exercises by distance (see table below). One out of four children (25%) did not succeed to follow classes due to the fact that they have no internet connection. More than one out of five (21,30%) neither could do it because he/she did not receive classes or didactic support from school, although 15,74 % made some exercises with their parents or families. 3,70% received instructions from school but could not do the exercises as parents could not help them. Another 6,48% received instructions but could not use the computer. Only 41,67% was able to study by distance, with or without the support of his/her parents.

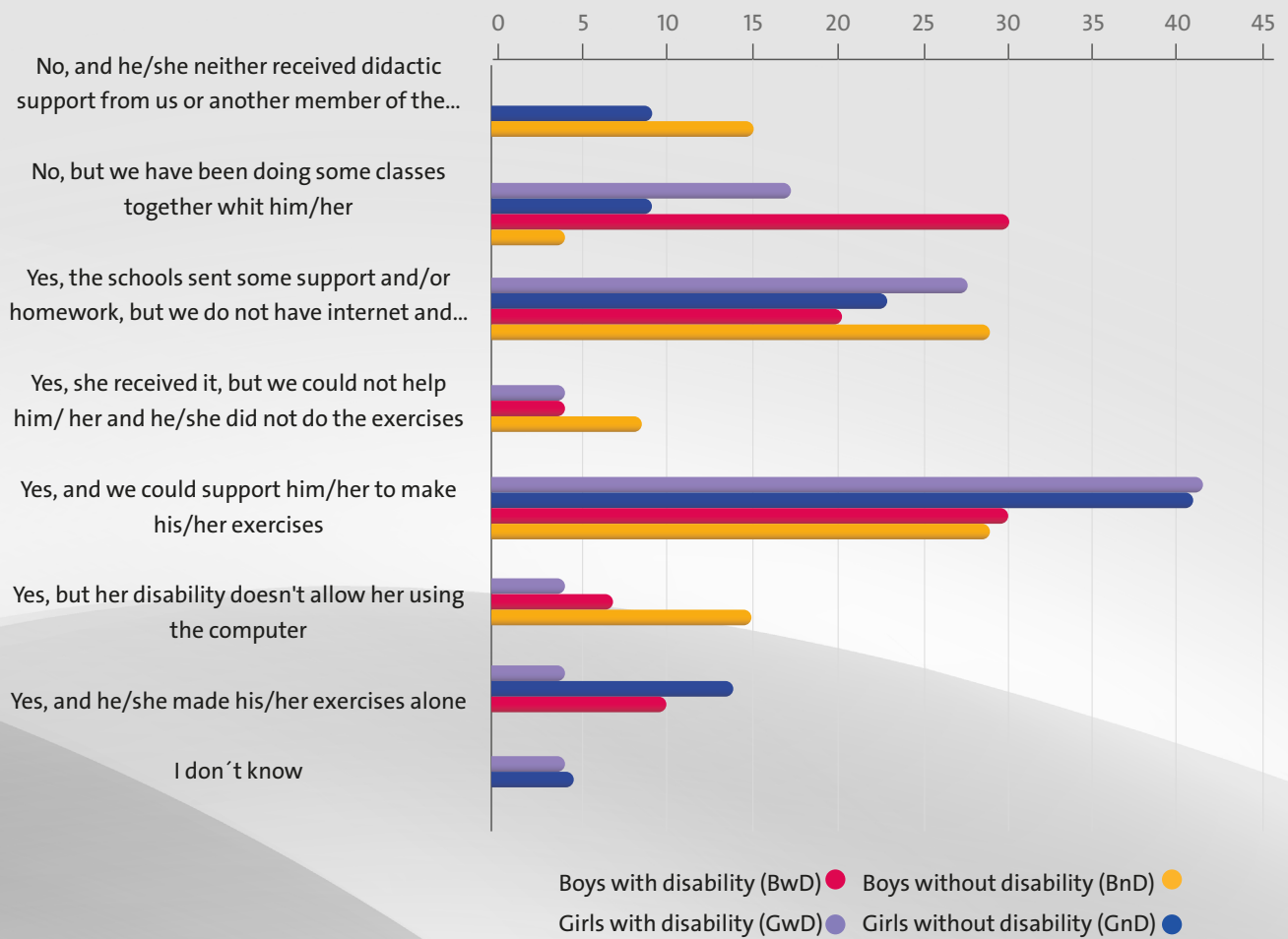
No gap based on disability could be assessed in the access to remote educative contents and activities. 55,93% of children with disability could not follow classes by distance compared to 57,14% of children without disability. The reasons of impairment differed from one group to another. Indeed, while the lack of internet access and the incapacity of parents to help them is quite similar for both groups, 23,73 % of children with disability who did not receive any instructions from school were exercised by their parents, compared to only 6,12% of children without disability.

On the contrary there is a clear gender gap in access to by-distance learning. 64,91% of girls could not make her exercises during school closures compared to 47,06 % of boys. Also, it has to be mentioned that girls with no disability were the most deprived from education: 70,37% did not have access compared to 60% of girls with disability. On the contrary boys with no disability had better access to remote education than

those with disability: Only 40,91% boys without disability did not access compared to 51,72% boys with disability.

Curiously, quite one out of six girls without disability was declared not being able to use computer due to her disability, which shall be understood as computer illiteracy (as far as these girls have none of the difficulty listed in the Washington Group template).

Access to on-line education during COVID-19 by gender and disability



	BwD	BwD	BnD	% BnD	Total Boys	% Boys	GwD	% GwD	GnD	% GnD	Total Girls	% Girls	TOTAL CwD	% CwD	CnD	% CnD
No, and he/she neither received didactic support from us or another member of the family	0	0,00%	2	9,09%	2	3,92%	0	0,00%	4	14,81%	4	7,02%	0	0,00%	6	12,24%
No, but we have been doing some classes together with him/her	5	17,24%	2	9,09%	7	13,73%	9	30,00%	1	3,70%	10	17,54%	14	23,73%	3	6,12%
Yes, the schools sent some support and/or homework, but we do not have internet and he/she could not access it	8	27,59%	5	22,73%	13	25,49%	6	20,00%	8	29,63%	14	24,56%	14	23,73%	13	26,53%
Yes, she received it, but we could not help him/her and he/she did not do the exercises	1	3,45%		0,00%	1	1,96%	1	3,33%	2	7,41%	3	5,26%	2	3,39%	2	4,08%
Yes, and we could support him/her to make his/her exercises	12	41,38%	9	40,91%	21	41,18%	9	30,00%	8	29,63%	17	29,82%	21	35,59%	17	34,69%
Yes, but her disability doesn't allow her using the computer	1	3,45%		0,00%	1	1,96%	2	6,67%	4	14,81%	6	10,53%	3	5,08%	4	8,16%
Yes, and he/she made his/her exercises alone	1	3,45%	3	13,64%	4	7,84%	3	10,00%		0,00%	3	5,26%	4	6,78%	3	6,12%
I don't know	1	3,45%	1	4,55%	2	3,92%	0	0,00%		0,00%	0	0,00%	1	1,69%	1	2,04%
TOTAL	29	100,00%	22	100,00%	51	100,00%	30	100,00%	27	100,00%	57		59	100,00%	49	100,00%

Boys with disability: BwD; Boys without disability: BnD; girls with disability: GwD; girls without disability: GnD; Children with disability; CwD; children without disability: CnD.

6. Perceptions, norms, attitudes and practices towards gender

The second part of the survey was aimed at inquiring about perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes regarding gender, disability and education.

A bulk of 30 multiple-choices questions (questions 83-113) allowed assessing gender, disability and intersectional levels

- **in the 5 dimensions:**
 1. Knowledge
 2. Perceptions
 3. Beliefs
 4. Attitudes
 5. Practices.

- **and in 6 domains of analysis:**
 1. Laws, Policies, Regulations and Institutional Practices
 2. Cultural Norms and Beliefs
 3. Gender Roles, Responsibility and Time Use
 4. Access to and Control over Assets and Resources
 5. Patterns of Power and Decision-making, and
 6. Gender based violence including sexual harassment and abuse.

The table below shows how the 5 dimensions and 6 domains of analysis are examined through the questionnaire at 3 levels: Gender level is in pink, disability level is in blue and intersectional level is in yellow.

	laws, policies, regulations and institutional structures and practices	cultural norms and beliefs	gender roles, responsibility and time use
knowledge	83. Is education a right that PA shall ensure for every child on an equal basis?		
perceptions	84. Do you think that educational system is promoting equality for boys and girls? 85. Do you think that public schools are accessible to children with disabilities?	90. In your community, do people value more a male or a female who has completed secondary education? 112. Do you think a child might not be willing to go to school due to his/her fear of being harassed or harmed or hit by Israeli soldiers, army or settlers?	97. Do you think that all professions shall be accessible to females just as for males? 96. Among the reasons below, in your opinion, which are the three main obstacles for a girl with disability to attend schools? 100. Among the reasons below, in your opinion, which are the three main obstacles for a boy with disability to attend schools?
beliefs	87. Which gender do you believe is more performing at schools? 88. Do you think that in mainstream schools, professors are more prepared to deal with children with disability or to promote equality between men and women?	91. Do you think it is more suitable for a blind boy to attend a mainstream school than for a blind girl? 92. Do you think that people with disability face difficulty to get married?	99. Do you think that school shall teach specific skills that girls will need during their life, like sewing, cooking, taking care of children, etc.?
attitudes		93. If you see a 10 years girl being alone and dancing in a desert place of the city, will you think that she has a mental problem and call for help? 103. If you see a 10 years boy walking alone and laughing loudly at an empty place, will you think that he has a mental problem and call for help?	
practices	89. Would you pressure the school direction to allocate funds to inclusion of children with disability, for instance purchasing educational materials for children with disabilities?	95. Do you think that it is not appropriate for boys to play with dolls or small kitchens or any games for girls?	101. At your family home, does every child support his/her parents equally in activities of cleaning, cooking and taking care of smaller children? 98. Would you accept your child to work or sell?

access to and control over assets, services and resources	patterns of power and decision-making	gender based violence including sexual harassment and abuse
<p>105. In general, do you think that in your community, parents prioritize more sending their daughter or their son to school?</p>		<p>111. Do you think that it is quite dangerous to let children with disability go to school, as they will be more exposed to sexual abuse than those who stay at home?</p> <p>86. Do you think that children with disability would be more secure at home than attending school?</p>
<p>102. Do you think that children with disabilities can use computers and shall be ensured access to them, just as other children?</p>	<p>109. Do you think that parents of a child with disability shall take decisions regarding the child without taking his/her opinion?</p>	
<p>106. If a neighbour tells you that they will not enrol their 10 years' deaf child at school, will you try to convince them to change their mind?</p> <p>110. Imagine you have a daughter who complains that she cannot play in the playground during the recess, because boys play football and do not want to include girls, what will be your reaction?</p>		
<p>108. If you were going through financial hardship, would you withdraw your children from primary school?</p> <p>107. During Covid19, many schools have provided classes on-line. In your opinion, do daughters access the computers the same time as your sons?</p>	<p>94. Imagine that you have an -14years old daughter and she has received a scholarship to go by herself for a -2weeks intensive course of German language in Europe, what will you do?</p> <p>104. Imagine that you have a -14years old son and he has received a scholarship to go by herself for a -2weeks intensive course of German language in Europe, what will you do?</p>	<p>113. Imagine you have a 15 years girl with disability and some neighbors would be interested in marrying her to their son who has finished high school and will get a job in a bank. What would you do?</p>

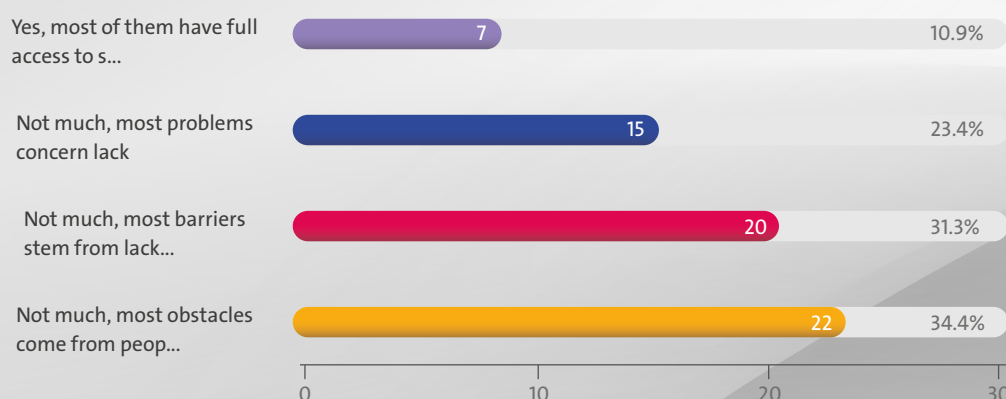
6.1. Level of disability (alone)

6.1.1. Laws, policies and institutions:

Only one out of ten (10,9%) of people surveyed have the perception that most children with disability have full access to public schools, while one out of 3 (34,4%) consider that most obstacles come from people mentality and behaviours towards people with disability and another third (31,3%) think that obstacle stem from lack of infrastructure and transportation. The 23,4% attribute obstacles to the lack of training of teachers.

Among the 14 parents with no child with disability, there is a higher perception of full accessibility to public schools (21,43%) and a lower perception of barriers resulting from the lack of training of teachers (14,29%). The main reasons for barriers are, as for the total of parents, people's mentality and behaviour (35,71%) and lack of infrastructure and transportation (28,57%).

85. Do you think that public schools are accessible to children with disabilities?

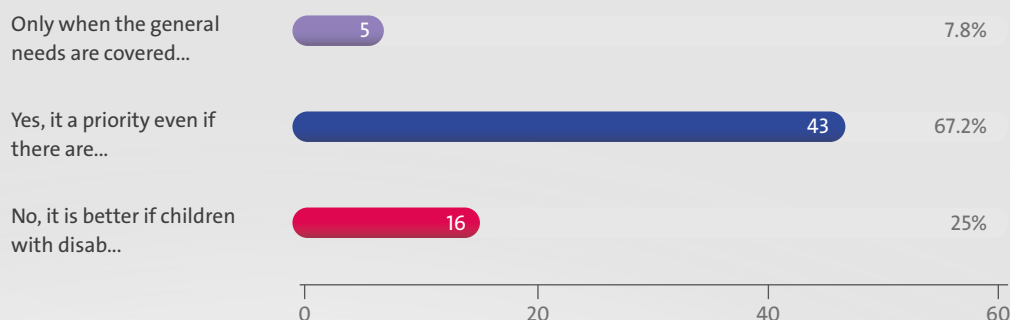


Regarding practices, 67,2% of parents surveyed would pressure the school direction to allocate funds to better adapt to the needs of children with disability, for instance purchasing special educational materials for children with disabilities, as they consider that because it is a priority even if there are only a couple of children with disability. One out of 4 (25%) would not do that because in their opinion, it is better if children with disability attend special schools or in some cases stay at home with their family. Finally 7,8% would do that only when the general needs are covered for all the children, like basic furnishing and school books.

The data are relatively similar among parents with no child with disability: 64,29% would pressure the school, 28,57% consider better to enrol children with disability in special schools or stay at home and only 7,14% would first cover basic needs of all

children. This shows the need to raise awareness of all parents regarding the benefit of inclusive education in mainstream schools.

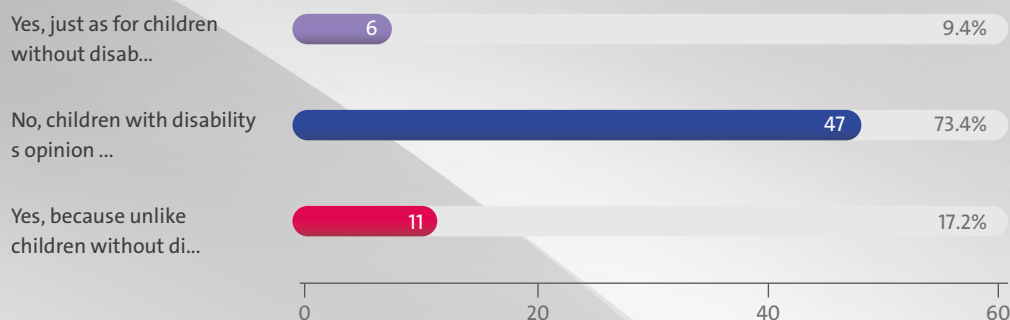
89. Would you pressure the school direction to allocate funds to better adapt to the needs of children with disability, for instance purchasing special educational materials for children with disabilities?



6.1.2. Patterns of power and decision making:

73,4% parents surveyed believe that children with disability’s opinion shall be taken into account by their parents and influence their decisions. 17,2 % think nonetheless that parents shall decide on their behalf because, unlike children without disability, they cannot judge what is better for them. 9,4% believe parents shall decide on their behalf, just as for children without disability. This shows that greater awareness shall be raised among parents regarding children with disability’s right and capacity to take decisions.

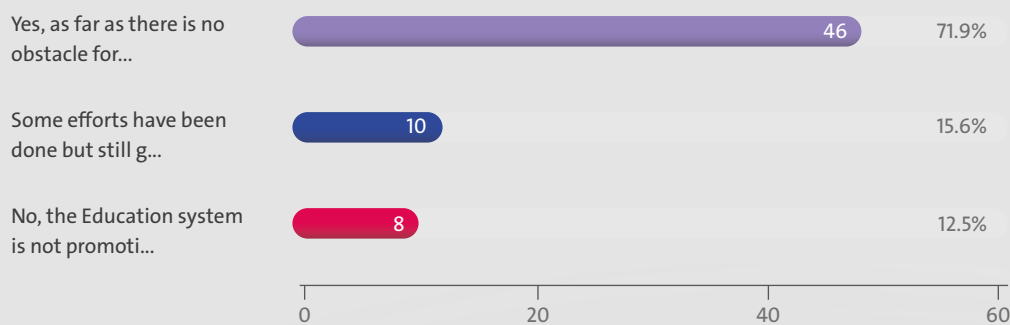
109. Do you think that parents of a child with disability shall take decisions regarding the child without taking his/her opinion?



6.2. Level of gender (alone)

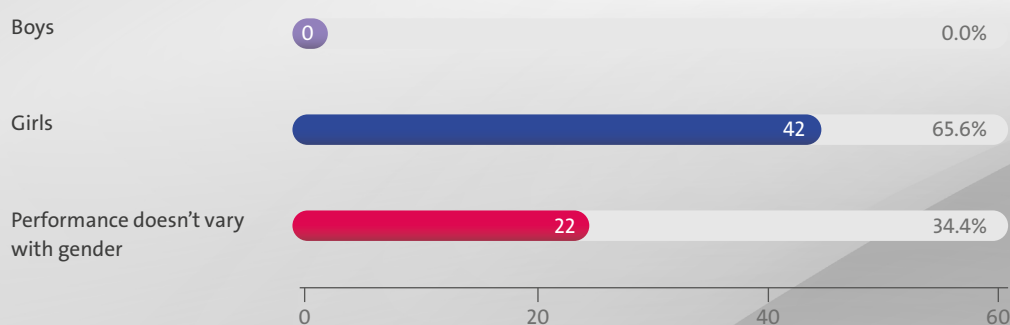
6.2.1. Laws, policies and institutions:

71.9% parents surveyed have the feeling that the education system is promoting equality for boys and girls, and base their perception on the fact that there is no obstacle for girls to attend schools, showing a low understanding of gender inequality. Another 15,6% think that some efforts have been done but still girls are not considered as important as boys, and 12,5% consider that the system is not promoting gender equality among children. This makes one out of three parents have the opinion that gender equality is not being promoted as it should by MoEHE. 84. Do you think that educational system is promoting equality for boys and girls?



