KNOWLEDGE SHARING PACKAGE

GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE WORKSHOPS FOR UNDP/PAPP STAFF

CHANGE STARTS WITH THE SELF

PART OF THE GENDER EQUALITY SEAL ACTION PLAN 2022-2023
Acknowledgments

This Knowledge Sharing Package falls within the overarching framework of the UNDP/PAPP Gender Equality Seal Action Plan 2021 – 2022, which is being implemented under the leadership and strategic guidance of the Chair of UNDP/PAPP Gender Working Group, Chitose Noguchi.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This Knowledge Sharing Package documents and visualises the learning experience of UNDP’s Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP) in piloting a series of Gender Transformative Workshops for all staff, which were carried out between April and October 2022. The workshops are part of UNDP/PAPP’s Gender Equality Seal Action Plan 2022 – 2023 and a wider gender journey.

In addition to providing an overview of the scope and rationale behind the piloting of the workshops and their content, significant attention is given to elaborating insights on key results and lessons learnt from this experience, as well as outlining recommendations to enhance sustainability.

The Knowledge Sharing Package consists of a descriptive part with links to videos and refers to the material used during the Gender Transformative Workshops (see Programme of the Workshop and PowerPoint Presentation in annex).

For the Gender Transformative Workshop manual and handouts, please contact UNDP/PAPP (Deputy Special Representative or Gender Focal Point). The material will be available to share such knowledge with other UNDP Country Offices (COs) in the region and beyond for potential up-take and tailoring to different contexts.

NOTE

Resources used to facilitate the Gender Transformative Workshops coming from Adopting a gender transformative approach in sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence programmes Rutgers’ Toolkit Module 1 Six interrelated components and the socio-ecological model (2019)[1]

1 Gender Transformative Approach Toolkit Module 1 – Rutgers (2019)
II. HOW DID IT START - WHY GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE WORKSHOPS?

In many parts of the world, including Palestine, women and girls have made tremendous strides in recent decades, as reflected in their personal lives, cultural and institutional transformations, and legal reforms. However, persistent inequalities and harmful gender ideologies continue to exist and negatively impact the lives of women and girls, in particular, men and boys and individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

Justified by male authority and harmful conceptions of manhood, Palestinian culture entails patterns of marginalizing women’s and girls’ rights that affect nearly every aspect of life. About 63% of Palestinian men agree that a woman must tolerate violence to keep the family together, according to IMAGES[2]. Constant threats and human rights violations in the context of Israeli forces’ dominance and occupation have a significant impact on gender relations, male and female identities, and roles.

While UNDP has been working for decades on gender mainstreaming, staff members’ personal attitudes, behaviours, prejudices, and stereotypes regarding women’s rights and gender equality have received less attention. Moreover, the emphasis of the approach has been primarily on the rights and empowerment of women and girls. The root causes of gender inequality and related power dynamics cannot be adequately addressed without the active participation of men and boys and women and girls as agents of change for gender equality. Male predominance and heteronormativity are still pervasive aspects of society that affect not only women but also men and individuals with sexual and gender differences. So, where are the men during the journey of gender transformation? Recently, boys and men have become more involved in social change, reevaluating harmful masculinities, and transforming them into constructive, nonviolent ones.

Staff members of UNDP/PAPP contribute to and shape the organization’s culture. Individual perceptions, biases, and stereotypes that staff members may unconsciously or consciously hold have an impact on the organizational culture. They can be instrumental in fostering an inclusive workplace that promotes gender equality. Individual gender biases and stereotypical thinking can hinder a staff member’s ability to ensure sound gender mainstreaming throughout the entire programme cycle and effectively promote gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment in Palestinian society.

2 Palestine - Understanding Masculinities (imagesmena.org) (2017)
While the existing UNDP/PAPP Gender Equality Strategy 2019-2022 and associated Action Plan recognized the importance of awareness raising and staff training, and a Gender Working Group had been established to lead the implementation of the Action Plan, there was recognition by senior management that this was not sufficient, and a different approach was required. Against this backdrop, UNDP/PAPP started its second UNDP Gender Equality Seal certification process in 2021. The initial baseline assessment highlighted opportunities and key entry points for improvement, which informed the development of UNDP/PAPP’s Gender Equality Seal Action Plan (1 April 2022- 1 April 2023).

