

# Exploring the Dynamics and Vulnerabilities of HIV Transmission Amongst Sex Workers in the Palestinian Context

A UN Women operational research  
occupied Palestinian territory  
2011



Ministry of Health



# Exploring the Dynamics and Vulnerabilities of HIV Transmission Amongst Sex Workers in the Palestinian Context

A UN Women operational research  
occupied Palestinian territory  
2011



Ministry of Health





## Acknowledgements

This operational research was developed on behalf of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) within the framework of the joint UN programme “Scaling up universal access to prevention, treatment and care of HIV/AIDS in the occupied Palestinian territory,” supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM).

The research takes part within a common global research agenda on “Knowing The Epidemics”. It will inform the work of the Palestinian Authority National AIDS Committee.

The research production was the result of a collective effort for which UN Women owes sincere gratitude to the many civil society organizations, governmental institutions, UN agencies part of the GFTAM and individuals who participated and contributed in countless ways.

Special thanks go to Laura Gauer Bermudez as researcher, the field research team for their courageous and pioneering work and the Women’s Human Rights Unit of the UN Women office in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The field research team was composed of four local field researchers (2 women and 2 men) and one field researcher coordinator with educational and professional backgrounds in the social sciences. The team completed the data collection over a period of three months, from March to June 2010.

## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this operational research are those of the authors and contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of UN Women, the GFATM, the Palestinian Authority, the United Nations or any of its affiliated organizations.



# Table of Contents

List of Acronyms .....	5
Executive Summary .....	6
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	8
1.1 OBJECTIVES .....	10
1.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .....	11
Chapter 2: Palestinian Context.....	11
2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE .....	11
2.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE .....	12
2.3 GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT .....	12
2.4 GENDER .....	13
2.5 HIV/AIDS .....	15
2.6 HUMAN TRAFFICKING .....	16
Chapter 3: Legal Framework.....	17
3.1 PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY .....	17
3.2 ISRAEL .....	19
Chapter 4: Methodology.....	19
4.1 STUDY DESIGN .....	19
4.2 DESK REVIEW .....	20
4.3 DATA COLLECTION.....	20

4.4 SAMPLING .....	21
4.5 ETHICS AND SAFETY .....	21
4.6 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS .....	22
4.7 LIMITATIONS .....	22

## Chapter 5: Presentation of Study Findings..... 22

5.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON STUDY RESPONDENTS .....	22
6.2 SEX WORK .....	26
6.3 TRAFFICKING .....	30
6.4 CASE PROFILE (TRAFFICKING) .....	30

## Chapter 7: Sex Work and Physical and Sexual Violence ..... 31

7.1 PHYSICAL VIOLENCE .....	32
7.2 SEXUAL VIOLENCE .....	33
7.3 ACCESS TO SERVICES.....	34

## Chapter 8: Findings on HIV/AIDS..... 36

8.1 HIV/AIDS AWARENESS.....	36
8.2 HIV PREVENTION .....	38

## Chapter 9: Conclusion and Recommendations..... 42

9.1 LEGISLATION .....	42
9.2 POLICY .....	43
9.3 PROGRAMMES .....	44

## Appendix I: Survey for Sex Workers/Former Sex Workers ..... 49

Appendix II: Survey for Key Informants.....	56
Appendix III: Survey for Clients.....	59
Annex IV: Focus Group Discussion Guide (Female).....	62
Annex V: Focus Group Discussion Guide (Male).....	65

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Types of Respondents .....	23
Figure 2: Respondents by Sector and Governorate .....	23
Figure 3: Women in Sex Work, Incidence of Past Physical and Sexual Violence.....	34
Figure 4: Perceptions of Vulnerability to HIV .....	36
Figure 5: Condom Use .....	39
Figure 6: Percentage of HIV Testing .....	40



## List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
GFATM	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NAC	(Palestinian) National AIDS Committee
NIS	New Israeli Shekel
NGO	non-governmental organization
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
STI	sexually transmitted infection
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNGIFT	United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSCO	United Nations Special Coordinator Office for the Middle East Peace Process
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WHO	World Health Organization



## Executive Summary

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), within the framework the joint UN programme “Scaling up universal access to prevention, treatment and care of HIV/AIDS in the occupied Palestinian territory,” and financed through the Global Fund for HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), undertook operational research to explore the dynamics of sex work and its associated vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS in the Palestinian context.