Nonetheless, an important majority believe that girls are more performing in education than boys (65,6%) and none thinks that boys are better at school. 34,4% feel that performance doesn't vary by gender.

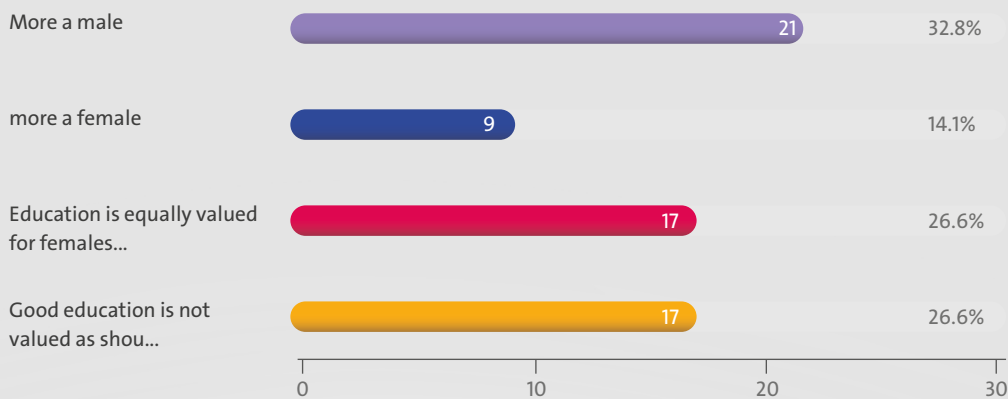
87. Which gender do you believe is more performing in education?



6.2.2. Cultural norms and beliefs:

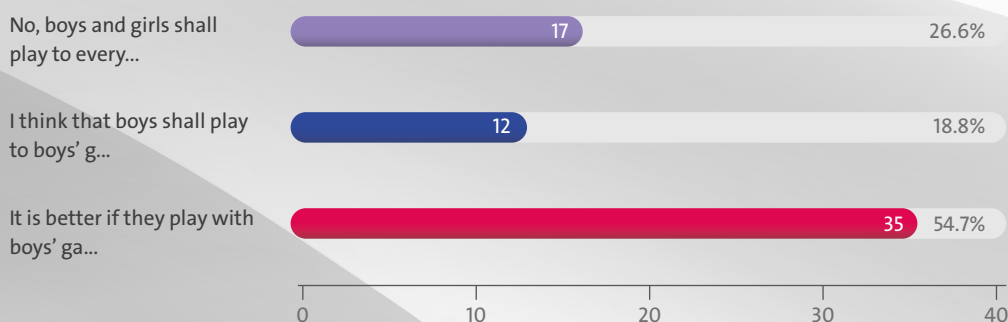
One out of three parents (32,8%) have the perception that in the community, people value more a male who has completed secondary education than a female, which is more than the double of those who consider that the community values more a female who as completed her secondary education (14,9%). A fourth part of the sample (26,6%) consider that education is equally valued for females as for males and another 26,6% believe that good education is not valued as it should in our community, no matters the gender of the person. Finally, a minority of 14,9% consider that the community values more a female who as completed her secondary education.

90. In your community, do people value more a male or a female who has completed secondary education?



When it comes to practices, more than half of the sample (54,7%) would not prevent boys from playing with dolls or small kitchens or any games usually attributed to girls although they think it is better if they play with boys' games, while 36,6% consider that boys and girls shall play to every game. Quite one out of 5 (18,8%) think that boys shall play to boys' games to develop their masculinity. The promotion of gender roles through games is still deeply rooted in parents' attitudes.

95. Do you think that it is not appropriate for boys to play with dolls or small kitchens or any games for girls?

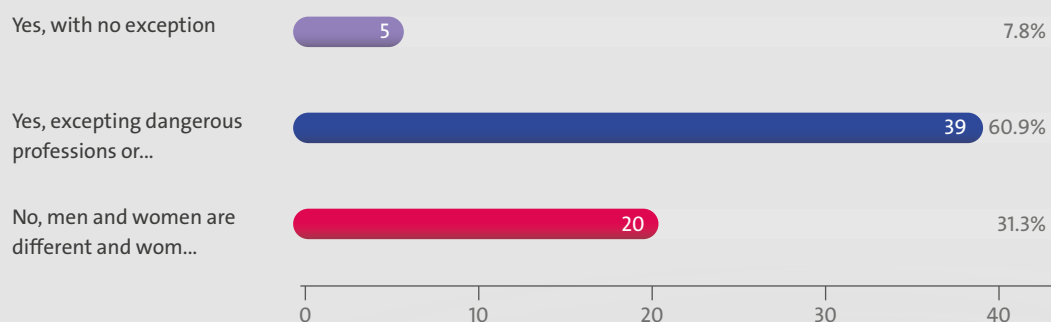


6.2.3. Gender roles, responsibility and time use

Still one out of three surveyed parents (31,3%) considers that men and women are different and women shall not aspire to same professions as males, as it is not compatible with their duty as mothers. Another 60,9% consider that all professions shall be accessible to females just as for males, excepting dangerous professions or those which require much physical strength.

Only 7,8% consider that all professions shall be accessible to both gender with no exception. This shows that there is still much to do to modify gender roles and promote females represented in jobs considered as "males' jobs".

97. Do you think that all professions shall be accessible to females just as for males?



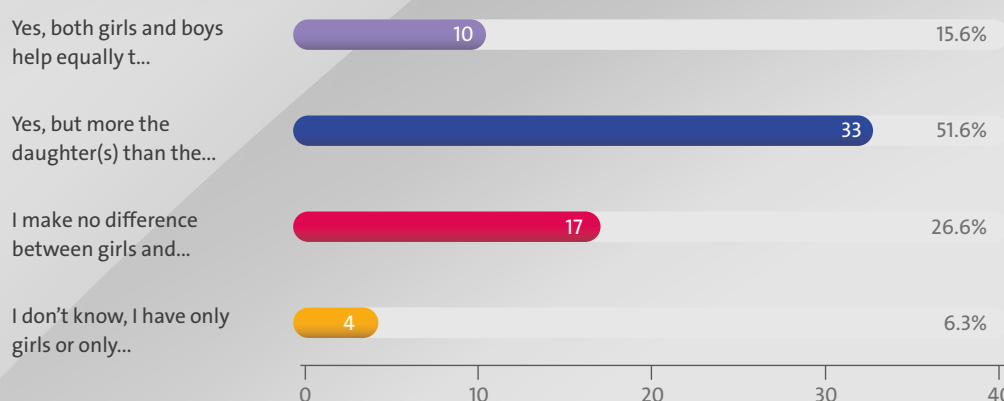
It must be said that while the percentage of parents who consider that all professions without exceptions shall be accessible to both genders is similar in GS (6,82%) and WB (10%), the reasons for justifying vertical segregation is for GS mainly the need to protect women from dangerous professions (70,45%) and for WB the fact that women who shall prioritize their duty as mothers (50%).

As well, it is worth emphasizing that all respondents who considered that all professions without exceptions shall be accessible to both genders are women. Among males, 44,44% are contrary to equal access to all jobs due to gender norms of women as mothers.

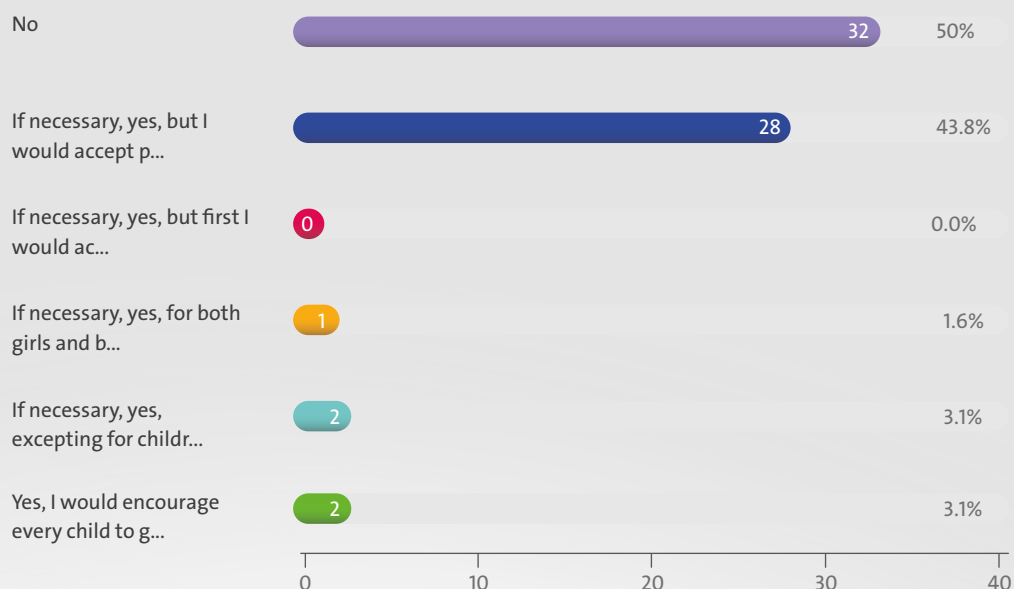
When it comes to their behaviour towards children, one out of two parents (51,6%) acknowledges that at their family home, daughters support more her parents than boy(s) for cleaning, cooking and taking care of small children.

On the contrary, 42,2% of parents declare that they help equally in these tasks (15,6% in general and 26,6% who makes no difference). 6,3% have no girls and cannot respond.

101. At your family home, does every child support his/her parents equally in activities of cleaning,



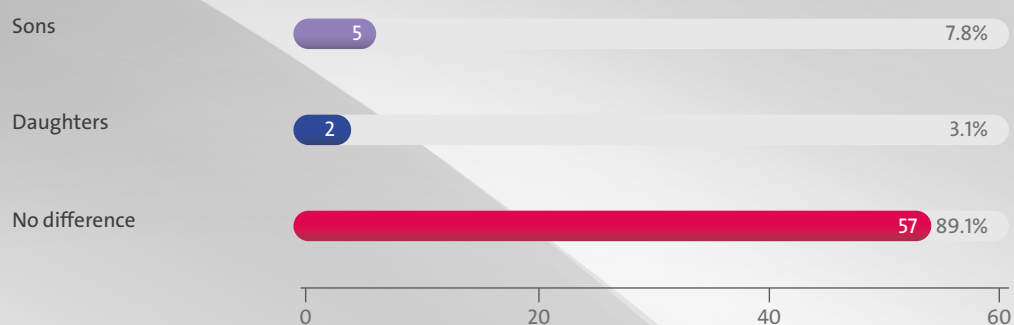
98. Would you accept your children to work or sell?



6.2.4. Access to and control over assets, services and resources

89,1% share the perception that in their community, parents make no difference between girls and boys in terms of sending them to school, while 7,8% think that they prioritize boy's education and 3,1% consider they prioritize girls' education.

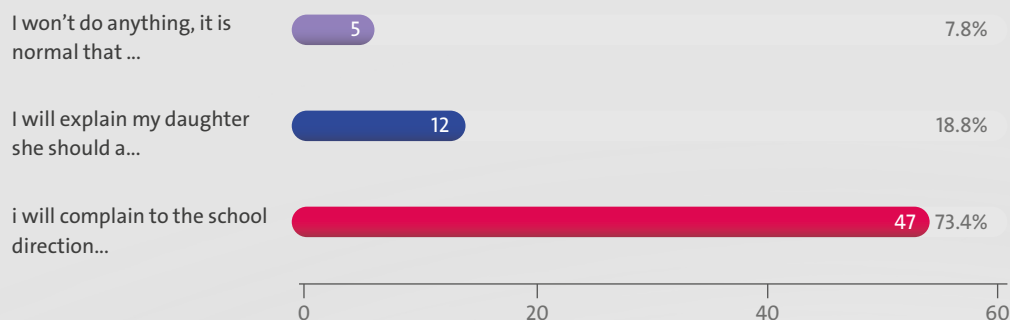
105. In general, do you think that in your community, parents prioritize more sending their daughter or their son to school?



Regarding the way they behave, it is to notice that most of parents would tend to straighten gender unfair distribution of games and space at school. 73,4% would indeed complain to the school direction or her teacher to request equal access to the playground for girls and boys if they had a daughter complaining that she cannot play in the playground during the recess, because boys play football and do not want to include girls

Another 18,8% would explain her/his daughter that she should ask them to let them a small place for girls to play. And finally only 7,8 % wouldn't do anything as it is normal that boys play football, they need space for that and Palestinian children have the right to play sport.

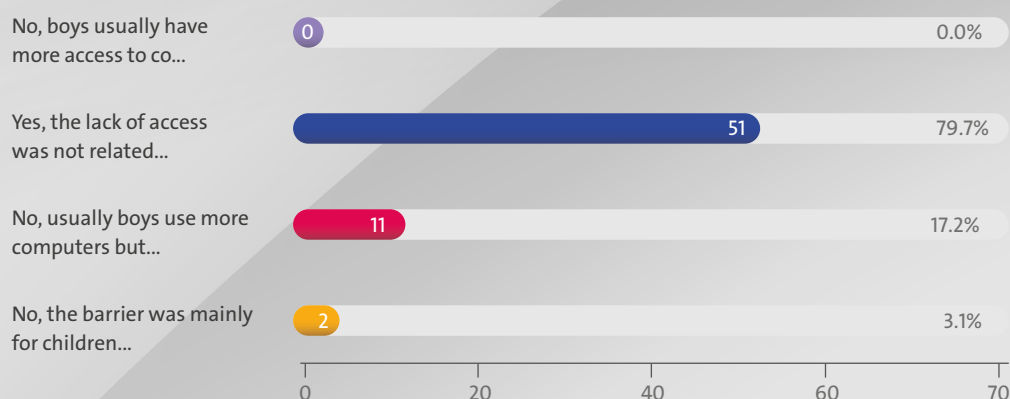
110. Imagine you have a daughter who complains that she cannot play in the playground during the recess, because boys play football and do not want to include girls, what will be your reaction?



Regarding the access to computers, which represented a barrier to education under schools closure due to Covid-19, 79,7% have the perception that the lack of access was not related to gender but to the lack of resources, computers or internet in some families. Another 17,2% are aware that boys usually tend to use more the computers and have therefore ensured that at home their sons and daughters had an equal access to this resource.

Moreover, none of those aware of this unequal access has intervened to redress this gap. 3,1% consider that the barrier was not related to gender but to disability as far as children with disability are not familiar with computers. It therefore seems that access to computers is more restricted by gender than by disability.

107. During Covid19, many schools have provided classes on-line. In your opinion, do daughters access the computers the same time as your sons?

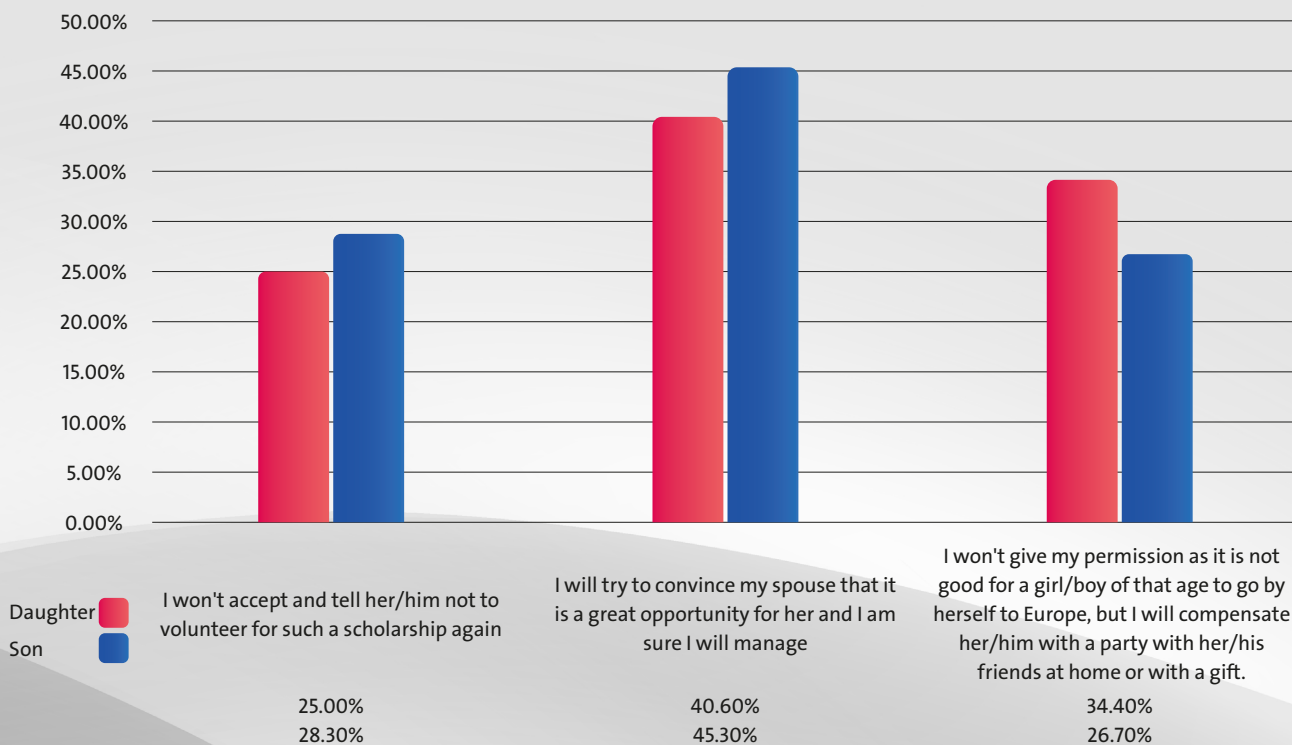


6.2.5. Patterns of power and decision-making

Again, a small gender gap is visible in patterns of power and decision making. Indeed parents are eager to let a boy travel for studies instead of a girl. Asked about what would be their reaction if their 14-years old daughter had received a scholarship to go by herself for a 2-weeks intensive course of German language in Europe, and with a son of that age in this situation, 40,60% would try to convince their spouse that it

is a great opportunity for the girl, compared to 45% for the boy.

104. Imagine that you have a 14-years old daughter and she has received a scholarship to go by herself for a 2-weeks intensive course of German language in Europe, what will you do? 6.3. Intersectional level

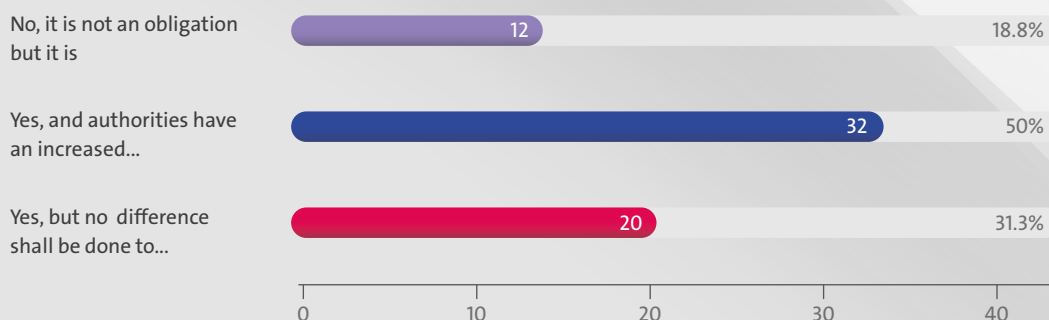


6.3. Intersectional level

6.3.1. Laws, policies and institutions:

Regarding knowledge about the duty of Palestinian Authority to ensure access to education, 50% know that Palestinian authorities have an increased obligation towards girls and children with disability. 31,3% think that no difference shall be done to favour girls or children with disability as all children are equal. Another 18,8% think that is it not an obligation but it is included in the PA Strategy on Education. A campaign on positive actions could be launched to enhance knowledge about the right to education.