Building staff capacity constitutes a key element of the GES Action Plan, with the Gender Transformative Workshops expected to improve staff awareness and foster a safe and inclusive working environment as part of UNDP/PAPP’s institutional transformation. It was also expected to increase staff motivation and commitment to gender mainstreaming within UNDP/PAPP projects and programmes. The Gender Transformative Workshops were an essential cornerstone upon which further capacity development activities would be built. This would include technical workshops/training and refreshers to strengthen programme staff skills and knowledge for gender equality and women’s empowerment.
III. WHAT TOOK PLACE – WHAT IS A GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE WORKSHOP?

The three-day Gender Transformative Workshop offered a safe space for critical (self)reflection and open dialogue on personal, socio-cultural, and religious perceptions of gender-related topics and issues, including social norms and gender roles, behaviours and stereotypes. It provided a safe and inclusive space for discussion, active listening and questioning issues often addressed and discussed among colleagues, whether in the workplace or outside the office.

The aim of the Workshop was to foster positive change across different dimensions, namely in terms of:

- Enhanced ability to critically (re-)think and self-reflect on personal gender-related views, behaviours, norms and values;
- Increased knowledge of sensitivity and ability to respect women’s and girls’ rights and to engage boys and men in gender equality; and
- Increased sensitivity towards and ability to create an open and safe working environment within UNDP and with partners.

The Gender Transformative Workshops were rolled-out through a series of 9 sessions, each with the participation of 15 – 25 colleagues. While most sessions lasted three days, the last session was a shortened one-day programme focused on staff who only speak Arabic, with translation provided.

Workshop sessions took place in external venues, to give participants the space to temporarily disconnect from the workplace and fully focus on themselves as individuals. Mixed participation of both women and men to the Workshop sessions was crucial, in line with the Gender Transformative Workshop methodology aimed at engaging both women and men as agents of change towards gender equality. Furthermore, each Workshop session included staff from both programme and operations, as well as from different levels of seniority, and a combination of national and international staff.
Finally, senior management perceived the roll-out of the Gender Transformative Workshop as a golden opportunity to strengthen a unified organizational culture within UNDP/PAPP, going beyond the existing geographic barriers that physically separate the teams in Jerusalem, Ramallah and Gaza. Thus, extra effort was made to give the opportunity to West Bank colleagues to attend the Workshop sessions in Gaza, and for Gaza colleagues to attend the ones in the West Bank, whenever logistically possible. This also allowed geographical/physical nuances in gender norms and biases to be explored. The workshop was facilitated by an international Gender Advisor, who has extensive experience in the gender transformative approach, and has designed and delivered gender transformative trainings in various countries and settings.

A total of 146 staff have been trained thus far, representing almost 95% of current UNDP/PAPP staff. Additional Workshop sessions will be organized in the coming months, to give the opportunity for the few remaining colleagues as well as newly hired staff to participate.
IV. WHAT IS A GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH?

A gender transformative approach ‘seeks long-term changes in gender relations and power dynamics, at all levels of society’. Core focus is on “Change starts with the Self”, and the approach entails the following steps:

- Encouraging critical awareness of gender roles and norms among women, and men
- Questioning the costs of harmful, inequitable gender norms, including harmful masculinity and making explicit the advantages of changing them
- Empowering women, girls and people with diverse gender identities and/or sexual orientations
- Engaging boys and men in a positive way and as part of the solution.

The approach uses the socio-ecological model[4], which allows analysis and interference with the complex interplay in the relationships between the individual and others, at personal, household, community, institutional and policy level. The model visualizes institutional structures where arrangements of formal and informal rules and practices enable and constrain the agency of women/girls and men/boys, where rigid stereotypical and discriminatory gender ideologies and norms are often perpetuated and govern the distribution of resources[5].