This research investigates the factors that drive women into both elective and forced sex work and their varying vulnerabilities in acquiring HIV/AIDS. A rapid assessment methodology was utilized to obtain a formative look into these issues and to address the knowledge gap that exists on sex work and HIV vulnerability in the Palestinian context. Surveys were conducted with women who had entered sex work both voluntarily and forcibly, as well as with clients who had sought to purchase sexual services, and other key informants ranging from social workers to medical personnel and law enforcement officials. In addition, focus groups discussions with university students, both male and female, were also conducted.

While the operational research focused on the governorates of Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Bethlehem within the oPt, some data was also collected from additional governorates. In total, 243 respondents participated in the operational research: 28 sex workers, 63 key informants, 64 clients, and 88 university students. The assessment was conducted through a snowball sampling technique.

### The following is a list of key findings from the assessment:

- Whereas the organization of sex workers in other country contexts has yielded some positive results related to HIV prevention through the promotion of condom use, the nuances of forced sex work in the oPt may necessitate a more in-depth look at how to address sexual violence and abuse as a means of HIV prevention.
- 35.7 percent of the women sex workers surveyed for this research reported that they were engaged in elective sex work, while 64.3 percent reported that they were forcibly engaged in sex work.
- Women sex worker respondents reported a high rate of previous physical violence; 96.3 percent indicated that they had been victims of violence, of which, over half cited a husband or father as the perpetrator of physical violence.
- Women sex worker respondents also reported a relatively high rate of previous sexual violence, with 76 percent of them reporting to have been victims of sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner or family member.
- 74 percent of the women sex worker respondents involved in the research did not

complete their formal education; 93 percent of those who did not complete school cited their family as the reason for dropping out.

- 60 percent of the women sex workers surveyed reported to be aware of HIV, while 39 percent indicated that they had no familiarity with the subject. As for men purchasing sexual services, 98.4 percent of those surveyed in the research reported to be aware of HIV, while only 1.6 percent indicated that they had no familiarity with the subject.
- Fear of scandals, tradition/religion, and a lack of adequate information were all listed by survey respondents as primary limitations to HIV awareness.
- Both clients and women sex workers were asked about their perceived vulnerability to HIV. Among the clients surveyed, 81.2 percent did not consider themselves to be vulnerable to HIV, while 18.8 percent believed themselves to be vulnerable. Among the women sex workers surveyed, only 18 percent believed that they were vulnerable to HIV.
- When asked how often clients used condoms during sexual intercourse, 64 percent of the women sex workers surveyed reported that their clients never use condoms. Those who reported that they did not know whether their clients used condoms stated that they were often under the influence of drugs and therefore could not recall. Reasons provided for not using condoms included client preference, the objection of madams<sup>1</sup>, lack of money, infertility, and simply that it was not considered.
- When asked how often they use condoms when having sexual intercourse with a sex worker, 37.5 percent of the clients surveyed stated “always”; 11 percent stated “often”; 37.5 percent stated “sometimes”; and 14 percent stated “never”. The relatively higher percentage of men who stated that they always wear condoms could be a reflection of some social desirability bias, whereby respondents provide answers that are considered more socially acceptable.
- Of those clients that reported not to use condoms during sexual intercourse, the primary reason given for not using a condom was a reduction in pleasure.
- Across all survey data, there was a low level of knowledge on where an individual can obtain an HIV test. While 28 percent of the male clients interviewed reported that they had been tested for HIV, only 12 percent reported that they knew where they could receive a confidential HIV test in their own community. This suggests that certain males are going outside of their own communities to seek confidential testing.
- Among the women sex workers surveyed, only 18.5 percent reported that they had been tested for HIV, while the remaining 81.5 percent reported that they had never been tested.

<sup>1</sup> A woman who is in charge of a group of sex workers who live or work in the same house, Cambridge dictionary.

- Stigma related to HIV is prevalent and when key informants, primarily service providers within their community, were asked whether or not they would like to keep it secret if a member of their family contracted HIV, 71.4 percent stated that they would.