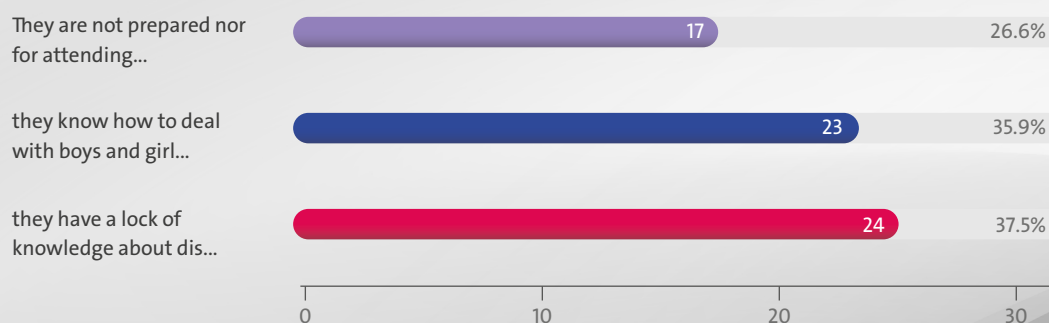
83. Is education a right that the government shall ensure for every child on an equal basis?



Asked whether teachers are more prepared to deal with children with disability or to promote equality between men and women, 37,5% believe that they have a lack of knowledge about disability but the issue of gender equality between girls and boys is more difficult to guarantee as it is against many traditions. Another 35,9% consider that they know how to deal with boys and girls, but they do not know how to deal with children with disability. Finally 26,6% believe that they are not prepared for teaching children with disability, specially girls, neither to promote gender equality.

This shows the need to work on teachers' capacity building and behavioural change equally on gender and disability.

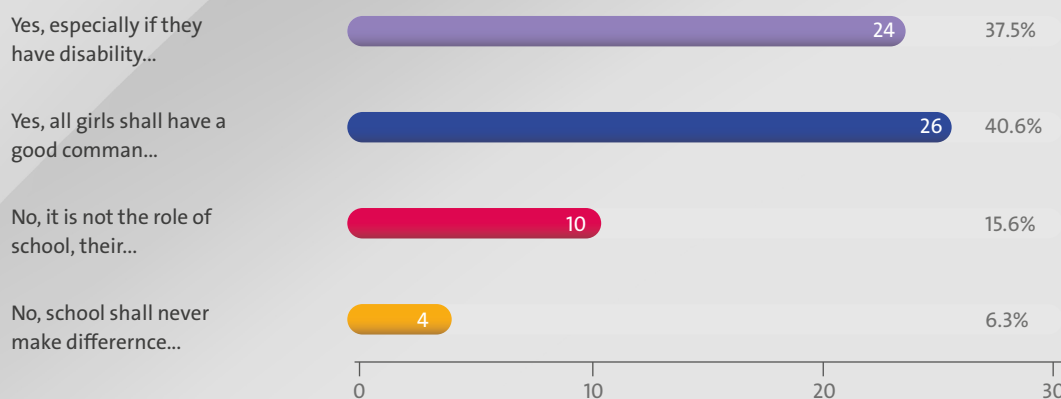
88. Do you think that in mainstream schools, teachers are more prepared to deal with children with disability or to promote equality between men and women?



6.3.2. Gender roles, responsibility and time use

Regarding gender roles, 78,1% parents consider that school shall teach girls specific skills that they will need during their life, like sewing, cooking, taking care of children, 40,6% in an equal measure for girls with and without disability, while 37,5% think that this need is higher concerning girls with disability. This shows that gender roles are more strongly enforced onto girls with disability. 15,6% consider that it is not the role of school, their mother shall be in charge of teaching her these skills. Only 6,3% answer that schools shall never make differences between boys and girls.

99. Do you think that school shall teach specific skills that girls will need during their life, like sewing, cooking, taking care of children, etc.?

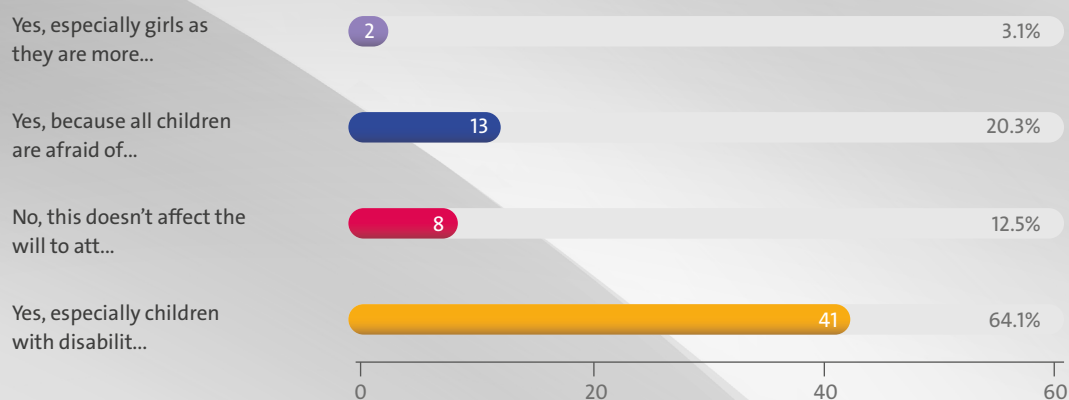


On this question, a gap has been observed in answers provided by parents in Gaza and West Bank. While all parents who responded that schools shall never make difference between children of both genders are from Gaza, amounting to 18,18% of all responses in this territory, 56,82% of parents of GS also responded that all girls shall develop these skills, compared to only 5 % in WB. 18,18% of parents in GS compared to 80% in WB view it more important for girls with disability. As conclusion, a stronger enforcement of gender roles on girls with disability than on girls without disability is more frequent among parents surveyed in WB than in GS.

6.3.3. Cultural norms and beliefs:

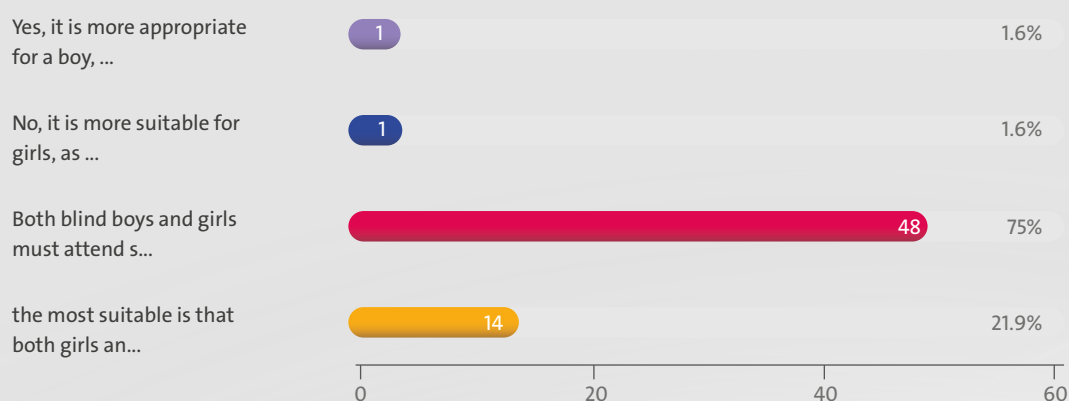
Asked if they have the perception that a child might not be willing to go to school due to his/her fear of being harassed or harmed or hit by Israeli soldiers, army or settlers, 64,1% parents declared that this applies especially to children with disability as they do not have the same skills to escape or even understand what happens like other children. 20,3% consider that it affects all children because all are afraid of being harassed by soldiers or attacked by Israeli Army. 12,5% consider that it is not a barrier that affects their will to attend school. It must be said that disability is perceived as a factor of vulnerability much higher than gender when it comes to the effect of Israeli Army practices as only 3,1% consider that this applies especially to girls as they are more vulnerable and usually they feel more shy than boys.

112. Do you think a child might not be willing to go to school due to his/her fear of being harassed or harmed or hit by Israeli soldiers, army or settlers?



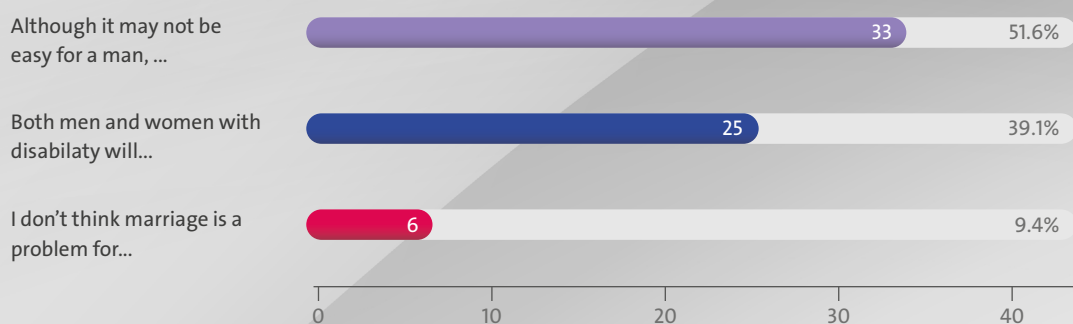
Three out of 4 parents (75%) think that both boys and girls with visual disability must attend school but preferably special schools while 21,9% believe that the most suitable is that both groups attend mainstream school along with children without disability. These answers show that parents would preferably enrol a child with disability in a special school instead of a mainstream school. Only 1,6% considers that it is more suitable for a boy with visual disability to attend a mainstream school than for a girl with visual disability, as he won't be the target of same jokes and he won't be exposed to sexual abuse. Another person considers that it is more suitable for a girl to attend school, as it will be easier to marry her if she has received a formal education.

91. Do you think it is more suitable for a blind boy to attend a mainstream school than for a girl?



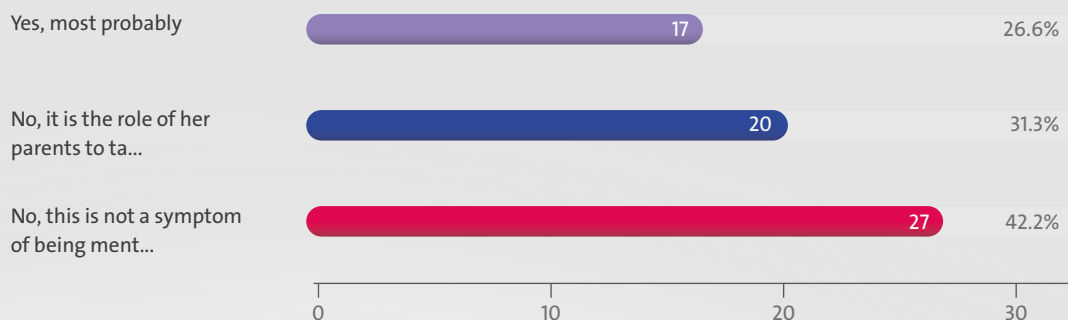
A majority of parents believe that it is more difficult for a girl with disability to get married than for a boy, which may put an extra burden on the family. Indeed, 51.6% respond that although it may not be easy for a man, it is more difficult for a girl with disability to get married and life will be more difficult for her. 39.1% think that both men and women with disability will face the same difficulty to get married and the same consequences in terms of social recognition and inclusion. Only 9.4% believe that marriage is not a problem for persons with disability. This shows how stereotypes surrounding disability are still high, especially concerning females.

92. Do you think that people with disability face difficulty to get married?

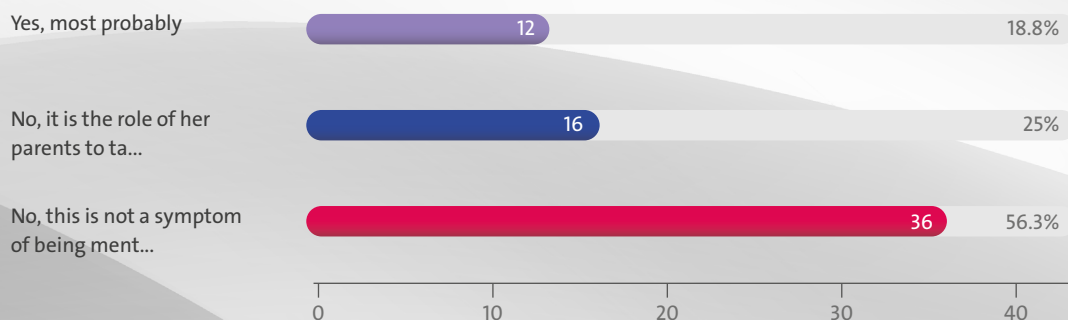


We can also detect a gender gap in parents' attitudes towards children's behaviour, as they conclude much more easily that a girl with a non conforming behaviour has a disability and is in need of protection than for a boy with a similar behaviour. While 26.6% of parents will most probably think if they see a 10 years girl who is dancing alone in a desert place of the city, that she has a mental problem and call for help, only 18.8% of parents will react in this way if the child is a boy. While 42.2% will think that this is not a signal of having a mental disability in the case of a girl, 56.3% will have this opinion for a boy.

93. If you see a 10 years girl being alone and dancing in a desert place of the city, will you think that she has a mental problem and call for help?



103. If you see a 10 years boy walking alone and dancing in a desert place of the city, will you think that he has a mental problem and call for help?



For girls with disability, the main barrier to attend school is her parents' fear that she will be target of bullying or jokes by other children, with a total of 48 answers (25,26% of total answers provided), 28 as first reason (43,75%), 11 as second reason (17,46%) and 9 as third reason (14,29%).

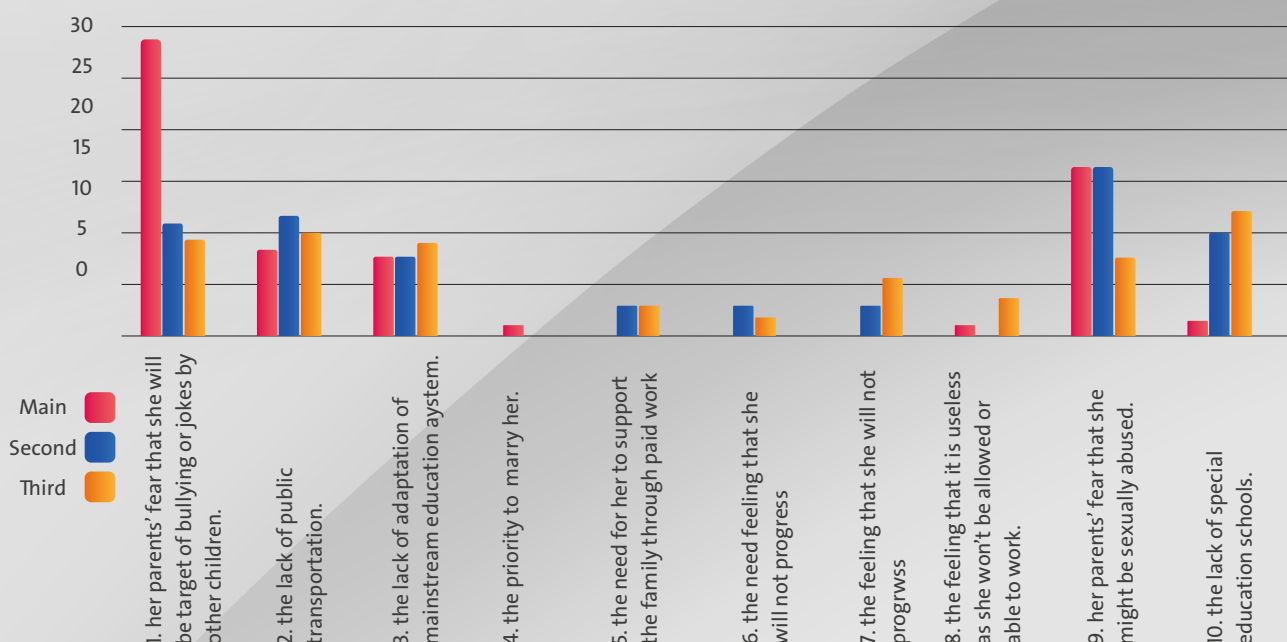
The second highest barrier that was mentioned by 40 parents or the 21,05% of all answers provided is her parents' fear that she might be sexually abused. It is the main reason for 16 parents (25%) and the second factor for another 16 (25,40%) and the third one by 8 people (12,70%), showing the high impact of this fear on girls' access to education.

In third position, 30 parents considered that the lack of public transportation is among the three main barriers to education for girls with disability which amounts to 15,79% of the all answers. It is viewed as main obstacle for 8 of them (12,50%), as second reason for another 12 parents (19,05%) and as third main obstacle by 10 (15,87%).

Other two reasons with a similarly wide prevalence are the lack of adaptation of mainstream education system and the lack of special education schools, which were mentioned each by 25 parents or 13,16% of the answers provided. If we look at the position, the lack of adaptation of mainstream schools is more frequently selected as main barrier: 12,50% compared to 3,13% for the lack of special education schools, which was selected as third reason by 20,63% of parents compared to 14,29% parents who chose the lack of special schools in that position.

More residually we must mention: the feeling that education is useless for her or that she will not progress only gather a total of 14 answers or 7,37% of the total. The need of supporting her family through paid work was mentioned 4 times (2,11%) or as second or as third reason. The need to support the family working at home was also invoked 3 times (1,58%) and the need to marry her was considered as first reason for one person (0,53%).

96. Among the reasons below, in your opinion, which are the three main obstacles for a girl with disability to attend schools?



For boys with disability, the reasons are quite similar but for boys, the weight of the lack of inclusivity of the education system is a higher reason for not attending schools. As well, the parents' fear of him being sexually harassed, although existent, is less important. As for girls, boy's parents' fear of him being the

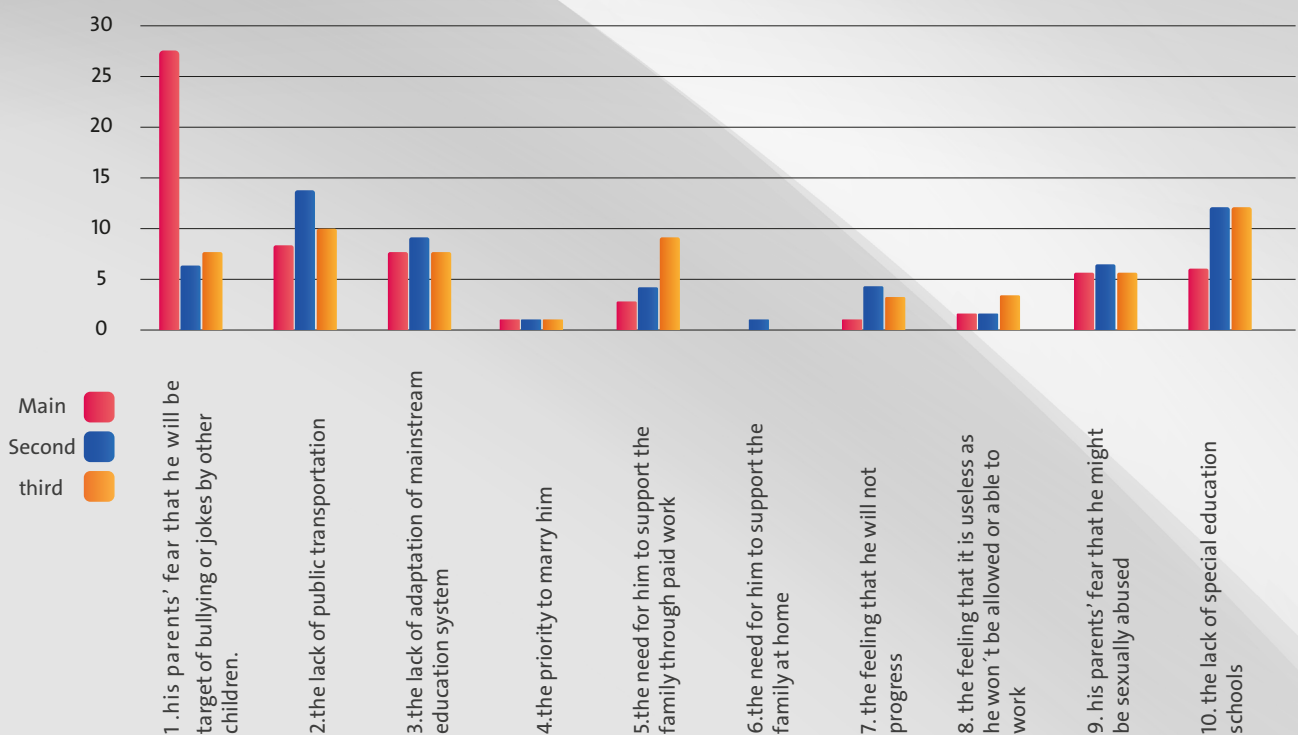
target of bullying or jokes by other children is the most mentioned obstacle by 45 parents, which represents 23,44% of all answers: 28 as main reason (43,75%), 8 as second (12,50%) and 9 in a third position (14,06%).