Socio-ecological model

The Gender Transformative Approach utilized in the Workshop consisted of the following six interrelated components, which were contextualized to the Palestinian reality and practices:

1. Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA);
2. Power- Gender and Intersectionality;
3. Norms and Values;
4. Empowerment of women and girls;
5. Engaging men and boys in gender justice;
6. Gender diversity and sexual orientation

- Additional session on Safe (working) space: Looking at the grey areas of sexual violence.

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3 Gender Transformative Approach Toolkit Module 1: Six Interrelated Components and the Socio-Ecological Model. Rutgers’ innovative and comprehensive toolkit for implementing a gender transformative approach has been designed as a resource and a guide to support the integration of a gender transformative approach (GTA) into sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) programmes and organisations (2019).


*Due to its sensitivity, the sixth component on gender diversity and sexual orientation was pending on the situation, whether facilitated as a separate topic or integrated within discussions and based on input from and sharing by participants.
Interactive, participatory learning techniques and methodology

The sessions take a practical and human-centred approach, with information/knowledge sharing and conceptual framing only to facilitate a deeper understanding of and the applicability of gender equality to the participant’s life and professional experiences.

Participants are encouraged to bring their experiences and examples from their daily life and workplace interactions. They are invited to actively participate, learn and connect with other participants through a wide range of interactive, participatory learning methodologies and techniques that create a safe dialogue space. Plenary sessions are alternated with focus group discussions, group work (men and women separated or together) and/or work in couples, as well as with individual reflections and interactive exercises.

The participants are invited to sit in a circle to see everyone’s face. A circle naturally contributes to a sense of equality and connectivity and embraces an open space for sharing and learning. Every day of the Workshop started with a ‘check-in’ round offering participants the opportunity to share any story, feeling, observation, question, concern etc., allowing the participants to get to know each other more. The check-in round allows the facilitator to reiterate the importance of just listening without judging; whatever is shared, it is about the experience, feeling or opinion of the person. The day ends with a brief ‘check-out’ round by inviting the participants to stand in a circle and share a few words about how they feel about the Workshop-day.

Golden (Group) Values

As a kick-off to each Gender Transformative Workshop, group values are established and collectively endorsed to ensure that all participants feel heard, respected and able to safely express themselves without risk or fear of being judged by others. These values serve as guiding principles throughout the whole Workshop and can be considered the backbone of a gender transformative process.

The following values help create an inclusive and safe space for sharing, (self)reflection and learning in a respectful manner:

- Strict confidentiality of all that is discussed during the Workshop
- Actively listening to each other
- Only one person speaking at a time, with no interrupting when someone is speaking/sharing
- There is no wrong or right answer
- Everyone has a right to speak
- Honesty is paramount, but there is no pressure to share private matters
- Everybody is seen as equal, irrespective of age or gender, religion, class, job position, etc.
- No judgmental remarks or disrespectful reactions to what another person says
- Full-hearted presence
V. IMPLEMENTATION AND FACILITATION OF GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE WORKSHOP SESSIONS

This section provides an overview and brief description of the six key components of the Gender Transformative Workshops, as well as the session on safe (working) space:

1. HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

The Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) is a useful tool for justice when rights like women’s and girls’ rights have been violated (for example, in sexual abuse and violence cases). Basically, all governments, by signing the United Nations (UN) convention, have committed to the existing international body of human rights treaties and conventions. Human rights thus form a fundamental principle to hold on to when advocating for and claiming equality, human dignity and opportunities for all people to receive education, health care and to fight poverty, violence, discrimination and exclusion.

A brief introduction to the HRBA encompasses a) the obligation of duty bearers to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all people, irrespective of their sex, gender, and sexual identity, and to abstain from human rights violations; b) the capacity of all people (rights holders) to claim their rights when necessary and c) to hold duty bearers to account to protect and fulfil human rights (accountability). The term ‘duty bearer’ is most commonly used to refer to State actors. Still, depending on the context, non-State actors like individuals (e.g., parents), local organizations, private companies, aid donors and international institutions can also be duty bearers. Additionally, human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and inalienable.

2. POWER, GENDER AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Understanding power is fundamental if you are to understand how change happens. Gender inequalities arise from different power dynamics, which can be rooted in harmful social norms and values as well as unequal economic, legal and political status. This session unpacks power by exploring various forms or expressions of power followed by an exercise the Power Walk.

Power Walk gives participants the opportunity to experience power in all its dimensions, from feeling powerless to being the person in power. The exercise helps participants to understand the relationship between gender, power, age, ethnicity, class, caste, race, etc. and how these factors often reinforce each other to create or exacerbate (gender) inequalities. The connection between gender and vulnerability to sexual harassment becomes very clear, regardless of class, ethnicity, religion, etc.
This session looks at gender roles and norms and the ways many cultures recognise two basic gender roles: masculine and feminine, which are different from the biological characteristics (sex) we are born with. Statements on gender give participants the opportunity to reflect on their own opinions, values and norms. The facilitation of the debate gives the opportunity to come in with additional knowledge and information, facts and figures. Reminding the participants of the agreed golden values is important to ensure respect and safety.

Several examples were presented during the workshops, most notably those emphasizing that males are expected to assist their fathers, protect their siblings, etc., and are raised with a sense of responsibility and significance. According to one male respondent, men learn to be the centre of the universe. Someone else stated, “Men learn to freeze their souls,” implying that men are not allowed to cry and to express their insecurities, fears, and vulnerabilities. As the public sphere is deemed dangerous and requires protection, girls are taught that their space is within the home. Girls are prepared for a future of marriage, they are taught to speak softly and adhere to dress codes that require covering the body. Messages to girls do not stimulate a sense of self-confidence, something that many women are still struggling with once growing older. For both sexes, the importance of education is very much highlighted and stimulated.

The Gender Box is a widely adapted exercise and a good starting point for conversations on gender socialization of both women and men. It invites female and male participants to look back at the messages received during their childhood on how to behave like a girl or a boy and to look at the life they are living now as an adult man or a woman. Central in the discussion is looking at the benefits and drawbacks of conforming to traditional gender roles and stepping out of the traditional gender box from both male and female perspectives. A discussion follows on how to support each other in these fundamental processes of social change (women->women, women->men, men->men, men>women).

Regarding sexuality, the belief that men have greater sexual endurance than women leads to the social expectation that men must be sexually active with multiple (concurrent) sexual partners. On the other hand, the belief that women are sexually passive, have no desire, and are vulnerable contributes to norms and laws that restrict and control women’s sexuality and prevent women and girls from gaining access to information, support, and skills that would allow them to make informed decisions about their sexuality and bodies.
Gender roles are changing for women and men: Opportunities and/or Frictions...?!

The women's and girls' rights session explores key concepts such as empowerment, choice and control.

Power over, too, within and with are fundamental aspects of empowerment. So is a choice, implying women and girls’ ability to make and influence choices that affect their lives and futures. The choice is empowering when, for example, women and girls have the freedom to choose from a range of options regarding contraceptive use or when and whom to marry. In addition, empowered choice challenges social inequalities. This is called 'critical consciousness’, defined as ‘women and girls identifying and questioning how inequalities in power operate in their lives and asserting and affirming their sense of self and entitlements (power within).

The topic of gender-based violence as a most severe violation of women’s rights gets explored, illustrated by data from Palestine, looking at forms, deeper root causes, and prevention strategies.

In the approach towards empowerment of women, the following aspects are seen as key: Girls and women have gendered vulnerabilities; Create a safe space for girls and women and listen (unbiased) to their stories; Use an approach to empower and make aware of their rights, by being supportive, using culturally appropriate framing; Approach women as diverse and complex actors – persons, partners, professionals, leaders, mothers, hetero and/or with gender and sexual orientation, not only recognizing them as victims, but also as survivors, and agents of change; Make girls and women aware of boys and men’s gendered vulnerabilities and engage them in changing harmful aspects of masculinities into positive masculinities.
What it means to be a man is changing in many parts of the world, including Palestine, where macho behaviour is less valued, but what the new forms of masculinity look like is far from clear. For some boys and young men, these changing gender norms create confusion, fear and insecurity. This may lead to stress about their identity, resistance and anger, even more so when confronted with educated and vocal girls and young women.