It is followed by the lack of public transportation for 35 parents (18,23%), 9 as main (14,06%), 15 as second (23,44%) and 11 as third reason (17,19%). The following barrier is the lack of special education schools for 33 parents (17,19%), 7 of them who think it is the main obstacle (10,94%), 13 the second (20,31%) and 13 the third (20,31%). The lack of adaptation of mainstream school is the fourth reason. Mentioned by 25 parents or 13,02% of all answers, it is worth saying that it was selected as first reason by 8 parents or 12,50% of this category.

Only as 5th reason comes the parents' fear of him being sexually harassed (11,46%), being a gap that can be assessed between girls and boys with disability. Another gender bias is that 15 parents consider as being among the three main obstacles to enrolment of boys with disability the need for him to support the family through paid work amounting to 7,81% of all answers, compared to only 4 parents for girls with disability.

No gender gap can be observed for obstacles linked to the lack of effectiveness or utility of education, as 8 parents (4,17%) mentioned the feeling that the boy will not progress and 5 parents (2,60%) selected the reason of thinking that education is useless as he won't be allowed or able to work. 3 parents (1,56%) compared to 1 for girls considered that the need to marry him is also a barrier. This trend might be explained by the fact that many parents believe it is easier to marry a boy with disability than a girl with disability.

100. Among the reasons below, in your opinion, which are the three main obstacles for a boy with disability to attend schools?

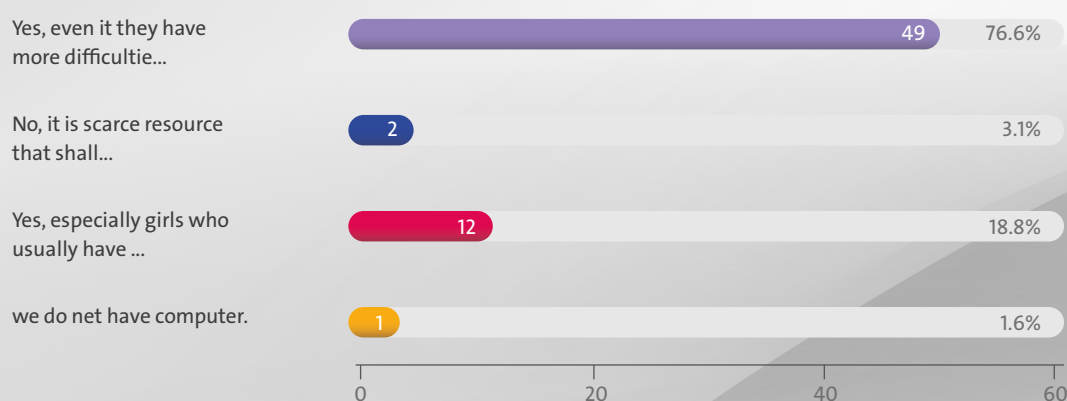


6.3.4. Access to and control over assets, services and resources

Asked regarding children with disability's use of computers, 76,6% consider that they shall be ensured access to them, just as other children, even if they have more difficulties to handle and understand them. 18,8% are aware that girls usually have lower access to computers and girls with disability shall be especially taken into account. Only two parents considered that it is a scarce resource that shall be prioritized for children without disability who will be able to take all benefit of them.

Regarding the 14 parents with no child with disability, responses are similar and even more supportive of universal access to computers: 85% answered that they shall have equal access as other children and 15% that girls with disability shall be given advantage. None considered better prioritizing children without disability.

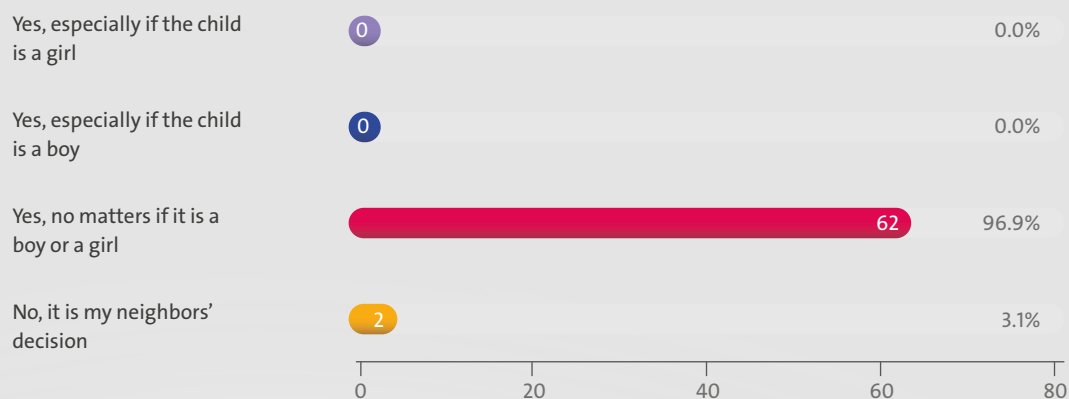
102. Do you think that children with disabilities can use computers and shall be ensured access to them, just as other children?



Regarding children with disability access to education, all but two parents would try to convince neighbours who would not enrol their 10 years' child with hearing impairment at school, to change their mind no matters if it is a boy or a girl. This shows that in theory, parents are supportive of school enrolment of children with disability, no matters of gender.

Only 3,1% would not try to interfere alleging that it is his/her neighbour's decision. This question confirms the answers provided to question 91. It shall also be put in relation with question 105 where 7,8% parents think that the community prioritizes boys' education compared to 3,1% who consider that girls 'education is preferred.

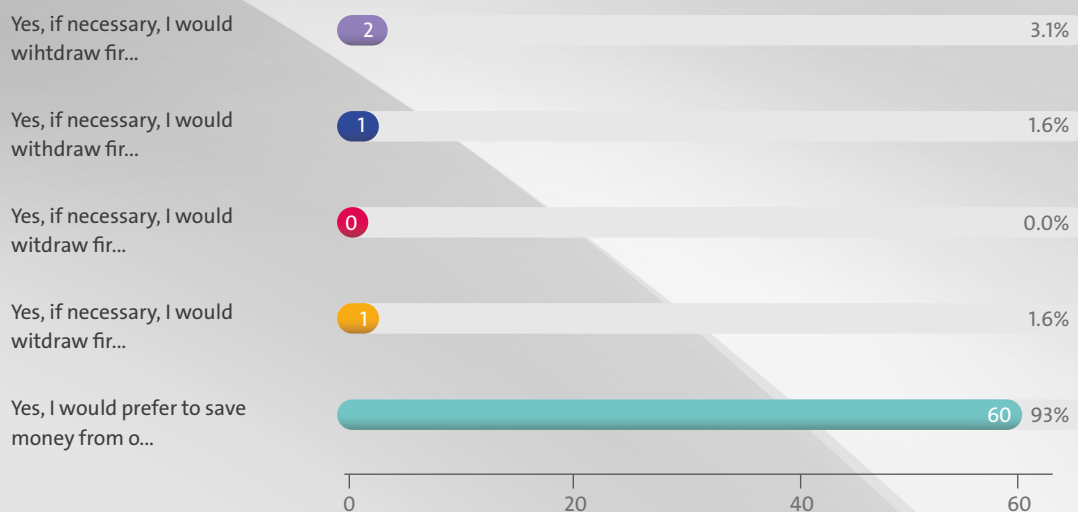
106. If a neighbour tells you that they will not enrol their 10 years' deaf child in school, will you try to convince them to change their mind?



When asked whether, under financial hardship, they would withdraw a their child from primary school, 93 % parents answer no, that they would prefer to save money from other basic needs like food or heating, showing the importance given to education.

No gender gap could be observed. While 2 parents would withdraw their daughter first, compared to 1 who would withdraw his/her son first, none says he/she would withdraw his/her daughter with disability and one says he/she would with his/her son with disability.

108. If you were going through financial hardship, would you withdraw your children from primary school?

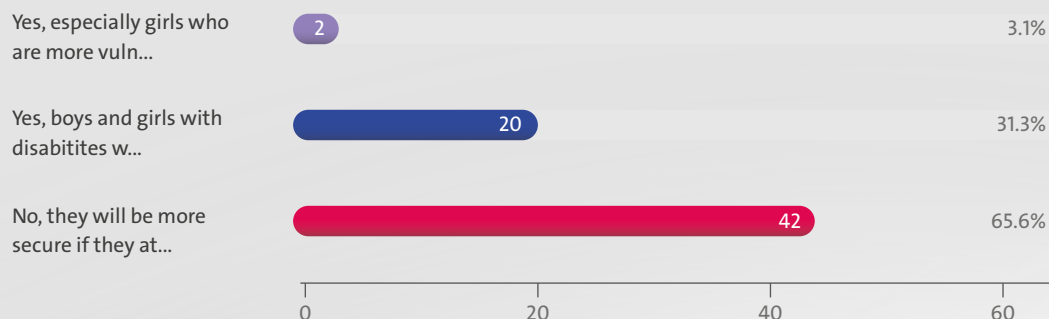


6.3.5. Gender based violence

Concerning safety, parents were asked if children with disability are more secure at home or at school and one out of three parents (31,3%) responded that both boys and girls with disabilities will be more secure at home. This shows that security is a reason that could lead a lot of parents to keep their child with disability out of school.

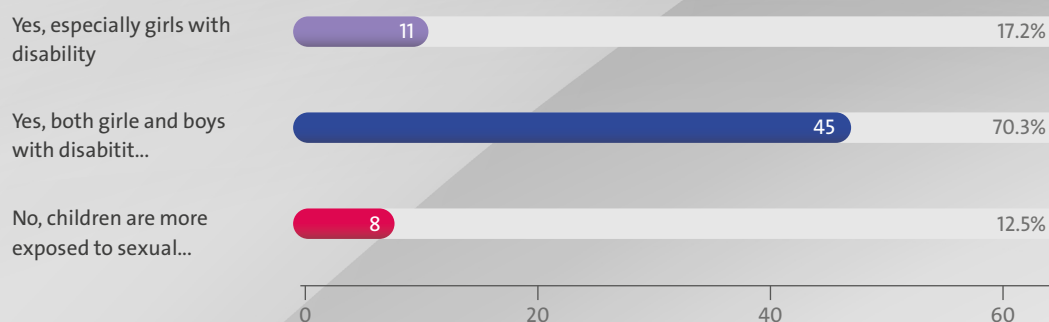
On the contrary, two out of three (65,6%) think that they will be more secure if they attend schools and develop skills. 3,1% think that girls with disability are more vulnerable to abuse and violence.

86. Do you think that children with disability would be more secure at home than attending school?



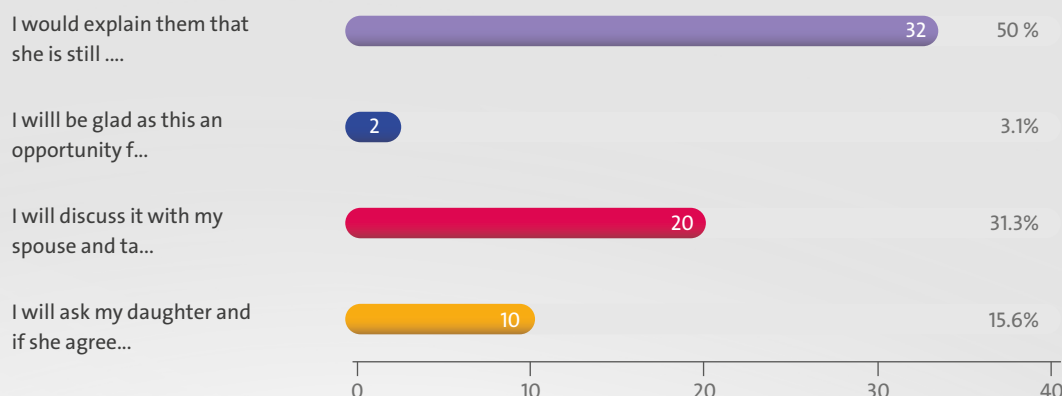
The gender gap becomes more evident when asked directly about children with disability's exposure to sexual abuse if attending school. While 70,3% consider that both girls and boys with disability are more exposed to sexual abuse when they are away from home, 17,2% believe that girls with disability are especially exposed. Only 12,5% consider that children are more exposed to sexual abuse from the family or individuals closed to the family.

111. Do you think that it is quite dangerous to let children with disability go to school, as they will be more exposed to sexual abuse than those who stay at home?



Finally, in the field of practices, half people surveyed would be ready to marry their girl with disability under 16 years old. Asked about their reaction if some neighbours would be interested in marrying 15 years girl with disability to their son who has finished high school and will get a job in a bank, 50% say they would explain them that she is still at school and need to finish before getting married although being aware that they will miss a wonderful marriage opportunity. 31,3% would discuss it with my spouse and take together the decision to marry her or to refuse the offer, 15,6% would ask their daughter and if she agrees will give our approval to the marriage. And 3,1% would I be glad as this an opportunity for her to get a very good marriage.

113. Imagine you have a 15 years girl with disability and some neighbours would be interested in marrying her to their son who has finished high school and will get a job in a bank. What would I do?



Concerning this question, a gap has been noticed between Gaza and West Bank. While 85% of parents in WB declared they would refuse the early marriage compared to 34,09% of parents in GS, 10% of parents from Bethlehem area would discuss it with their spouse and 5% with the daughter and none would consider it an opportunity. In GS, there is a higher percentage of parents potentially in favour of early marriage of girls with disability: 40,91% would discuss it with the spouse, 20,45% with the daughter and 4,55% would be glad and view it as an opportunity.

6.4. Conclusions of perceptions, norms, attitudes and practices towards gender

There is a clear need of developing inclusiveness of educational system in West Bank and Gaza. 90 % of surveyed parents have the perception that children with disability do not have full access to public schools, being the main obstacles perceived as stemming first from people’s mentality and behaviours, secondly from the lack of transportation and inclusive infrastructure and finally from the lack of training of education staff.

Parents are highly supportive of allocating funds for inclusive education: two out of three would pressure the school direction in this sense. Regarding children with disability’s autonomy, still there is much awareness to rise among the community, including among parents of those children. One out of four parents believes that they shall take decisions on behalf of their children with disability. It must be noticed that surprisingly parents would preferably enrol children with disability in special schools instead of mainstream schools, showing the need to develop knowledge about inclusive mainstream education and inclusiveness of mainstream schools.

Regarding children’s access to education generally speaking, a gender bias is not clearly visible. Although one out of three parents have the perception that in the community, people value more a male who has completed secondary education than a female, schooling is considered by parents surveyed as equally important for girls and boys. Nine out of ten share the perception that in their community, parents make

no difference between girls and boys in terms of sending them to school. As well, parents declare to be supportive of school enrolment of children with disability, no matters the gender of the child.

Regarding gender gap, one out of three parents considers that gender equality is not being promoted as it should by MoEHE. As well, gender equality promotion is perceived as a gap to be filled in teachers' skills, a little more even than their competences in inclusive teaching, although both aspects are perceived as needs of capacity development.

In spite of this general assessment, the survey has shown that gender roles and norms are still deeply rooted in the mentality. Less than one out of ten parents (7,8%) considers that all professions shall be accessible to both genders with no exception. Gender roles are instilled in children at home: one out of two parents acknowledges that at their family home, daughters support more her parents that boy(s) in activities

of cleaning, cooking and taking care of smaller children. According to a third of parents, gender roles shall be reinforced through games: only one out of 3 considers that boys and girls shall play to every game.

As well, although neither paid work nor the need of the support at home are among main reasons mentioned behind children's drop out or not attending school, paid work is seen as more acceptable for boys than for girls for 43,8% of parents surveyed.

Eight out of ten parents expect that, besides education at home, the school shall also reinforce gender roles, as they consider it should develop girls' skills needed to fulfil traditional gender roles attributed to them, like sewing, cooking, taking care of children, etc. For 37% of parents, this expectation is even higher concerning girls with disability, showing how disability increases gender roles and norms enforced onto girls. This shows that there is still much to do to modify gender roles, especially regarding girls with disability. This increased expectation of including the development of skills related to gender reproductive role among girls with disability might be explained by the exacerbated difficulty perceived by half respondents for marrying girls with disability compared to males with disability. Also, half people surveyed would be ready under certain circumstances to marry their daughter with disability under the age of 16 years old.

Although girls are clearly perceived as being more performing at schools and equal importance seems to be allocated to girls' education, at least at elemental levels, gender assigned roles might unconsciously provoke indirect discrimination in education in terms of access to educational qualitative inputs. For instance, parents are more eager to let a boy travel for a school exchange abroad than a girl. As well, surprisingly, access to computers is more restricted by gender than by disability. 17,2% of surveyed parents are aware that boys usually use more computers and have therefore intervened to redress this gap in access to remote education during COVID-19 by ensuring that at home sons and daughters had equal access to computers. Parents' readiness to take action to correct gender gap in access to space and games at school is also perceived.

Regarding the reasons why children with disability drop out of school or do not enrol, a gender gap has also appeared. While for both boys and girls with disability, the highest barrier is their parents' fear of him/her being the target of bullying or jokes by other children, the second factor most mentioned regarding girls is the fear that she might be sexually abused. For boys just after the fear of him being targeted by jokes and bullying, it is the lack of public transportation, followed by the lack of special education schools and the lack of adaptation of mainstream schools. These three reasons are also mentioned in the same order for girls, just after the fear of sexual abuse.

Other reasons like the feeling that education is useless as the child will not progress or never get a job one side, and priorities other than education -like marriage or the need of the child support at home or through paid work- on the other side, are less widely considered as main barriers to children with disabilities' education. In other words, the reasons why children with disability are not enrolled are at first stigmatizing and violent behaviour targeting them and girls' vulnerability to sexual abuse, followed by the lack of transportation and the lack of inclusiveness of the educational system.

Finally, there is still much to do to give the feeling to parents that their child with disability will be protected from violence and harassment, including sexual violence. While one out of three parents considers that both boys and girls with disabilities will be more secure at home, their fear of sexual abuse is higher regarding girls with disability. The fact that there is still a taboo /denial surrounding the subject doesn't imply that the fear of sexual abuse is not a silent barrier at play that must be addressed in order to increase the enrolment rate of girls with disability, especially when they grow up and can be viewed as teenagers.

As we will see in the analysis of the qualitative information collected in the following chapter, gender and disability interact also in the field of stigmatizing attitudes stemming from wrong beliefs around hereditary nature of disability, which has an impact not only on girls with disability's enrolment but also on her socialization.