Men and boys are crucial partners in effectively reducing gender inequality and the discrimination of women, girls and people with diverse orientations. However, leaving them out has often led to failures in challenging the systems and processes that control and limit the opportunities of these groups. This means we must politicize masculinities, considering how elemental economic, political and social power and gender relations shape men’s behaviours and attitudes, which the women’s movement has often ignored.

The session facilitates further discussion by making use of several videos:

**Videos:**
- Men’s Brains and Women’s Brains with Mark Gungor (Nothing Box)
- Understanding Masculinities: An IMAGES MENA Film
- Understanding Masculinities in Palestine

**Men Talk-video:**
Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/watch?v=190359649785925](https://www.facebook.com/watch?v=190359649785925)
Youtube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wX_BakaCT48](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wX_BakaCT48)
Due to its sensitivity, the component of gender diversity and sexual orientation was dealt with as an integrated topic within discussions and based on input from participants. Male superiority and heteronormativity emerge clearly during the Workshop, reflected in being married and having children as the norm in many societies, including Palestine. The facilitator raises the issue of exclusion from what is seen as the norm, like singles, divorced women, widows, couples with no children, LGBTs, persons with disabilities, the elderly, etc. When the space in the group feels safe enough, participants feel free to share inner ambiguous feelings around sexual orientation. On the one hand, it conflicts with their religious beliefs, and on the other, you want to respect people of different orientations. Still, you do not want your child to be gay or lesbian due to the exclusion and hostility they will face. The parental concern is entirely valid and is never questioned. For instance, the facilitator brings in new knowledge and facts by highlighting that 5-7 % of the global population has a different sexual orientation or gender identity. It means that within UNDP, with more or less 160 staff, 8-10 people are not heterosexual. In other words, people are around us. Participants are invited to imagine how it feels when you are not respected for what feels like your deepest sense of being.

In sensitive issues, it is important to keep referring to the golden values. Moreover, having open and honest discussions and space for reflection can be seen as more important than finding clear answers.

- **Safe Working Space – Looking at the grey areas of sexual violence**

One additional session focused on safe (working) space by defining consensual (sexual) acts/relationships and sexual violence, allowing participants to understand the clear difference between the two and what is the grey area. A grey area is a space where many acts and behaviours are happening, often tolerated and acceptable by society but harmful to the individual subject to them. A discussion follows a series of acts and behaviours from people’s own context and practices and how to identify them as consensual violence within or outside the grey area.
VI. KEY RESULTS & LESSONS LEARNT

Overall reflections

A key takeaway for the Workshop participants was that gender is more than women. It placed gender back into its original meaning, namely seen as a relational concept involving both women and men within a certain context, both gendered in different ways. The limitations and discrimination women face within a patriarchal culture are well-known and has been the focus of attention for a long time. The recognition that while men benefit from privileges, they also pay the price for it was a new insight for the participants. It opened up the mind and new space for learning and interest in change for the betterment of all.

In the Palestinian context, men experience high financial, social, and emotional responsibilities. They are expected to be the breadwinners while being confronted with the harsh realities of severe unemployment and limited economic opportunities across the West Bank (incl. East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip. Men - especially young boys in Palestine- face violence (settler violence, at checkpoints, in the streets by Israeli armed forces and settlers). They are more vulnerable in some aspects than women and girls. Moreover, their ability to freely express their emotions - other than the socially expected stamina and boldness – is limited. This means that most Palestinian men often do not have the freedom to show fears, pain or weaknesses - particularly in public and at home.

"It was amazing; the best thing about this Workshop was respecting the opinions of others, listening to the participants, and delivering the Workshop in the form of questions that would motivate the listeners and make them more interested.

(participant)"
Once offered a safe space for sharing their vulnerabilities and being listened to, men start feeling heard and acknowledged in a way they often do not experience when exposed to traditional development initiatives solely focused on women's rights. Once heard and acknowledged, men feel more motivated to reflect critically on their own behaviours and show more interest in respecting and actively supporting women’s and girls’ rights and empowerment, starting from the household level. It is to be noted that there is a clear shift happening between older and younger generation male colleagues, whereby younger men are nowadays more involved in child-care and household chores than older men.

Such mixed-gender transformative processes also generated opportunities for women to embrace new insights and learnings. Recognizing and sharing similar experiences among and with other women have an empowering effect, transcending national and international borders. Different religious backgrounds among the participants also revealed differences in upgrowing. Christian communities seem to reproduce less strict gender roles, norms and values than Islamic communities. And by shedding light on the gender-related impact of socialization and social conditioning for girls and boys, women gained more understanding of their own and men’s behaviour. They came to understand, deconstruct, and ultimately challenge their role as mothers in perpetuating harmful gender norms vis-a-vis their children, sons and daughters alike. Transformation became not only an issue of advancing girls’ and women's rights and empowerment but also a matter of critically looking at and re-shaping boys and men’s roles, norms, values and behaviours. The binding factor is very much the joint horizon - which does not differ much between women and men: **striving for a healthy, happy, peaceful, and prosperous future for their families and communities.**
Choosing gender transformation as an entry point proved to work as an ‘equalizer’ in it itself. All participants, regardless of position, function or role in the organization, are ‘gendered’. Everybody has experience with what a means to be a woman or a man in society and is experiencing changes in expectations and opportunities, facing social pressure, struggles and sometimes trauma. Listening to and sharing similar experiences with others, whether coming from your boss or someone else, led to recognition, increased trust, strengthened interpersonal connections, better knowing each other, improved work relationships etc. The choice to form mixed groups regarding men-women, positions and functions, age, geographical areas, and national and international proved to be very beneficial with additional beneficial results.

The Gender Transformative Workshops also revealed the intrinsic power of moving beyond gender and the men-women dichotomy. It created a space for deep and critical thinking about oneself and what it means to be human. It enhanced a sense of agency to liberate oneself from social restrictions and limit (gender) roles to become the person one wants to be in one's personal and professional life.

In every Gender Transformative Workshop session, an evaluation and feedback survey was carried out through Mentimeter (see Annex I for a snapshot of key results). This online survey aimed at gathering participants’ feedback on the relevance of the topics discussed and their satisfaction vis-à-vis the interactive methodology adopted. It also aimed at understanding the main takeaways/learnings from the participants’ perspective and assessing their motivation and commitment to actively challenge harmful gender norms and behaviours moving forward – both in their personal lives and in the workplace.

Figure 1. Participants’ responses to the online evaluation and feedback survey - “In one word, describe your experience with the Gender Transformative Workshop.”
**KEY RESULTS**

- **Increased awareness and acknowledgement** that creating positive change towards gender equality starts at the individual level - “Change starts with the Self”, including rethinking and challenging own behaviours that reproduce harmful gender norms.

- **Positive changes** at the individual level, including a stronger sense of agency, feeling free to express oneself, showing vulnerability, and sharing positive changes in the relationship with own partner, led to increased commitment and support by men within the household, as well as mutual support between the partners.

- **Strengthened commitment** to practice the Golden Values both in their personal and professional lives - especially actively listening and trying to understand other people’s perspectives and experiences, communicating in a respectful manner, and being aware of the ways in which their actions, words or behaviours can affect other people, whether family members or colleagues.

- **Enhanced positive relationships** and group dynamics in the workplace based on mutual respect.

- **Increased positive interactions** among staff, including colleagues from the opposite sex and/or those who were not used to interacting before the Workshops.

- **Increased interest** in, motivation for and commitment to strengthening gender mainstreaming in ongoing and new projects/programmes.

- **Enhanced interactions** between programme staff and Gender Focal Points and experts within the office, including increased requests from programme colleagues for technical support in mainstreaming gender in ongoing and new projects/programmes.
LESSONS LEARNT

• Strong commitment and leadership from senior management regarding the Gender Transformative Approach and rollout of the Workshop (including making it mandatory for all staff, regardless of contract modality) is crucial and powerful – particularly in stimulating staff interest and motivation to participate in gender-related activities.

• A senior manager (either in-person or online) opening each Gender Transformative Workshop with a strong message demonstrates that the gender equality agenda is a priority within the organization.

• A high level of gender knowledge and expertise of the facilitator, coupled with strong interpersonal communication skills and (cultural) sensitivity, are essential.

• The entry point of gender serves as an ‘equalizer’ for connection and dialogue, as everyone has experiences with gender roles, expectations, norms and values which influence their lives.