GENDER ANALYSIS RESULTS: QUALITATIVE DATA

1. Analysis of sample: Gender and disability

A total of 15 parents' in-depth interviews (PIDI) were conducted using the questionnaire reproduced in Chapter I. paragraph 7.2.

Out of this total sample, 9 were realized with mothers and 6 with fathers, which makes a rate of 60/40. The geographic criteria were also defined to be proportionally representative of the group of beneficiaries of HI project in GS and WB. As such, 11 in-depth interviews with parents (IDI) were conducted in GS compared to 4 in WB. In GS, there were 4 IDI in Gaza City (2 females and 2 males), 4 in Rafah (2 females and 2 males) and 3 in Deir El Balah (2 females and 1 male), while in WB 2 were implemented in Janata (1 female and 1 male) and 2 in Wadi Foqin (1 female and 1 male). The gender breakdown of children was as follows: 10 girls with disability in 7 IDI and 7 boys with disability in 7 in IDI.

Regarding the types of disability of children, a large spectrum was represented. We must alert that, as far as in IDI we did not use the set of questions of Washington Group but made opened questions on this issue, the terminology used below reproduces parents' own wordings: brain atrophy, brain palsy, muscles atrophy, mental retardation, mental deterioration, visual difficulty, brain atrophy, hearing and speaking difficulty, hemiplegic, mobility difficulty, physical, Down syndrome, autism, severe autism, development disorder, physical disability.

The detail of the sample is described more in details in the table below:

	Place	Gender	BwD/ GwD	Out/in-school	BnD/GnD	Out/in
PIDI1	Gaza City	Male		Out-of-school since 4 years. Was at PACF before but has dropped out due to economic reason (transportation cost),	Yes	All enrolled at UNRWA School
PIDI2	Rafah	Female	No		Yes	1 GnD only made 6 months at university and 1 BnD did not go for financial reasons (eldest) Other children in schools.
PIDI3	Rafah	Male	2 GwD with difficulty in speaking, understanding and retardation. 1 BwD, brain paralysis, 11 years. 1 GwD, 20 years, atrophy of the back muscles,	11 BwD, 11 years, out-of-school. He is enrolled at a special association, receiving all the services also he is resident there, but dropped out of special school due to economic reason. 1 GwD, 20 years, studied one year at the university and since 1½ year, out of university. 2 others girls with disability, one in 7th grade (17 years old) and the other (27 years) finished school.	yes	Children with no disability all enrolled in school or finished university.
PIDI4	Gaza	Male	1 GwD of 16 years old, mental deterioration. Visual difficulty wears glasses	In-school. Since she was three years old she has been enrolled at PACF and she is at level 2. Which means each 3 to 4 years she moved from level to another.	yes	1 son cannot go to university due to financial hardship
PIDI5	Deir El Balah	Female	1 GwD of 12 years as a result of a surgery to remove a cancerous mass i 1 GwD (Mobility)- Brain atrophy 15 years.	Out-of-school. Was enrolled in MCRS since 3 years ago and since one year she is out of school for economic reasons, could not pay for transportation.	1 GnD	At university, she borrowed money to cover the university fees
PIDI6	Rafah	Female, grandmother ill at hospital in Jerusalem	1 GwD of 12 years as a result of a surgery to remove a cancerous mass in the abdomen when she was 8 months old, she lost her ability to walk as well as feeling in her legs, also can't control urine and faecal passage. Using wheelchair	Enrolled at UNRWA since 7 years and is doing well Need electric wheelchair but no response from association for children with disability. Also has received remedial classes free of charge from a private centre.	3 BnDand 1 Gn D	All at UNRWA

Boys with disability: BwD; Boys without disability: BnD; girls with disability: GwD; girls without disability: GnD; Children with disability; CwD; Children without disability: CnD.

	Place	Gender	BwD/ GwD	Out/in-school	BnD/GnD	Out/in
PIDI7	Gaza	Female	1 BwD, brain paralysis, 9 years 1 GwD, brain paralysis, 14 years, Do not need devices	Enrolled at PACF since a few months (both) Before did not go to school for financial reason.	1 GnD	Public school
PIDI8	Deir El Balah	Female	1 BwD 10 years intellectual disorder doesn't need assistive devices	Enrolled in MCRS since 4 years although financial hardship all in one room	2 BnD 2 GnDs	All enrolled
PIDI9	Gaza	Female	1 BwD of 21 years mental deterioration No need of assistive devices	Out-of-school. Was enrolled at PACF but since 2 years out of school, no improvement due to health situation times in hospital	2 GnDs 3 BnDs	One son finished the 11 class and stopped school and it was his decision. Another son injured during return marches and suffers from psychological problems and dropped out but now wants to enrolled again.
PIDI10	Deir el Balah	Male	1 BwD, 11 years, intellectual disorder autism	Enrolled at MCRS since 1 year and half, before went to association for pronunciation but due to incapacity to pay fees he stopped	5 GnDs and BnD	1 Boy without disability finished high school but did not go to university due to financial reasons
PIDI11	Rafah	Male	No		2 GnDs and 1 BnD	Girls too young and boy 17 years out of school since 3 years as no attainment and problems with other children at school. Work now, very difficult financial situation
PIDI12	WB Janata	Male	1 BwD, 18 years, with down syndrome	Out-of-school. Never enrolled due to hearing and speaking problems	1 GnD 6 Boys with out disability	All finished school
PIDI13	WB Janata	Female	1 GwD of 9 years, 1st diagnosed development disorder and 3 years later severe autism	In school. Was attending regular school twice a week but dropped and went to special school private	3 GnDs 1 Boy with out disability	Enrolled
PIDI14	WB Wadi Fokin	Female	1 GwD of 17 years, mental development disorder or retardation	Out-of-school. She was registered at public school and attended for two years but then did not go anymore due to her mental retardation. She stopped before covid19-. Now just attends CBR in Hussan.	1 GnD 2 BnDs	Enrolled
PIDI15	WB Wadi Fokin	Female	1 BwD of 8 years physical disability	Enrolled at public school.	2 BnDs Enrolled	Enrolled at public school

Besides these in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted with key informants in GS and WB as described under 8.2 of first chapter of this gender study.

A total of 17 female and 8 male key informants were consulted through semi-structured interviews and Focus groups. The categories of key informants were: Education Clusters members in GS (EC1) and WB (EC2), Protection Clusters members in GS (PC1) and in WB (PC2), Educational/CBR staff in GS (ES1) and WB (ES2) and Community members in GS (CM1) and WB (CM2).

2. Access to disability diagnosis and assistive devices

All the children with disability of parents interviewed had been diagnosed by a specialist. Among them, 1 girl with disability was initially attributed a development problem, and 3 years later her diagnosis turned to be severe autism.

Regarding devices, only two children with disability were lacking assistive devices needed: 1 girl with disability needed an electric wheelchair she had requested to an association and did not get an answer, and another had crutches from PACF but was in need of glasses as she had a visual difficulty.

3. Schooling situation: enrolment, drop-out and types of schools

Regarding the enrolment situation of children in age of schooling, the sample can be summarized as follows: 6 girls with disability were in school and 3 out of school while 4 boys with disability were enrolled in school and 3 out of school. This makes a total of 10 children with disability in school and 6 out of school (plus one who dropped from University).

Regarding children with disability who are out-of-school, only 1 boy with intellectual disability (Down syndrome) had never attended school. 2 other boys with disability who dropped out from special schools. Among the 3 girls with disability who are not enrolled at school, 2 were previously enrolled at private special schools and 1 attended a public school.

Most of those who attend school are enrolled at private special school, except three: 1 boy, age 8, with physical disability in Wadi Foukin (WB) who attends public school, and 1 girl with hemiplegics who is enrolled at UNRWA school. One girl, age 17, with difficulty in speaking and understanding is at 7th grade of mainstream school.

Except this girl, no child with intellectual, behaviour, visual, hearing or speaking disorder was at the time of the interview enrolled in a mainstream school. Nonetheless, several children in-school and out-of-school had spent some time at a mainstream school.

Regarding children without disability, all of them were enrolled except 2 boys without under the age of 18. Other children with and without disability were reported to have dropped or not enrolled at University due to financial hardship.

4. Reasons behind drop-out and out-of-school status

When talking about the reasons why their child had dropped out of school, parents mentioned:

1. Financial hardship that made impossible continue paying fees (private special school or university) and/or affording the cost of transportation to school.
2. Level of intellectual disability of the child or his/her lack of attainment / progress, which in reality may be interpreted as a result of the lack of adaptation of the education system.

Regarding the first of these reasons, that most families interviewed are undergoing economic hardship. Poverty and extreme poverty situations have been detected, especially in GS.

For instance a divorced woman (PID15), unemployed and with diabetes, lives in GS with her two daughters in the living room of a family house, where there is no place enough for them. The eldest daughter is enrolled at university and the mother borrowed money to pay for the fees. She doesn't have a computer and could not follow her education during COVID-19. Her 15 years old daughter with brain atrophy is out of school and needs help to perform basic activities. She stopped attending a special education school run by a HI partner because she could not pay for the transportation fees.

A father (PID11) who lives in GS explains that due to the financial situation of the family, where both parents are unemployed, their 12 years daughter with hemiplegics is out of school. She was enrolled at a special education school partner of HI but stopped attending because her parents could not afford the cost of transportation to the centre. Her brothers without disability are enrolled at UNRWA school, which is closed to their home. There is thus no need for them to take transportation.

Another father (PID13), living in WB, mentions that financial shortage is also the reason behind the drop out of his 11 years old boy with cerebral palsy from a private special school and his entrance in an association where he is resident and receives all services. The father is headmaster of secondary school and his wife is housewife. His salary is not sufficient because he has 3 other daughters with disability: 1 of them with mobility difficulty and speaking and understanding problems is enrolled at 7th grade in mainstream school and the other age 27 has finished high school. Another 20 years-old daughter with back muscles atrophy, was enrolled at university but stopped attending one year and half ago because of the mentioned economic problem.

Another testimony (PID17) show the cases of two children, a 9 years old boy and a 14 years old girl, both with cerebral palsy, who started attending school at a special education centre partner of HI in GS. They were not previously enrolled due to financial situation, as the father declared during the interview. It must be said that parents have only one daughter more, who doesn't have any difficulty, who has been enrolled all the time. The father is employed in the Ministry of Health and the mother is housewife. Besides, some children with disability enrolled at school stopped receiving special rehabilitation programs due to economic shortages of the family. This is the case of a boy with autism (PID10) enrolled at

a special school partner of HI in GS, who stopped receiving pronunciation courses because his parents could not pay for this speech therapy. The father is retired and the mother is housewife.

The second kind of reasons evoked to explain why children with disability are out of school can be summarized as the lack of adaptation of the educational system, which results in the lack of improvement of the child –or the feeling that he/she doesn't progress - and the frustration of parents. Although parents usually do not point at the lack of adaptation of school directly, but instead declare it is due to the lack of progress of the child or his/her kind or degree of disability, it becomes clear in the second part of the interview that the lack of inclusiveness of the school is the root problem of the drop-out. Three cases respond to this situation.

The father of an 18 years old boy with intellectual disability (Down syndrome) living in WB (PID112) declares that his son never attended school due to his hearing and speaking problems. He just goes to a CBR program on a daily basis but stopped attending due to COVID.

A mother living in WB (PID114) declares that her 17 years old daughter with developmental disorder stopped attending school before COVID-19 because of her delay in mental development. She ensured that she would not withdraw her kids from school due to economic difficulties. The girl is now attending a CBR program every day from 7 am till 12 pm, where she learns how to carve wood and work with glass. When asked if public school are accessible to children with disability, the mother answers no, that there are problems of lack of teachers who know how to deal with children with disability, the lack of educative materials suitable to the level of mental understanding and also there is the lack of infra-structure at the school. In addition she mentions the fear of sexual abuse.

Besides, a 21 years old boy with “mental deterioration” (PID17) who doesn't need assistive devices, is out-of-school since two years, after being enrolled at a special education centre partner of HI. The reason alleged by the mother is that because of his health situation he didn't reach any improvement in his level of education. He used to spend long time in the hospital from time to time. It has to be said that she acknowledges financial hardships, but they could hold up thanks to social support received - including an “adoption” of the boy with disability by a charity association. She declares that the family never thought of withdrawing any of their children from the school.

In this respect, a mother of a 9 years old daughter with sever autism (PID113) changed her daughter from a mainstream public school to a private special education. The mother says that she tried to integrate her into a regular school but she was extremely afraid of sounds and speech of the teacher and cried all the time. She used to attend school two days a week but three months ago she got enrolled in an education/ CBR centre called Lifegate which has inclusion programmes besides special education program.

Regarding gender, there is no clear manifestation of a gender bias in the main reasons openly mentioned for drop out. Nonetheless, as we will expose in the next paragraph, the main barriers have a gender di-

mension that must be taken into consideration to ensure inclusive education for both genders.

5. Barriers to inclusive and gender responsive education according to parents

When asked about the 3 main barriers to education, the answers provided are as follows, by order of frequency:

- The lack of secure and adapted to children with impaired mobility transportation to school.
- The economic difficulty or financial hardships of parents, which includes their incapacity to pay for transportation.
- The fear that the child may be beaten, pushed, attacked, insulted or targeted by jokes and/or bullying from other children.

As well, other reasons evoked by parents in interviews are:

- For girls principally, the fear that she might be sexually abused and insulted.
- The lack of adaptation of the school infrastructures and equipments for children with disability (ramps, elevators, toilets, furniture, etc.).
- The treatment given by teachers to children with disability which is not suitable and rough and their lack of patience.
- The lack of innovative methodology with games focused on the child's autonomy and development.
- The way how community sees children with disability, i.e. weak and powerless.
- The lack of awareness for parents who feel ashamed of their children with disability.

These reasons can be summarized in 5 categories:

1. Lack of adapted transportation.
2. Financial hardship of parents, which includes the incapacity to pay for transportation.
3. Peers and community harmful behaviours.
4. Lack of adaptation of education system including schools infrastructure, methodology and teachers skills.
5. Lack of awareness of parents.

Although nobody emphasized the lack of psychological support and/or empowerment of children with disability as a reason for their drop out, it was proposed by one parent among possible solutions to put in place to overcome the barriers and order to increase inclusiveness, this is by reducing impact of bullying on them.

When questioned about the gender bias of the 3 main barriers, most parents declared that except for sexual harassment and abuse, to which girls with disability are more exposed, the barriers applied equally to both genders. Nonetheless in the answers of parents who emphasized that both boys and girls face

the same barriers, several gender aspects of these barriers have been indirectly expressed. This covered gender bias or barriers to education was analyzed to better understand how gender interacts with disability to limit access to gender responsive and inclusive education.

5.1. Lack of adapted and safe transportation

A special mention must be made regarding the lack of transportation. This problem has linkages with other barriers like family's financial hardship, peers and community harmful behaviours and lack of adaptation of educational system. Nonetheless, it has been singled out as one barrier due to the importance given to it in the interviews. Most parents mentioned as one of the main problems the lack of safe and free transportation adapted to the needs of children with disability including those with mobility impairment, and the need to ensure that an adult is there to help them in and out of the bus and take care of them.

While some special education schools provide transportation with adapted buses and skilled drivers, like PACF, these services must be paid by parents on a monthly basis. Besides, public and UNRWA schools and some private special education schools do not provide this type of services. This is why this barrier is linked to the second one: the financial shortages of parents.

When school is far from house and there is no adapted transportation organized by the school, which is usually the case including for some HI partners, the alternative is to send the child to school by taxi. Through in-depth interviews with parents and with key informants, it has been observed that some taxi drivers use to be rude with children with disability. Sometimes they even do not want to give them a ride. A mother based in GS (IDIP5) mentioned that one of the taxi drivers who used to drive her daughter to MCRS was violent verbally with her daughter and took from her and other children with disability the biscuits they received from this nongovernmental special education school.

The provision of a safe and adapted transportation to and from schools outweighs the risk of being harmed, beaten or insulted by other children and the risk of being sexually harassed or abused, which is a barrier with a clear gender dimension. Although boys with disability are also in need of being transported and/or accompanied to schools, this recommendation is perceived as imperative for girls with disability due to cultural gender norms and beliefs linked to their increased exposure to sexual harassment and/or abuse, as explained under point 6.4.

In this respect, a mother from GS (PID1 8) thinks that girls with disability are more at risk because they are not known by the neighbours or the community: "we can't leave the daughter go alone to school because she can't recognize the places, also no one knows her but it is different when we speak about a boy: the people will know him and recognize his family because boys go outside more than girls. If people know the family of the girl or the boy they can't attack him or harm him, while the daughter, other children can beat her."

In order to avoid risk of sexual harassment, a mother suggests (PID17) to ensure that “the school has a good reputation at the community, that the parents, relatives or an adult accompanies the daughter in her way to school or if there is a bus which belongs to the school it will be better”. These statements show that stereotypes surrounding sexual gender based violence, i.e. that it is committed mainly by strangers in public spaces -where in reality authors are more frequently relatives or adults closed to the family-, contribute to limit girls with disability’s access to public places. For this reason, the lack of an adapted transportation and/or escort or accompaniment by an adult is a higher barrier for girls with disability than for boys.

5.2. Financial hardship of parents.

Concerning access to educational resources and services, it seems that importance attributed by parents to the schooling of their child is not discriminating against children with disability. All parents interviewed have valued equally education for children with disability. We can even detect among the testimonies collected, an enhanced awareness of the need to educate children with disability, in spite of the economic crisis and extreme poverty that some of them undergo, especially in GS.

It has to be mentioned that regarding boys and girls with disability, the need of education has been emphasized by all respondents. It is even considered as more important as one of the main expectations of parents is to ensure that they are independent and can take care of themselves.

There doesn’t seem either to be an increased impact of families’ economic shortage on girls with disability. On the contrary, it appears that financial hardship and economic crisis have made more important girls’ enrolment as they are seen as more performing at school and more in need of formal education to access job opportunities that will complete or even replace income traditionally expected to be covered by her future husband or by her father or brother(s).

Education is declared to be equally important for daughters and sons. It is even perceived by several fathers interviewed as being a higher priority for girls. The reason alleged, which is based on gender roles at play in the society, is that boys can work in any profession to earn money, even professions that do not require academic education, while girls will need intellectual and specialized skills and/or higher education to find a job and receive a salary.

A father in GS (PID12) declares that “it’s more important for girls to attend school than for boys because boys can work or do anything as they have wide opportunities, but girls they use their education to look for a job where their job opportunities are so limited”. Another father in GS (PID13) considers that education is more important for girls than for boys, declaring: “We live at a male society where boys can work in anything but girls can join just only certain professions”. As well, he explains that girls are more performing at school.

Education is considered a priority for girls also to fulfill their traditional role. A father in GS (IDIP10) says

that “he considers education is more important these days for girls because education enhance the girl’s marriage opportunity. Because if the girl finishes her university education and has a job then many men will be willing to be engaged with her because the situation is so difficult and in this case women will help their husbands and will use her income to support the family”.

5.3. Peers and community harmful behaviours, including bullying and sexual violence.

In general, both boys and girls with disability are the target of bullying, insults, mockery, aggressive attitudes and even violence (pushed, beaten, etc.) by peers. Although some parents believe that physical violence from boys without disability is mostly targeting boys with disability, their fear and anxiety is higher about girls with disability as they are more exposed to abuse, insults and mockery, as well as sexual violence and harassment.

The beliefs about the fragility of girls are also influencing. A mother in GS (PID17) says that she “believe[s] in inclusion of children with disability in the community, but of course there is fear. The children may be exposed to bullying, or may they fall down if any one pushes them and no one helps them, how the community looks at them. Threats are the same for both girls and boys with disability but girls in general are gentler than boys and maybe they can’t defend themselves like boys”.

The increased exposure and/or vulnerability to harmful practices are an explanation given by parents to justify why girls are not authorized to be alone in public areas, even to play with other children. In this respect, a father in GS (PID13) declared that “the girl with mental disability will be more exposed to violence, sexual harassment or rape more than girls without disability. In spite both girls and boys with disability may be more exposed to violence than children without disability, in our community parents are more afraid about girls than boys”.

A father in WB (PID12) acknowledged that “first of all I am afraid from the environment of school itself, from students; I am scared to expose her to sexual abuse and insult. For the disabled child the best place is at home with her/ his parents. It is true that people are religious but that does not mean that there is no harm/ abuse. It is not same for boys, boys can defend themselves and they will talk about it. Girls, if they talk about it, it will be late”. He also added that “his son with disability “plays with other boys outside; he plays outside because he is a boy, but if he was a girl, [he] would not allow her to play outside because [he is] scared that something happens to her”.

A mother in WB (PID15) shows how age interacts with gender and disability, as she presumes that girls with disability shall stop playing outside the house even before they reach the puberty: “Boys go and play outside. My disabled child does not go much because our home has stairs. - If you had a girl with disability, would you send her to play outside? - Yes, only until she becomes 9 years old. When she becomes 9 years old, I would not let her to go outside and play”.

A mother in GS (PID17) answers that “of course” she doesn’t let her 14 years old daughter with disability

and her 9 years old son with disability play outside with other children because she feels “afraid that any of them may be harmed” but for different reasons: while she says that the boy is less independent and she can’t let him home go outside alone, “the daughter is 14 years old and people may consider her as an adult and may expose her to any kind of harassment”, indirectly referring to sexual harassment or abuse. These testimonies emphasize that on one side parents feel fear and anxiety about the harmful practices that may target their daughters or their sons with disability. It also highlights that the kind of abuse, its frequency or level of probability, the vulnerability of each gender and the consequences on the child and the family is different if the child is a girl or a boy. In spite of the taboo still surrounding the issue, social impact of a rape committed on a girl has deep and extremely serious consequences on the all family due to cultural conceptions about honor, marriage and females’ virginity.

5.4. Lack of adaptation of education system including schools infrastructure, methodology and teachers skills.

When asked if the mainstream schools are accessible to children with disability, the answer is most of the time negative. Some parents acknowledge that there was an improvement in terms of accessibility in the last years, especially in WB, but that it depends on the kind of disability. Improvements were reported regarding adapted infrastructure for children with mobility difficulty, but still schools are mostly not considered prepared for children with mental disability, visual, hearing or speaking problems or behaviour disorders. Some parent nonetheless said children with slight mental “retardation” can attend public school. Quite all of them consider that children with disability will be better treated/taught at special education schools.

The gaps mentioned regard mainly the methodology, the teachers’ skills, the educative materials and the schools facilities. A father in GS (PIDI3) summarizes the situation like this: “Our schools are not rehabilitated to accept children with disability and it depends on the type of disability. The schools don’t have elevator or ramps or furniture which suits the children with disability. Also the teachers are not qualified to deal or teach children with disability. The curriculum doesn’t suit the children who have mental retardation”. A mother (PIDI9) says that “there should be teachers specialized in teaching children with disability because those children need teachers with special skills. Also our public schools lack the facilities to make the life of children with disability easier”.

Another mother in WB (PIDI13) shares the view that training of teachers “on how to accept the disabled child in the class and how to treat them to integrate the child gradually is a priority”. Besides, she points at the need of reducing the number of students in a same class, which is an obstacle for an adapted and child-focused pedagogical methodology: “The classes at school are exploding from so many students, there are from 40 to 50 students in one class and with so many problems, the teacher cannot take care of disabled student. For this reason the disabled student needs a shadow teacher”.

In regard with the infrastructures, a mother in WB (PIDI15) emphasizes that “the public schools do not provide everything, for example a child with physical disability does not have access to proper toilet and

there are stairs”. Although children with mobility difficulty are usually assigned a classroom downstairs, some schools have stairs at the entrance.

This lack of inclusion can even amount to indirect obstruction of access to public mainstream school. A mother in GS (PID15) for instance reported that she tried to send her daughter with disability to a public school but the headmaster asked her to bring a permission from the Ministry of Education, saying that they can't take the responsibility in case one of the children would push her and she would fall downstairs and that her daughter needed to go to a private school. For this reason, the mother declared that she considers that the public schools are not accessible for children with disability.

Regarding the gender dimension of the lack of adaptation of schools, some parents have explained that there are no adapted materials for girl with disability and that infrastructures are not suitable but none have provided a single concrete example of gender impact of these gaps of facilities. When talking about the lack of inclusion of public school, a mother from WB (IDIP13) declares that the “main obstacle for the girls is the material environment such as equipment. There is not any program to teach them by playing and then there is the issue of patience, there is no patience. The educator does not have any patience, they say if she manages like a normal child, it is okay but if she does not then they reject her. - Is it same for boys? - They think boys have fewer problems to integrate, it is a masculine society”.

Others have also addressed the gender aspect of bad attitudes, emphasizing that a girl with disability might be more exposed to professors or teachers' denigration or discrimination than a boy with disability due to patriarchal mentality that value more males. Besides, the feeling of increased vulnerability of girls with disability, the problem created by the need of assistance to go to the toilet or the fear of sexual harassment or abuse against them are factors at play that were mentioned by several parents when responding in general about the lack of accessibility or inclusion of mainstream schools.

A mother in WB (PID14) responded as follows: “-Do you think that public schools are accessible to children with disabilities? - No, there is the problem or lack of teachers to know how to deal with the disabled child and also there is the lack of infra-structure at the school. In addition to the fear of sexual abuse. - You have fear regarding sexual abuse, what is your suggestion to be done in order to prevent it? -The teacher should accompany them when they go to bathroom, and also they should learn to talk to parents if there is something bothering them”.

Another gap to be mentioned is the limited extension of special education or integrated education available. For instance, a mother of WB declares that in her area, there is a lack of special school after 4th grade (PID14). This makes impossible for her girl to continue learning after a certain age, except if she is inserted in mainstream school, which is a challenge due to the lack of preparedness of those establishments.

It has to be mentioned that as underlined in UNICEF Country Report on out-of-school children of State

of Palestine (2018), there are options for integrated education of children with moderate cognitive problems in public schools but only in those equipped with resource rooms –less than one out of ten- and only till the 4th grade, being therefore accessible mainstream education after 4th grade only for children with sensorial difficulty and those with moderate mobility constraints : “I want her to keep on learning, here we have special school until 4th grade and after that she has to stay at home, but I want her to keep on learning” (PID114).

5.5. Lack of awareness / empowerment of parents.

It must be said that all parents showed an enhanced awareness of the importance of education for both boys and girls with disability. None of them mentioned the possibility of marrying a girl under the age of 18. Most of them, especially mothers, are deploying huge efforts to give them a proper education, develop their skills and protect them from harmful situations. Several of them even declared that they give priority and have a special protection instinct towards their child with disability. A mother in WB (PID113) of a 9 years old girl with severe autism enrolled at a private special education centre (Lifegate) clarifies that she has to work in two jobs in order to provide her treatment.

None directly acknowledged that he/she felt ashamed of his/her child with disability but one father mentioned as a barrier to education the parents’ shame of their child with disability and the way how the community sees children with disability. He also highlighted the gender component of it. This man based in GS (PID13) said that “the above mentioned obstacles are the same obstacles that prevent the school enrolment of boys with disability, with one difference that parents feel less ashamed when they have boys with disability than girls. This is because we live at a males’ society that gives boys all the advantages”.

It must be noticed that a lot of work is still to do to eradicate stigmatizing beliefs, attitudes and practices towards children with disability, and towards their family, especially towards their mothers and sisters. A mother from WB (PID113) testifies: “One of them say, that this is a punishment by God, that my daughter did something bad. Some others have mercy of my daughter. They support you and feel sorry for you but from outside. Some of them are afraid that my child will socialize with their children, they think there is contamination. Ignorance is the main problem. Even my family said that is my fault and something went wrong during my pregnancy”.

As addressed by key informants in semi-structured interviews, there is a popular belief that disability is genetics and that it is inherited by daughters from their mothers. This belief has an impact on the girls with disability and on her sisters without disability, with the result of reducing their marriage opportunities. This reason may also lie behind the fact that girls with disability are hidden from the community and kept inside the house. Although this phenomenon has not been addressed by parents in in-depth interviews, it was underscored by several key informants in the semi-structured interviews (see below). Although increased awareness and inclusive attitudes are reported among the community, still there is a need to transform wrong beliefs mostly at play at the intersection of disability and gender that cast

stigma on women and girls with disability, their mothers and their female relatives. The promotion of models of empowered women or girls with disability would contribute to transform stereotypes and indirectly feed inclusive education of both genders .

5.6. Gender Roles, Responsibility and Time Use

As it has been highlighted above, education is considered equally important for boys and for girls by parents interviewed. Even certain parents, principally fathers, declare it is more important to give education to the girls. It must be said that this priority shall not necessarily be interpreted as a sign of thorough defence of gender equality, as the same parents are deeply in favour of traditional unequal gender roles and norms.

On one hand, parents consider that males will more easily find a job without the need of secondary or higher education. While it males' dedication in non skilled professions in markets, restaurants, factories and other public places is widely admitted, girls are considered in need of getting special skills to be candidates for jobs which are socially acceptable for females and which they can easily conciliate with their social roles as mothers.

Regarding their performance at school, most parents interviewed consider that girls, including girls with disability are more successful in education than boys and link this statement to the fact that, while boys spend much more time playing outside, girls stay at home and spend more hours studying and doing their homework. These gender assigned capacities are therefore linked to social norms about what is an "acceptable" behaviour for females - to stay sitting at home - and for males – to play outside with peers. The gender division of public and private spheres is more strictly enforced on children with disability. It is considered totally unsuitable for girls with disability to play in the street with other children, as mentioned above. Most daughters with disability stay at home and when enrolled at school, they do not have any other extra-school activity like sport, artistic, music, etc. If we consider that the lack of socializing activities has a negative impact on the development of the child, gender norms imposed on girls constitutes impairment to the progress of their skills, their personal development and their happiness.

A second aspect onto which attention must be driven is that parents consider very important to teach girls on domestic activities like cooking, sewing, cleaning and taking care of children and this duty is even viewed as more important for girls with disability. A father in GS (PID15) declares that "for his daughter it's difficult to learn sewing or cooking because of her disability, but these skills are very important for girls when they get married. The girl when she will go to her husband's house, she should know these skills." As well, all parents have admitted that girls help more their mother at home than the boys, and this role is more systematically enforced on daughters with disability. A mother in GS says that her daughter with disability helps her more than her sister without disability because she wants to teach her everything. She focuses more on the daughter with disability and asks her to do more in the house in order to ensure she will get all the requested skills. This is a way to increase her opportunity of marriage, which people often consider very limited.

It must be said that a limited number of parents also consider that boys with disability should also learn how to do these tasks, not to increase their opportunities to get married but to get a job with job opportunities, or to their capacity to gain autonomy and live by themselves. An illustrating example of this range of opinions comes from a grandmother in GS (PID17) who declares that “yes it is very important for girls with disability to learn cooking and sewing because she can help herself and this is the same for boys with disability because cooking may end being his profession when he will grow up”. According to a mother also based in GS (PID18) “for the girls with disability it is good to learn cooking and sewing if they have the ability and this is the same for the boy with disability to be more independent and to learn how to do a sandwich for himself at least. In general the children should like and choose the skills they want to learn”.

As it becomes evident through testimonies, this is not aimed at transforming gender roles which are very scarcely challenged. One case was detected among the 15 in-depth interviews, but it staid anecdotic and was restrained by the school which reinforces gender roles. The alluded mother, living in WB (PID13), acknowledged that although her husband is sharing domestic tasks at home, her son refuses to do the same when conveyed to do so: “My husband is very helpful in cleaning and washing dishes because his mother raised him like that but my boy does not accept to do it. He thinks in that way he will preserve his identity, this is not from home; he got it from school and the neighbourhood”.

Some mothers are completely against the assumption of reproductive tasks by boys. This is the case of a mother in WB who answers to the interviewer as follows: “A girl with disability should learn how to cook. - What about the boy with disability? - Boys should learn other things. - Such as? - Learning about computers and fixing things at home. - Why they do not learn or do the same activities? - Because cooking and cleaning is not the work of a boy and girls should do that but boys are better with computers. - Why this division of work? - This is what the society wants.”

It must also be said that among parents, gender norms are also clearly imposing on mothers’ shoulders the responsibility of children’s education, including the increased burden of care of children with disability. Mostly fathers are only involved in hygienic care tasks (toilet, bath) with their sons with disability when they reach puberty. In some cases they have been reported to be requested to calm down the child when he/she becomes aggressive, for instance with some children with autism. But the bulk of the non remunerated care work to raise children with disability is assigned to mothers. This burden has been aggravated during COVID-19 due to the closure of schools and the by-distance learning activities that replaced classes, which was also attributed to mothers.

5.7. Access to education during COVID-19

Asked about the gender impact of alternative by-distance learning activities launched by schools, parents acknowledged that mothers mainly faced this difficulty, due to their gender based assignation of children’s education. The difficulty stemmed from the time to be consumed, the difficulty to uphold this

The famous case of the US-Palestinian comedian and activist with cerebral palsy Maysoon Zayid is an example how role models can empower girls with disability and transform the perception of community towards girls with disability.

didactic activity without the needed skills and knowledge, and the lack or scarcity of support resources required and the communication methods used.

All parents agreed that by distance learning was less accessible to children with disability due to the difficulty they have to use computers, be autonomous and stay for a long time sitting in front of a screen and doing exercises at home. It is clearly an obstacle for children with visual difficulty. A father in GS (PID14) declares that “children with disability had been affected more than the children without disability because they can’t depend upon themselves to use the technology and internet, also they can’t spend long time doing their activities and sometimes they refuse and the parents can’t force them”.

In his testimony, this parent shows how schools contribute to reinforce gender roles while assigning education support to mothers: “PACF contacted her mother and sent activities for our daughter but the girl was not interested to deal with these activities”. Although this is a logical way of dealing with the parent who is in charge of the education of the child and who is usually the contact person for the school staff, it might reinforce gender roles described above.

The lack of interest or the difficulty faced by children with disability for alternative remote education during COVID-19 is also mentioned by another father (PID13) who recognizes that “only one girl receives educational material from the school, but the educational materials are not suitable for her because of her weak capabilities especially in English and mathematics”.

The lack of computers or tablets, and the bad connection have contributed to restricted access to educational materials and exercises when existing. A mother in GS (PID19) states that “the online learning is not successful in our country and the skills of mothers are not the same like the teachers, for this reason the COVID 19 which

imposed this situation has led us to this result”. This has driven to mothers to distribute electronic devices and internet connection according to timeline of courses and sometimes even to prioritize some children according to their children’s needs.

A mother says that “the children received educational material from their school but she gave the priority for her daughter who is in the high school to use the tablet because the internet is so weak and she used her mobile to teach other children online. The online education is difficult and the children don’t understand very well their lessons and they need their mothers all the time to teach them. Also the communication way between the teachers and parents through whatsapp is not comfortable because the number of participants in each group is high and always there are many messages and when you have more children your life will be more complicated because you can’t follow everything on the whatsapp groups for all your children”.

A majority of parents agree that on-line teaching during COVID-19 had a worse impact on boys because they spend less time at home; they are less studious and face more difficulty to focus on homework. A

mother (PID17) says that “COVID 19 has a worse impact on the boys more than girls because girls used to stay at home and she is more committed with the classes but they need the support from the family to do their duties”.

Another example of mother (PID19) who shares this view declares the following: “Yes, COVID 19 impact the education of my children and the boys more because boys spend more time outside and they are careless and they don’t want to study, but girls spend the majority of their time at home so they follow their lessons. At the other side online teaching added a new burden on me besides the activities I already do and it is useless in our case”.

Very few parents have admitted that boys might have an enlarged access to computers compared to girls but none confirmed this situation in his/her family. For instance, a father (PID17), when asked if daughters access the computers the same time as sons, replied: “I think there is no difference and the majority of people have more than one mobile and computer in the house but in general in our society people give preference to boys more than girls”.

6. Barriers to inclusive and gender responsive education according to key informants from Education and Protection Clusters, educational/CBR staff and community members

6.1. Gender and disability based barriers in the Palestinian Education system

PCBS reported that, in 2017, 255,228 persons in West Bank and Gaza suffered from at least one difficulty in seeing or hearing or mobility or remembering and concentration, or communication. The rate of persons with disability is higher among males than females: 6,3% compared to 4,6% . According to the same source, 20% of persons with disabilities in West Bank and Gaza are children under the age of 18. The percentage of male children was higher than females reaching 21% and 18% respectively.

Since then, due in part to the casualties provoked by Israeli attacks, especially in GS in 2018-2019 during the great Return March, it is likely that the number of persons with disability, including children with disability, have increased with a deeper impact on males who represented the bulk of demonstrators injured by Israeli military.

Regarding enrolment rate, figures are evolving quickly. More than 27% of children between 6 and 17 years with difficulties were not enrolled in education. The same source gave other figures in December 2019, showing an impressive increase of the rate of children with disability out-of-school: 46% in total. The situation is worse in WB where 51% of children with disability do not attend school compared to 43% in GS . Regarding the gender gap in children with disability who are not enrolled in school, some inconsistencies between data and sources have also emerged. According to the mentioned 2018 PCBS report, the balance of enrolment in 2017 was in favour of girls with disability as 23,8% of girls with disability were out-of-school compared to 29,9% of males in this situation. The rate of boys with disability deprived of education was higher both in GS and WB as illustrated in the table below.

Percentage of Children with Difficulties (6-17 Years) who were not Enrolled in Education by Region and Sex in 2007, 2017

Sex	2007			2017		
	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Palestine	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Palestine
Males	23.7	27.3	25.1	35.8	25.6	29.9
Females	20.5	25.9	22.6	27.5	21.1	23.8
Both Sexes	22.3	26.7	24.0	32.4	23.8	27.4

Source: PCBS report on Disability, Press EN (2018), p.2.

Another reality is reflected by UNICEF Country Report on out-of-school children (2018). While the overall gender gap in out-of-school children in West Bank and Gaza provided in this study is in favour of girls in general over boys in general, the same indicator for the category of children with disability shows that girls with disability are more deprived of education than boys with disability. The rate of 10-15 years girls with disability who are out-of-school reaches 36,6% compared to 26,3% boys with disability not enrolled. The authors explained that “the gender difference arises mostly as a result of higher rates of girls with disabilities never attending school (28.5 per cent), compared to boys with disabilities (18.3 per cent)”. It is presumed that in this report, UNICEF has used the Census of Persons with disability conducted by PCBS in 2011. The difference between these figures of 2018 PCBS report and 2018 UNICEF Country report may be explained by the different sources and methods used to compile data. It is indeed difficult to understand how gender trends could have evolved so quickly over years.

The Education Cluster members have acknowledged in general the need to collect more detailed data on gender and disability in education in order to better understand how gender and disability interplay to limit the enjoyment of equal right to education. A resource person has also alerted that the Ministry of Social Development has highlighted that many children with disability are out of the system. Stats have shown that in 2016, in the age group 6-17 years, 13,000 students with disability were not captured because they were not registered and therefore not entitled to public schools. For this reason, these un-screened children are out of the scrutiny of public administration and may be deprived of other services.