• Golden (group) Values represent the backbone of the Workshop; having all participants endorse these values at the beginning and reinforcing them repeatedly throughout the Workshop is key to ensuring a safe space for dialogue, sharing and learning.

• Acknowledging the importance of active listening and refraining from judging others was a key takeaway throughout all Workshop sessions amongst female and male colleagues, which can have a ripple effect beyond gender relations.

• Workshop planning should be done for the entire group of participants - in this case, all staff, taking into consideration the overall gender balance within the organisation to ensure a relatively good gender balance for each workshop session. (UNDP/PAPP asked all staff to sign up for the preferred Workshop session, which resulted in more women participating in the earlier sessions and poor gender balance in the last few sessions.)

• Rolling out the Workshop sessions with mixed groups, including both men and women, helps participants to better understand gender as a relational concept, including men, and to gain a better understanding of the other sex and respective challenges, resulting in more positive interactions and mutual support for moving out of the traditional gender box.

• Rolling out the Workshop sessions in mixed groups regardless of position in the organization, age and geographical area (Ramallah, East Jerusalem, Gaza), national or international, contributes to a better understanding of each other and improved interaction and group dynamics.
• Religious convictions may impede the process and hamper the safe space for dialogue. In the facilitation, it is essential to refer to and make connections between the underlying patriarchal values and practices in religion and those in the larger culture. The Workshop is not about discussing religion; it focuses on the overlapping and similar harmful patterns in religion and culture that must be altered for greater gender equality and the protection of women’s rights. As a result, it is essential for the facilitator to regularly remind the participants of the Golden Values that they have collectively agreed upon in order to preserve mutual respect for diverse viewpoints and positive group dynamics.

• Sensitive topics - such as LGBTQI+ rights, women’s sexuality, and sex before marriage – can be dealt with as part of a broader exercise and/or when spontaneously addressed by participants rather than a separate topic. Such topics are highly controversial in the Palestinian context and must be dealt with carefully to avoid creating resistance and potential backlash from participants.

• Although the Golden Values included respect for diverse opinions, strong and vocal resistance from a few individuals (in this case, men, potentially responding to the fact that the sessions were mandatory) negatively affected the overall group dynamics and sense of safety in the group. Reinforcement of senior management’s message in each Workshop’s opening session around the purpose of the sessions and the importance of respecting others was critical in preventing similar incidents from taking place.

• Clarifying in the opening session that the Gender Transformative Workshop is not technical training was key in adjusting any misguided expectations that participants may have had. Communicating that this Workshop is the foundation of subsequent gender mainstreaming training and other Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH) training helped participants understand how the Workshop fit within the overall strategy of the organisation to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment.
• Measuring institutional changes (beyond the Global Staff Survey), particularly inclusive and safe work environments, is important, and methods to capture such change should be explored moving forward.

• Gradually transitioning from facilitation by an international expert only to co-facilitation with trained national colleagues can be effective in ensuring context-specific nuances are addressed, and national capacity is strengthened within the organisation. A further trajectory for consolidating expertise within UNDP/PAPP in facilitating gender transformative workshops is foreseen; see below.

• The workshop venue can facilitate or constrain creating an atmosphere of open dialogue, positive interaction, and safe space. A venue away from the office, with ample light and space, was a key factor in ensuring a successful Gender Transformative Workshop.
The Gender Transformative Workshop sessions have been rolled out as part of the UNDP/PAPP Gender Equality Seal Action Plan. It is considered important in fostering institutional transformation by creating a more inclusive and safe work environment and strengthening staff commitment to ensure gender mainstreaming across the programming. These Workshops are complemented by technical refreshers on gender mainstreaming, as well as continuous technical support and guidance from the Gender Focal Points and the Gender Advisor to programme teams.

The Gender Transformative Workshops and overall gender efforts within UNDP/PAPP take place within the institutional set-up illustrated below, under the leadership and strategic guidance of senior management and with the engagement of colleagues across programmes and operations.

![Gender & PAPP](image)

Figure 2. Gender in UNDP/PAPP - Organisational setup, Roles & Responsibilities

A communication platform for continuing exchange, including sharing and discussing gender-related topics in an interactive, creative and stimulating way, is essential to keep colleagues engaged, building on the various Workshop sessions and interactions. Social media channels such as WhatsApp groups have been set up, and discussions about organizing monthly brown-bag lunches, or other informal in-person exchanges have been held.

A Training of Trainers on Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA ToT) for selected UNDP/PAPP staff will be rolled out (January 2023) with a view to enhance sustainability and build institutional capacity to sustain and scale up the implementation of gender transformative approaches.

Once trained, the new trainers will be expected to (co)facilitate:

- Gender Transformative refresher sessions;
- Gender Transformative Workshop sessions for newly hired staff; and
- Gender Transformative Workshop sessions for relevant and interested Implementing Partners.
Such focus on building in-house capacity on gender transformative approaches, coupled with technical capacity development on gender mainstreaming for programme staff, are key elements of UNDP/PAPP’s gender journey and are expected to enhance UNDP/PAPP’s contribution to gender equality in the oPt.

With interest being expressed by other UNDP COs in the region, as well as UN agencies and donor partners in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), UNDP/PAPP is exploring opportunities to share the gender transformative approach and methodology with a broader group of stakeholders who could collectively make a more significant difference in people’s lives.
What, if anything, will you change in your work because of what you have learnt?

- Speak up
- Continue to mention the positive changing household dynamics reflecting on my and my friends’ experiences
- Stop feeling guilty
- Be more supportive
- Be outspoken about gender issues. Support female colleagues. Say NO
- Pay attention to my own behaviour and become more gender aware

- Listen, communicate and support more
- Don’t be afraid to speak out in office when I see issues
- Be more cognizant of statements that might offend. Discuss more about changing roles of men and women in safe environments.
- To be more open for the other different options, backgrounds and mentalities. To accept the different
- I will be more aware of my actions and words to be more gender sensitive and to avoid misunderstandings
- Hold myself and others accountable as much as possible

- Language used in the office, be sensitive to the power balance, take the lead as woman. Engage partners with similar workshop.
- Be more outspoken when undesired incidences occur. Be more aware of my own gender-biased behaviour.
- We learned many things that should be applied at work and outside work, with a focus on changing oneself for the better

What, if anything, will you change in your personal life because of what you have learned?

- Making jokes about sexuality and being aware of what’s defined as sexual harassment and tolerated within the society. I would change the way we raising children and deciding to identify their sex without their choice
- Be more proud of my gender
- Be more willing to let go of certain responsibilities
- Listen more and understand emotions of the male family members
- Challenge myself more
- Pay more attention to the details because it might be something small but it is big for the other party

- Consider how certain situations might be for the other gender
- Be more flexible and accommodating
- Maybe focus on listening more, accepting others
- Interact more with my family
- I will share my wife’s life with me more and more in many ways. Love will be the MAX to share
- Respect

- Show more trust and appreciation
- Do more homework with the kids. Discuss more household roles and responsibilities.
- I will share and cooperate with my wife inside the house in terms of helping her in the house works and try to use more emotional and lovely words towards her
- Listen more
- Active Listening
General Video

Asmaa Ma’rof

Alice Dal Gobbo

Ali Ghaith

Rachel Ploem

Julie Samara

Yousef Abu Hamad

Ihab Salameh

Chitose Noguchi

Heba Murtaga
## Training Programme

### Gender Transformative Workshop

**for UNDP/PAPP STAFF**

Facilitated by Rachel Ploem, Gender Advisor UNDP/PAPP

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<tr>
<th>DAY 1: Group Values, Gender Statements, Human Rights Based Approach, Power</th>
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<th>DAY 2: Gender Box, Women’s Rights and Engaging Men</th>
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<th>DAY 3: Safe Space, Recap Gender Transformative Approach, Evaluation</th>
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### Objectives

- Enhanced ability to critically (re-)think and self-reflect on personal gender related views, behaviours, norms and values
- Increased knowledge of, sensitivity and ability to respect women’s and girls rights and to engage boys and men in gender equality
- Increased sensitivity towards and ability to create an open and safe working environment within UNDP and in relation with partners