The size of the survey included in this gender study cannot pretend to be demographically representative as explained in the methodological chapter of this report. On the other side, the PCBS “Disabled Individual Survey 2011” published in English and available on PCBS website doesn’t provide gender breakdown data on children with disability out of-school. There is a clear need to produce nation-wide survey on this issue. Failing this, PCBS shall gender breakdown all data available on its website and in the reports,

http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_3-12-2018-disability-en.pdf

<http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/512/default.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=3607>

studies and press notes it publishes on disability, children's rights and education. As well, there is a lack of systematic gender breakdown data on persons with disability in the literature, including in reports published by international agencies like Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO).

The uncertainty about the gender gap in enrolment of children with disability was also perceived during the semi-structured interviews with key resource persons. While some considered that there were more girls with disability out-of-school, due to cultural reasons that will be explained below, others nuanced this reality with the phenomenon of Boys with disability dropping out to work and support their family. The gender breakdown enrolment data provided by the special education schools interviewed in GS did not show a clear trend of higher rate of out-of-school girls, except for MCRS, which has 30 girls compared to 47 boys enrolled. ERS provides educational services to 61 boys and 59 girls and PACF had 73 students of each gender. It must be said that this last partner conducted a study in 2020 about their children who had dropped out recently and found that among the 19 who stopped attending, 13 were Boys with disability and 6 were girls with disability.

Although it is difficult to make reliable conclusions from the quantitative data and rates of enrolment mentioned, there seems to be a gender gap in enrolment that goes in detriment of girls with disability. Most educational staff, including the teacher at UNRWA school agreed that parents give priority to boys over girls with disability, especially starting from 6th grade.

This assessment contradicts apparently the declared priority of several interviewed parents, especially fathers, regarding education of girls with disability. It must be said that parents contacted for this gender study have been reached out through HI partners, which means that they are among those families already screened and sensitized by these structures. Among the 15 families who took part in in-depth interviews, one parent, a father employed at a Ministry, acknowledged that a daughter of him aged 14 had never been enrolled in school till a few months ago, alleging financial reasons.

It is of high interest to understand the reasons behind the high rate of out-of-school children of both genders, which implies to capture all factors at play, including those

that end up marginalizing girls with disability because they are girls who have one or several difficulties. Part of these reasons respond to extreme poverty and the severe situation created by Israeli long-lasting occupation, blockade and war on West Bank and Gaza; part are institutional gaps under the responsibility of the MoEHE and other stakeholders; and part are of cultural nature and lie mainly under traditional community beliefs and attitudes.

These three kinds of reasons are intertwined, and complex linkages are at play. For instance, cultural beliefs, attitudes and practices are fed with the hard conditions imposed on Palestinian people by the occupying power, especially in the Gaza Strip. They can be modified through prevention and awareness policies and programs lead by institutions. As well, the economic collapse provoked by the occupation is undermining the capacity of the PA to upgrade and adapt public schools in line with its strategies. The

UNICEF Country Report on out-of-school children of State of Palestine (2018), p.41.

political division between the two territories also puts an obstacle to a common integrate program that would ensure that teachers are duly trained, properly and timely paid and sufficiently motivated and skilled to deal with children with disability. Hereunder are systematized the barriers identified during semi-structured interviews with key informants.

6.2. Political and economical barriers: Israeli occupation and poverty

Key resource persons who kindly took part in this study share the vision, especially in GS, that the poverty and extreme poverty of families is the main barrier to education. Unemployment, lack of revenues and increase of prices are direct consequences of Israeli occupation. The situation is even more acute in the GS where three wars, continued blockade and restrictions to movements of goods and people, as well as shortage of basic needs including water and electricity have destroyed the economy and provoked rampant rate of unemployment. The Humanitarian Needs Overview Report (HNO) 2020 highlights that while 53% of the population in GS and 14% in WB lived under the line of poverty, 17% of Palestinians are in extreme poverty: 34% in GS and 6% in WB.

Poverty affects the capacity of parents to afford fees for transportation and educative materials of children of primary and secondary schools, as well as fees to enrol at University. For all key resources persons, the main reason for drop out is the economic shortage of families. This has a gender and disability impact: if a family has a large number of children and cannot afford the cost of these fees, they will prioritize those children who have more possibilities to take benefit of studying. Children without disability are seen as having more opportunities to get a job and earn money, while they will also progress better than children with disability especially those with cognitive or sensorial difficulties.

As well, in spite of the opinions of the aforementioned fathers interviewed, all resource persons interviewed have agreed that parents usually give the priority to males because the breadwinner role in Palestinian society is attributed to them. This places girls with disability at the intersection of two factors making them more vulnerable of dropping out or not attending school for socioeconomic reasons. ERS declared that if a family who has several children with disability enrolled undergoes critical economic situation, they will prefer that the boys will continue studying.

Besides, members of the Education and Protection clusters have highlighted other reasons linked to Israeli occupation not mentioned by parents in in-depth interviews. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, access to education is heavily compromised by continuous education-related violations, student arrest and detention, protection concerns for students on their way to schools and school demolitions orders, affecting in WB, 38,000 children (18,000 females and 20,000 males) and teachers, of whom around 2,000 are children with disability.

In 2020, there were 198 education related incidents in WB, affecting 17,644 children. Between 90 and 200 schools were affected, with negative impact in coping mechanisms. The situation is especially complicat-

ed in East Jerusalem and area C in WB, due to demolition orders, lack of permits and checkpoints. This not to say about the Israeli settlers' attacks on children on their way to school. A violence that represents a higher threat for children with disability.

It must be added that inside the WB, the situation is not homogeneous. Regarding children in general, a member of the education cluster mentioned that "although the enrolment of girls is higher than that of boys, in rural areas there are more dropouts of girls due to the fear of parents that they will have to go through check points and this affects more girls with disability".

In GS, the restricted areas closed to the borders are more castigated. As explained by a resource person, "people who live there are mostly poor families and they usually fear about their child, especially those with disability, and among them, girls with disability even more". It must be said that although they are not at play for most of the families of children with disability, these barriers can amount to be the main obstacle to education for those living in these very conflictive areas.

All these barriers imposed by the Israeli occupying power have a deeper impact on children with disability, due to the vulnerability that parents attribute to them and the feeling of increased protection duty they nourish for these children, especially for girls with disability.

6.3. Cultural barriers: Community beliefs, norms and stereotypes on gender and disability

It has been acknowledged by all informants that much work has been done to raise awareness and change attitudes and mentality regarding persons with disability in West Bank and Gaza. Nonetheless, there is still much to do to eradicate stereotypes and stigma on children with disability, especially girls with disability. Traditions still controls the mind and behaviours of people. One resource person even made allusion to the risk of sterilization of girls with disability based on the belief that she will give birth to children with disability.

These opinions about persons with disability have an impact on how the community values the enrolment of children with disability. A resource person in GS mentioned that "in some areas, people still have an old irrespective behaviour towards children with disability. They do not believe that they should attend school and some people still consider that children with disability shall be treated in a special education school and not be integrated in mainstream schools".

Still, part of the community feels it is useless to educate a child with disability, as he/she will not be able to work and earn a salary. In WB, CBR staff explains: "there is the family's perception towards their child that he is not going to progress at school, so why should we spend on him/her and pay for the transportation". There is also a largely shared perception that children with disability are weak, powerless and vulnerable and that they will be the target of attacks, insults and bullying. These two perceptions affect more girls than boys, who are seen as more capable of defending themselves.

Besides cultural barriers based on disability that have a worsened effect on them, girls with disability also face cultural barriers based on gender that apply more on them than on girls without disability. The reasons behind the dropout of girls in general, like early marriage, the preference of keeping her at home with the mother to support in household tasks and learn skills considered necessary and the fear of exposing her to sexual harassment or sexual abuse have actually an aggravated effect on girls with disability. This last fear also limits girls with disability's access to CBR, as highlighted by a CBR worker in WB: "Some families do not send their daughter even to the CBR programs because they are afraid that they will be sexually abused".

Besides, traditional gender roles are also at play in discriminating girls from schooling. Depending on the culture of the family, they will think that it is better to give the opportunity to the boy as he will be the breadwinner and must therefore be more

skilled to get a job. As well, the main reason for boys' drop-out – which is the remunerated work- doesn't have the same impact on boys with disability like among boys without disability, as they are viewed as having less possibility to find a job and support their family. This may explain how gender intersects with disability turning upside down the gender ratio of enrolment among children with disability compared to this ratio among children without disability.

On the contrary, a conservative value largely admitted in the community is that the girl destiny is to get married and that she won't have the same need of a professional career. Especially in the GS and in rural areas, early marriage is still frequent and perceived as a solution for the incapacity of parents of large families to rear, feed and educate all their children. In WB, CBR staff has mentioned child marriage as barrier for girls: "in rural areas and in Bedouin community, when the girl finishes the grade five and six at school, the family begins to think that she should get married." This is even a higher priority for girls with disability as far as the community considers difficult to marry a female with disability.

More seriously, these views about acceptability and irreversibility of dropouts triggered by early marriage are also shared by educational staff as denounced by UNICEF in the mentioned report on out-of-school children: "Some counsellors, as well as principals and teachers, view girls leaving basic education for early marriage and children from nomadic households leaving education as acceptable and unchangeable". Additionally, girls with disability may be kept at home, hidden from the community, to avoid stigmatization of her and her sisters wrongly seen as potential future mothers of children with disability, reducing in this way their marriage opportunities. As some resource person explained: "Sometimes their family refuses to send them for services [including school] because they do not want people to know. Sometimes, the girl has other sisters and parents want them to get married". This barrier stems from a specific cultural belief that applies only and exclusively to girls with disability, being a clear example of intersectional discrimination.

All in all, many parents are still in need of awareness, empowerment and psychosocial support, especial-

According to MICS 2019, about 13% of women aged 20-24 years got married for the first time before reaching the age of 18 years; about 11% in the West Bank compared to about 17% in the Gaza Strip. See: <https://palestine.unfpa.org/en/news/palestinian-multiple-indicators-cluster-survey-pmics-2019-2020-announced>

ly mothers who are those who carry most of the burden. As CBR workers have explained: “We use to tell the families about the achievements of their boys at CBR and they look at us questioning: what he will be in the end, he will get nowhere.” In this sense campaigns with successful models of persons with disability who have a career, especially women or girls with disability, shall be launched to change the mentality.

Another issue that shall be mentioned is the impact of GBV at home and domestic violence on children as one of the main reasons for drop-out. This is why it is considered very relevant to put in place case management interventions with the all family and with different actors involved in protection of children and women victims of GBV when a potential case is detected.

6.4. Institutional barriers: Educational policies, infrastructures, capacities, equipments and mechanisms

Resource persons have ratified the fact that on the level of policies, the Palestinian Authority has made many efforts to enshrine inclusive education for children with disabilities within its policies and strategies on education. The Education Strategy 2019-2022 deals with adaptation of educational system to the needs of children with disability. Generally speaking, at the level of protection and education policies, there is a common perception that everything is good. The problems arise at the level of implementation of these policies.

The resource persons underscore problems of the general education system in West Bank and Gaza: lack of quality, lack of follow up especially with children who drop out, lack of schools, classrooms and professors, which leads to groups of 50 in one class, lack of resources, old didactic methods, problem of motivation of teachers who do not receive their salary during months for instance in GS, and violent attitudes towards children in spite of being forbidden by law.

Although these problems affect all children, for children with disability it may result in a barrier to education, as the lack of availability or negative attitude of teachers and counsellors towards them may end up with the dropout of the child. As a resource person declares: “With 40 children, how will the teacher deal with a child with disability?” This situation also leads to school headmasters or teachers refusing children with disability and referring parents to special education schools.

The overall system available to children with disability is still deficient. Made of private pre-school centres, public, UNRWA and private primary and secondary schools, private special education schools and CBR programs, it presents loopholes for children with moderate, severe and multiple disabilities, especially those with cognitive difficulty. As mentioned previously it is impossible for those who are integrated in mainstream public schools equipped with resources room (1 out of ten) to continue learning after 4th grade.

UNICEF balance is clear: “Efforts for inclusive or integrated education are yet to include children with severe cognitive disabilities whose only option for education remains the handful of special education

centres run by nongovernmental organizations. Specialized education providers for children with severe cognitive disabilities, severe mobility constraints, and multiple disabilities are few in number,

making them inaccessible to most children who need them. It is unlikely that these children would be able to benefit from inclusive education in the short-term”.

At the level of infrastructures and equipments, since five years, efforts have been deployed to reform mainstream schools to eliminate some of the barriers in the new buildings. But the current landscape is that schools still lack ramps, elevators, accessible toilets, etc. While special education schools are mostly adapted to the needs of children with disability both at the level of infrastructures and equipments, mainstream schools generally lack completely these reforms and equipments.

As described by a teacher at a higher school of UNRWA in Gaza, although the headmaster usually assigns classrooms on the ground floor for children with mobility or visual disability, access may be difficult for those children due to the bad surroundings of the school, especially in refugee camps. Regarding devices, this teacher has explained how at the beginning of the year the UNRWA school where she works screens children with disability and brings them to UNRWA clinic to assess their needs and provide hearing assistive devices or glasses. Unfortunately, for those children with mobility impairments, they do not provide wheelchairs neither crutches.

As well, the school gives support to print enlarged letters for students with seeing difficulty. According to key resource persons, among private mainstream schools, very few have made some adaptations to be more inclusive. Special education schools have mostly being adapted to the needs of children with disability both at the level of infrastructures and equipments.

If mainstream schools lack equipments and materials, the biggest gap regards the level of knowledge, i.e teachers skills development. It has been mentioned that every teacher receives an initial practical training which includes a unit on how to deal with children with disability in the classroom and that disability is displayed over the curricula. But this is not sufficient and continued capacity building shall be ensured as some teachers finished this training many years ago and new methods of inclusive learning have been developed in recent years. Some organizations are training teachers to be skilled and prepared to take care of children with disability and integrate them in the class. These efforts shall be encouraged.

CBR workers have reported that public schools have been equipped with educational materials for blind and deaf students, but teachers do not know sign language or Braille to communicate with them and fully use these materials. Their testimony is an evidence of the gap in integrated education in public system: “There is no skilled teacher who knows how to deal with persons with disability. There are no proper schools for them or proper curriculum and educational materials”.

Besides the need of technologic equipments to ensure inclusive education (programs, special computers,

tablets, etc.) and the basic training of all educational staff, the MoEHE shall increase the number of special education teachers and equip resources rooms over the all education public system.

Regarding gender, more efforts shall be put in place. The contents, training and methods shall be reviewed to mainstream gender equality, transform gender roles and eliminate gender inequality. At the level of curricula, members of the education cluster in WB have mentioned that during the preparation of the new curriculum, there was a review of the document by CSOs and most of recommendations were on gender and disability. As well, on the past 6 years, a Gender unit has developed in the MoEHE. This unit has worked on a policy on how to deal with GBV. Qader has also worked on GBV towards disability and produced a guide (“Teachers guide on how to adjust attitudes of teachers on disability”) that could be used to train professors and teachers, or at least displayed among all schools staff.

As highlighted by a resource person from the protection cluster in WB, “to be fair, there have been attempts to improve, but a lot of work must be done. Inside schools, women’s organizations have made some works but some families have complained. Still, how gender is addressed in education is contrary to PA commitments and international standards. There is a need to develop teachers’ capacities to deal with these issues. All of that is problematic, the education system is not responding. There is a study lead by the Ministry of women’s affairs, in which the Women study centre is engaged, that aims at assessing the review of curricula and contents”.

These testimonies show that efforts have been made at the policy level, but they still need to be translated into practice and reach all the system. In this respect, to build on these efforts, all teachers and counsellors should be trained both on disability inclusiveness and on gender equality to ensure full implementation of curricula upgrading.

Contents of educative materials shall be also upgraded and reedited according to gender and disability reviews (aligned with the work made by Qader and Women’s Study centre and Ministry of Women affairs) to ensure that females and males are equally represented in productive and reproductive roles and that women and girls are portrayed in leading positions, challenging both “glass walls and ceilings” and contributing to modifying gender roles.

As well, persons with disability shall be represented and portrayed in a respectful way which is aimed at promoting their full participation in society. Women or girls with disability shall be empowered through educative materials and didactic activities. As well, methods centred on individualized development, creativity and empowerment of every child shall be promoted and adopted with the participation of experts and civil society organizations, including HI.

At the level of services to be provided by the schools, there is a need of providing buses equipped with ramps to ensure transportation of children with disability from home to school. Besides skilled and sen-

sitized drivers, a CBR worker or a female teacher shall accompany the children to ensure acceptance of parents who do not accept that males touch their daughter. Free transportation shall be provided to children with disability from families with economic shortages when individual family assessment shows that she/he is at risk of dropping-out.

Finally, at the level of safety and protection of children against violence including GBV and sexual violence, parent's fear that both boys and girls will be victims of violence and bullying is a barrier at play that must be addressed in a clear, transparent and effective way. Protocols against harassment, violence, bullying and gender based violence including sexual violence shall be adopted, disseminated and enforced in public and private schools to outweigh this barrier to education for children with disability that impacts especially on girls with disability.

Cases of impunity of teachers who have sexually abused children might spread the feeling that children who attend school are at risk and that educational institutions are not a safe place for children perceived as vulnerable. While some organizations have developed tools to protect children and women against sexual abuse (for instance SAWA in WB has developed an app), other have worked with children who did not want to go to school due to sexual harassment (AISHA in GS). The role of NGOs to advocate the MoEHE to adopt protocols to effectively protect against and sanction sexual abuse and harassment in the education system, when committed by staff or students, shall be encouraged.

6.5. COVID-19: a new barrier at play

The schools closure and restrictions to social meetings have had a deep impact on schooling of all children with particular emphasis on children with disability. Special education schools made great efforts to ensure the continuity of education by distance, using on-line support and developing YouTube videos and internet teaching materials. HI partners have welcomed the adaptation of by-distance learning materials prepared by HI and presented in a webinar and used during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The main barrier faced by these efforts is that many parents do not have computers, internet or a stable connection. Some educational staff has reported that parents sometimes even do not have phone, which forced them to meet the children to provide a minimum follow-up. At ERS, although they had recorded lessons and prepared videos on Youtube for Arabic, English mathematics, science and sign language, only 43 children with disability out of 120 students enrolled had internet connection and could access to these contents.

Besides, it is more difficult for children with disability to learn without a teacher and stay sitting in front of the computer or watch didactic contents on a phone screen, especially if they have visual difficulty ... Also, mothers often do not have enough skills and are not able to help their children, for instance for English or mathematics classes. This gap will most probably have an impact in terms of drop out. In this respect, HI partners have informed that after confinement and state of emergency ended, many parents stopped sending their children to special education schools. This will put an extra burden on all the sys-

tem to address this problem and convince families to re-enrol their child.

Although girls with disability may be the most affected by the closure of schools due to the gap in access to computer or tablet, no gender gap was clearly detected by key informants, except regarding parents. Educational and CBR staff has underscored the increased burden placed on mothers of children with disability to help them to follow remote exercises and teaching activities. None has nonetheless reported about efforts deployed to encourage fathers to take this responsibility.

CONCLUSIONS

Barriers to education and reasons for drop-out

1. The main barrier faced by children with disability to attend schools most frequently invoked by surveyed parents are by order of importance: 1) the parents' fear that the child with disability will be the target of bullying or jokes by other children (25,26% for girls and 23,44% for boys); 2) their fear that their daughter with disability will be sexually abused (21,05%), a barrier that comes only in fifth position for sons (11,46%); 3) the lack of public transportation to and from school (15,79% for girls with disability and 18,23% regarding boys with disability); 4) the lack of special education schools (13,16% for girls and 17,19% for boys); 5) the lack of adaptation of mainstream education system (13,16% for girls and 13,02% for boys); 6) the need of the child's financial support of the family through paid work (7,81% for boys and 2,11% for girls); and 7) the feeling that he/she doesn't progress (4,74% for girls and 4,17% for boys).

This shows that after the fear of their child being bullied or harassed by other children or being or sexually abused, and except the need of economical income through the child's work, most reasons invoked are institutional and could be solved through increased adaptation of the educational system to children with disability, including through free and adapted transportation.

Besides, all reasons had a similar weight for boys and girls and followed the same order of importance, except for two of them: 1) the fear that the child will be sexually abused which is the second main barrier to education for girls with disability, mentioned by one out of five parents, and the sixth barrier for boys, selected by one out of ten parents; 2) the need of income from the child's work comes in 6th position for boys with disability compared to 7th position for girls.

2. When it comes to the reasons invoked by parents of out-of-school children with and without disability, the institutional/policy related factors come at first, before the cultural motives. The three first main reasons for drop-out are actually: 1) education is useless as he/she doesn't progress, 2) mainstream school is not prepared to host children like him/her or 3) there is no special education school.

After come the financial reasons either because 4) they cannot afford the cost of education or 5) they need their child to work to support the family. This kind of reasons was most often selected in Gaza (75% of all families who invoked financial reasons). Less frequently, cultural reasons linked to social relations

are also mentioned as main reasons that lead to the drop-out: 6) regarding boys who had problems with other children, 7) girls with disability who were targeted of mockery and 8) a girl without disability who had a problem with the teacher.

While the need of the child's work is only mentioned regarding boys without disability, the lack of special education school is only mentioned for girls with disability. As well, problems with other children were mentioned by parents of out-of-school boys with and without disability but mockery and insults by other children were only selected by parents of out-of-school girls with disability, showing parents' gendered interpretation of social rejection by peers.

The high rate of children with disability out of school is mainly linked to the lack of adaptation and inclusiveness of the education system, followed by financial hardships that families go through in the current crisis, especially in Gaza, and finally the lack of skills of educational staff or lack of effectiveness of education to ensure the progress of children and their insertion and acceptance by other children.

3. In in-depth interviews with parents of children out-of-school, the main reasons for the child's drop-out or never attending school mentioned were, firstly, the financial hardship that made impossible paying fees to enroll their child in private special school and/or affording the cost of transportation to school. In second position comes the level of intellectual disability of the child or his/her lack of attainment / progress, which in reality may be interpreted as a result of the lack of adaptation of the education system. Regarding the first of these reasons, it must be considered that most families interviewed are undergoing economic hardship. Poverty and extreme poverty situations of parents of children with disability have been observed, especially in GS. The lack of opportunity to continue studying after 4th grade in the very few mainstream schools equipped with resource rooms is also a reason for drop-out of children with disability.

4. Key informants have confirmed that the lack of financial resources to pay for transportation, the lack of adaptation of most mainstream schools including the need of development of teachers' skills, equipment and infrastructures to accommodate to children with disability, and the fees to enroll in private special education schools, constitute children with disability's main barriers to education.

They also mentioned reasons for drop-out that were not declared by parents: political obstacles on one side, like the practices of Israeli army and settlers and the political division between Gaza and West Bank, and cultural barriers on the other side. Among the last ones, parents have enunciated the belief still widely shared in the community that education of children with disability's is useless; the stigma and shame surrounding disability that lead parents to hide them from the community, especially girls due to the stereotype that disability is hereditary; and the priority given to children without disability and to boys over girls due to the traditional breadwinner role assigned to males.

5. All in all, barriers to education stem from the severe situation created by Israeli long-lasting occupation, blockade and war on West Bank and Gaza and the economic difficulties that Palestinian families

are experimenting; part are institutional gaps under the responsibility of the MoEHE and other stakeholders; and part are of cultural nature and lie mainly under traditional community beliefs and attitudes. The following paragraphs will detail more in depth the institutional and cultural barriers. The financial barriers represented by the cost of transportation and the fees for special education can be considered as pertaining to the duty of the Education system to be accessible to all children, gender responsive and inclusive. They are therefore addressed in this set of barriers.

As far as it has been mentioned as one of the main obstacles to education, gender based and sexual violence will be addressed as a separate barrier, although it must be considered as a cultural phenomenon and it might be eliminated or countered through institutional and policy measures. As well, due to its circumstantial nature, COVID-19 context is also addressed separately in spite of being a mix of financial and institutional barrier.

Barriers stemming from policies, regulations and institutional practices of the Education system

6. There is a need of collection and dissemination of detailed data on gender, disability and age in education. This may be done through a gender sensitive nation-wide survey on disability and education or, failing that, through systematic gender, disability and age breakdown of children's enrolment and drop-out data in all governorates.

7. The education system is not perceived as inclusive and gender responsive or transformative by parents. 90 % of surveyed parents have the perception that children with disability do not have full access to public schools. Only 50% know that Palestinian authorities have an increased obligation towards girls and children with disability, showing the continued need to raise awareness of community. Regarding gender, 28,1% parents considers that gender equality is not being enough promoted by MoEHE. Gender equality promotion is perceived as a major gap to be filled in teachers' skills for 37,5%, in similar proportions as their competences in inclusive teaching (35,9%).

8. Parents are divided when it comes to select the best schooling option for children with disability. While 67,2% declare to be ready to pressure the school principal to allocate funds for inclusive education, 25% think that is better if children with disability attend special schools or, even in some cases, stay at home with their family. This percentage is much higher when asked about the best option for children with a concrete disability: 75% answered that both girls and boys with full visual disability shall attend preferably special schools.

In this sense, several parents declared, in-depth interviews that they ended up enrolling their child in a special school because the public one was not prepared for them or because he/she did not progress. They mentioned the lack of preparedness of teachers but also the lack of adapted equipment and infrastructures. The crowded classes were also invoked. A mother even explained that the teacher refused to enrol her daughter with intellectual disability and referred her to a special school.

9. On the level of policies, the Palestinian Authority has enshrined inclusive education for children with disabilities within its policies and in the Education Strategy 2019-2022. As well, the MoEHE has adopted a policy Palestine Inclusive Education Policy, 2015 and its operational Plan adopted in 2017. In spite of those efforts made at the policy level, these achievements still need to be translated into practice in all the system. Also we have to regret a lack of intersectional perspective regarding gender and disability in the Palestinian Authority's policies on inclusive education.

10. Overall structural problems of education system in West Bank and Gaza, which are linked to the political and economical crisis created by Israeli occupation, have a worse impact on children with disability and among those, particularly on girls with disability: gaps in education quality standards; lack of follow up of children at risk of drop-out; scarcity of schools, classrooms and professors, which leads to groups of 50 in one class; old didactic methods; and lack of resources and IT; low motivation of teachers due to bad salary and working conditions (some did not receive their salary during months in GS), violent attitudes towards children in spite of being forbidden by law.

For children with disability, these challenges like the lack of availability or negative attitude of teachers may end up with the dropout of the child. Having 40 children in a classroom may also leads to school headmasters or teachers' refusal of the child with disability and his/her referral to special education schools.

11. The overall system available to children with disability is still deficient. Made of private pre-school centres, public, UNRWA and private primary and secondary schools, private special education schools and CBR programs. The number of mainstream schools equipped with resource rooms, which admit children with disability, is very low: 1 out of ten. Besides, they are prepared to receive only children with simple and light disability, while the system still presents loopholes for children with moderate, severe and multiple disabilities, especially those with cognitive difficulty.

As well, those children with disability integrated in mainstream public schools cannot continue learning after 4th grade. When this occurs, and for all children with severe, multiple or cognitive disability, the cost of enrolment fees in special schools, all of them private, is a new barrier at play, as there are only a few free access special education centres run by nongovernmental organizations.

12. At the level of infrastructures and equipments, in the last five years, efforts have been deployed to reform mainstream schools and eliminate physical barriers in the new buildings. But the current landscape is that schools still lack ramps, elevators, accessible toilets, etc. Except some Braille and hand language educative materials, mainstream schools generally lack of assistive devices and technological educative resources. While disability screening and referral to clinics deployed in UNRWA schools allows providing assistive devices excepting mobility support devices (wheelchairs, crutches), special education schools have mostly adapted to the needs of children with disability both at the level of infrastructures and equipments.

13. The biggest gap regards the level of knowledge, i.e. teachers' skills development, and the need to provide continued training on how to deal and communicate with children with disability and implement adapted and inclusive methodologies. Some organizations are training teachers to be skilled and prepared to take care of children with disability and integrate them in the class. These efforts shall be encouraged. Besides the need of technologic equipments to ensure inclusive education (programs, special computers, tablets, etc.) and the basic training of all educational staff, the MoEHE shall increase the number of special education teachers and equip resources rooms over the all education public system.

14. But it is concerning gender equality where the lack of awareness and capacities to ensure a gender transformative education is most needed. In this sense, teachers shall receive awareness and training on gender equality, transformation of gender roles and how to prevent gender based violence in all its forms. Women's organizations have made some training and awareness rising but they need the full endorsement and support of MoEHE to outweigh cultural resistances.

15. As well, at level of curricula, contents, training and methods shall be reviewed to mainstream gender equality and disability following CSO's

recommendations. Contents of educative materials shall be also upgraded and reedited according to gender and disability reviews to ensure that females and males are equally represented in productive and reproductive roles and that women and girls with and without disability are portrayed in leading positions, challenging both "glass walls and ceilings" and contributing to modifying gender roles and eradicating stigma and stereotypes on disability.

Moreover, methods centred on individualized development, creativity and empowerment of every child shall be promoted and adopted with the participation of experts and civil society organizations, including HI. In this respect, to build on these efforts, all teachers and counsellors should be trained both on disability inclusiveness and on gender equality to ensure full implementation of curricula upgrading.

16. At the level of services, adapted buses equipped with ramps and provided with CBR worker or a female teacher shall ensure transportation of children with disability from home to school. Free transportation shall be provided to children with disability from families with economic shortages when individual family assessment shows that she/he is at risk of dropping-out.

Cultural norms, roles and beliefs regarding gender and disability

17. Much work has been done to raise awareness and change attitudes and mentality regarding persons with disability in West Bank and Gaza. Nonetheless, there is still much to do to eradicate stereotypes and stigma on children with disability, especially girls with disability. Part of the community still considers that it is useless to educate children with disability and that they shall be enrolled in special education schools or stay at home, especially for girls. These stereotypes feed their drop-out from mainstream school.

18. Parents usually declare that education is equally important for boys and girls. One out of ten (89,1%) has the perception that parents make no difference between girls and boys in terms of sending them to school. This is in spite of the better results obtained by girls, provided that 65,5 % believe that girls are more performing in education, while no parent declared that boys are better students. 73,4% of parents declare to be supportive of straightening gender unfair distribution of resources and space at school between girls and boys.

19. At the same time, they feel that the community values more a boy (32,8%) than a girl (14,1%) who has completed secondary education. This shows that social expectations are still in favour of investing in males' education. Although this was not openly acknowledged by parents, resources persons have indeed reported that many families will think that it is better to give the opportunity to

the boy as he will be the breadwinner and must therefore be more skilled to get a job. As well, conservative values largely that the girl destiny is to get married and that she won't have the same need of a professional career are still admitted in the community.

20. Parents are supportive of traditional gender roles assigned to girls and skills to be acquired to fulfil the gendered division of tasks. A scarce 7,8% of parents consider that all professions shall be accessible to both genders with no exception. On the contrary, 31,3% consider that women shall not aspire to same professions as males, as it is not compatible with their duty as mothers. These norms have an impact on the expectations of parents regarding education: 78,1% parents consider that school shall teach girls specific skills linked to traditional gender roles, while only 15,6%, especially mothers, consider that it is not the role of school. According to 37,5% parents, the reproductive or "domestic" tasks shall be more enforced on girls with disability.

21. Especially in the GS and in rural areas and in Bedouin communities, girls' early marriage is still frequent and perceived as a solution for the incapacity of parents of large families to rear, feed and educate all their children. This leads to the drop-out of girls since 5th or 6th grade . These views about acceptability and irreversibility of dropouts triggered by early marriage are also shared by educational staff. Usually, no action is taken from schools to prevent these marriages and avoid the drop-out.

The pressure of early marriage is even higher for girls with disability as it is seen as a great opportunity that might not happen again. 51.6% parents think it is more difficult for a girl with disability to get married and 50 % declared that they would be ready to marry their girl with disability under the age of 16 years old, with a higher percentage in Gaza (65,91%).

22. The other reasons behind the dropout of girls based on gender apply also more on girls than on girls with disability: the preference of keeping them at home to support in household tasks and learn skills considered necessary and the fear of exposing her to sexual harassment or sexual abuse have an aggravated effect on girls with disability's access to education and rehabilitation services.

23. Additionally, there is a cultural barrier that applies only and exclusively to girls with disability, being a clear example of intersectional discrimination. The traditional belief that disability is hereditary casts stigma on all the females of the family. This belief may end up with the daughter with disability kept at home, hidden from the community, to avoid stigmatization of her and her sisters wrongly seen as potential future mothers of children with disability, reducing in this way their marriage opportunities.

24. On the contrary, the main gender based reason for boys' drop-out, which is remunerated work, doesn't have the same impact on boys with disability, who are viewed as having fewer possibilities to find a job and support their family.

25. Parents shall be empowered and provided psychosocial support, especially mothers who carry quite all the burden of care of children with disability. Co-responsibility shall be promoted in families and fathers shall be encouraged to share the care chore of children with and without disability by schools, special education centres, CBR and CSOs.

Barriers linked to gender based violence including sexual harassment and abuse

26. There is also a largely shared perception that children with disability are weak, powerless and vulnerable and that they will be the target of attacks, insults and bullying. This perception is at play as barrier to education and a reason for drop-out, as 31,3 % of parents think both boys and girls with disabilities will be more secure at home. 65,6% think that they will be more secure if they attend schools and develop skills. These perceptions affect more girls than boys, who are seen as more capable of defending themselves.

27. As mentioned above, the second main barrier to education of girls with disability is their parents' fear of being sexually abused or harassed. Although 70,3% consider that both children with disability are more exposed to sexual abuse when they are away from home, 17,2% declared that girls with disability are especially exposed to this kind of violence. Only 12,5% consider that children are more exposed to sexual abuse from the family or individuals closed to the family. Showing how public sphere, including school, is perceived as a dangerous place for children with disability.

28. At the level of safety and protection of children against violence including GBV and sexual violence, parent's fear that both boys and girls will be victims of violence and bullying is a barrier at play that must be addressed in a clear, transparent and effective way. Protocols against harassment, violence, bullying and gender based violence including sexual abuse and harassment shall be adopted, disseminated and enforced in public and private schools to deconstruct this barrier that impacts especially on girls with disability.

29. GBV at home and domestic violence on children is also a reason for drop-out. This is why it is considered very relevant to put in place case management interventions with the all family and with different

According to MICS 2019, about 13% of women aged 20-24 years got married for the first time before reaching the age of 18 years; about 11% in the West Bank compared to about 17% in the Gaza Strip. See: <https://palestine.unfpa.org/en/news/palestinian-multiple-indicators-cluster-survey-pmics-2019-2020-announced>

actors involved in protection of children and women victims of GBV when a potential case is detected.

Barriers linked to COVID-19 and by distance learning

30. More than half of the children surveyed (56,48%) could not follow on-line classes and/or make their exercises by distance. One out of four children (25%) did not succeed to follow classes due to the fact that they have no internet connection. More than one out of five (21,30%) neither could do it because he/she did not receive classes or didactic support from school.

31. No gap based on disability could be assessed in the access to remote educative contents and activities, but for those who did not receive any instructions from school, a higher percentage of parents tried to compensate this gap towards children with disability than with others.

32. On the contrary there is a clear gender gap in access to by-distance learning. 64,91% of girls could not make her exercises during school closures compared to 47,06 % of boys. While boys without disability had better access to remote education than those with disability, the most deprived from education during COVID-19 were girls without disability: 70,37% compared to 60% of girls with disability. Again, it must be mentioned that due to the size of the survey, this trends cannot be considered demographically representative of all Palestinian children.

33. The previous conclusion is reinforced by the confirmation that access to computers is more restricted by gender (girls have less access) than by disability. 76,6% consider that children with disability shall be ensured access computers just as other children. 18,8% are aware that girls usually have lower access to computers and that girls with disability shall be especially considered. 17,2% declare that boys usually tend to use more the computers and have therefore ensured during COVID-19 that at home both genders had an equal access to this resource.

GLOSSARY

Children with disabilities

Persons with disability under the age of 18.

Disability

Disability is an evolving concept. Disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Equality

Equality is when people enjoy rights, opportunities and resources on an equal basis with others, irrespective of disability, gender or age. So equality means that enjoyment of rights and opportunities are not limited by whether people are born female or male or whether they have a disability or belong to a particular age group.

Gender

Gender refers to the social and political roles, behaviours and attributes which are constructed for men and women by a given society and which each given society considers most appropriate and “valued” for men and women. These constructs are learnt, they shape how people define themselves and how they are defined by others. Gender norms can change over time and vary within and between societies. Gender is to be distinguished from sex, in the biological sense, which refers to the physical and biological characteristics that distinguish males and females.

Gender sensitive education

Education that takes into consideration gender based norms, roles, relations and needs,, but not aimed at ensuring equal benefit from education neither to modify those gendered socio-cultural constructions.

Gender responsive education

Education that ensures that children who are discriminated against on the basis of gender, benefit equally from services, resources and rights.

Gender transformative education

Education that addresses root causes of inequalities or systemic barriers based on gender and foster lasting changes so that girls and boys benefit equally from services, resources and rights. It is aimed at transforming gender roles, norms and relations in order to ensure substantial equality of females and males.

Persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Gender in Education Network in Asia-Pacific (GENIA) Toolkit. Promoting Gender Equality in Education, 2017.
- Global Partnership for Education, UNGEI and UNICEF, Guidance for Developing Gender-Responsive Education Sector Plans, 2017.
- Humanity and Inclusion, Data Analysis Report: Development of an Inclusive Education Practical Manual for Teachers, 2018.
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).
- Child Protection Policy (CPP).
- Policy on Disability, Gender and Age.
- Barriers assessment. Opportunities and Potential for Children with Disabilities to Access Education in Gaza and Rafah cities, 2015.
- Barriers assessment. Opportunities and Potential for Children with Disabilities to Access Education in Gaza and Rafah cities, 2015.
- Data Analysis Report: Development of an Inclusive Education Practical Manual for Teachers, 2018.
- Technical Guide: Inclusive good practices in schools within the projects “Improved Access to Essential Services for Persons with Disabilities in Highly Marginalized Areas of occupied Palestinian territory”, and “Improved Access to Essential Services for Children and Adults with Disabilities in Highly Marginalized Areas of Palestine”.
- Desk study on the intersection of Gender and Disability in international development cooperation, by Stephanie Ziegler, 2014.
- Palestinian Authority, Palestine Inclusive Education Policy, 2015.
- Palestine Inclusive Education Policy Operational Plan, 2017.
- Education sector strategic plan 2017-2022.
- Second Country Gender Action Plan (C-GAP II) for Palestinian Territories (FY2018-2021).
- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), Population, Housing and Establishments Census, 2017.
- UNICEF, Education Kit Handbook. Guidelines for Training of Trainers, 2013.
- UNICEF and Ministry of Social Affairs report: Every child counts: Understanding the needs and perspectives of children with disabilities in the State of Palestine, authored by Nicola Jones, Bassam Abu Hamad, Kifah Odeh, Paola Perezniето, Ola Abu Al Ghaib, Georgia Plank, Elizabeth Presler-Marshall and Mohammed Shaheen, 2016.
- UNICEF/ Washington Group on Disability Statistics, Module on Child Functioning, February 2017.
- UNICEF / PCBS. Palestinian Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019-2020, Survey Findings Report, 2021.
- Washington Group on Disability Statistics. “Using the Washington Group Tools for the First Time.”