The following is a sample of key recommendations based on the assessment. These recommendations are provided in further detail in Chapter 10:

- Strengthen the national HIV and AIDS policy in the oPt.
- Create and ensure access to confidential HIV testing services within the oPt.
- Implement programmes that empower women to make decisions related to sexual and reproductive health. Educational materials on HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) should be readily available to both men and women regardless of marital status. Efforts should be made to provide educational materials to both urban and rural areas and to bridge socio-economic divides.
- Develop a school curriculum that addresses gender-based violence, women's human rights, and sexual and reproductive health, including HIV and STIs.
- Make use of media outlets as means of sensitization about HIV to reduce stigma and dispel clichés around the issue through sharing stories and testimonies of people who contracted HIV.
- Strengthen national efforts to integrate women into the formal labour force, ensuring equal access to assets and promoting skills training for women in non-traditional areas to ensure that women have the opportunity to enter innovative and expanding sectors.
- Develop a comprehensive national action plan addressing gender-based violence and tackling physical and sexual violence, forced prostitution and human trafficking.
- Train police forces to identify and assist victims of gender-based violence, including victims of forced prostitution and human trafficking.
- Until the new unified Palestinian Penal Code is enacted, use the provisions on forced prostitution contained in the Jordanian Penal Code (Articles 310-318), currently enforced in the West Bank, as a means of protecting women against forced prostitution.
- Repeal Article 340<sup>2</sup> of the Jordanian Penal Code, currently effective in the West Bank, which provides for a reduced sentence for those who commit crimes in the name of "honour," and ensure that it is not included in the new unified Palestinian Penal Code.

<sup>2</sup> On 15 May 2011, the Palestinian Authority issued a Presidential Decree amending the Palestinian penal code to cancel leniency for so-called "honour crimes". As of June 2011 the presidential decree has not entered into effect.



## Chapter 1: Introduction

UN Women, within the framework of the joint UN programme "Scaling up universal access to prevention, treatment and care of HIV/AIDS in the occupied Palestinian territory" and financed through the Global Fund for HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), undertook operational research to explore the dynamics of sex work and its associated vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS.

This research is intended to provide a formative look into sex work in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from individuals with primary or secondary knowledge of the trade in this area. The research serves to address the gap of information on sex work in the oPt and its associated vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS.

In the 2008 report on the global AIDS epidemic issued by UNAIDS, it was estimated that there were approximately 33 million people living with HIV/AIDS globally. According to this report, young people between 15-24 years old accounted for nearly half of all new HIV infections worldwide, with the majority of infections continuing to occur in the developing world where poverty, lack of access to health services, and gender inequalities may contribute to the spread of the disease. According to a recent report on the UN Millennium Development Goals, in low and middle income countries, it was estimated that only 31 percent of young men aged 15-24 and 19 percent of young women of the same age have an accurate understanding of HIV (United Nations 2009).

Though seldom reported, the HIV epidemic in the Middle East and North Africa region is growing steadily with an increase in estimated cases from 200,000 in 2001 to 310,000 in 2008 (UNAIDS 2010). At present, the Palestinian Authority (PA) Ministry of Health has reported a cumulative total of 19 cases of asymptomatic HIV and 47 cases of AIDS since 1986 (2010). Despite the fact that the reliability of available data on cases of HIV/AIDS in the oPt is questionable, the World Health Organization (WHO) still suggests that prevalence is low, at less than 1% of the total population (2009).

Even in countries with low HIV prevalence, significantly higher rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV are found among sex workers and clients when compared to other population groups (UNAIDS 2002; UNAIDS 2008; UNAIDS 2010). As research suggests that HIV infection will likely spread amongst sex workers prior to spreading to the general population, an investigation into the vulnerabilities to HIV among groups involved in sex work in the oPt provides a useful first glimpse into relevant preventative measures for HIV infection for the general population of the oPt.



During this operational research, a gender framework was utilized to analyze the underlying issues that increase women sex workers vulnerabilities to HIV, for instance vis-à-vis their access to opportunities, previous experience of gender-based violence, balance of power, and ability to negotiate sexual relationships.

The topic of the research was of such a sensitive nature that all experienced Palestinian researchers who were approached to lead the study declined the position. Thus, an international consultant was selected to act as senior researcher and to coordinate a Palestinian field research team. Great appreciation is due to the local research team that undertook this courageous and pioneering work in exploring these themes despite the resistance and obstacles they encountered in doing so.

## Objectives

The objectives and related operational research questions are as follows:

- To explore the nature of sex work among women in East Jerusalem and the West Bank
- What are the means and methods of recruitment into sex work?
- Is entry into sex work voluntary or forced?
- What is the role of pimps or madams?
- What is the role of the family?
- To investigate the determinants of vulnerability of women to forced sex work and trafficking
- What are the demographics of women that are victims of forced sex work and trafficking?
- Do protective factors such as level of education, geographic location, religion, or socio-economic status seem to affect vulnerabilities?
- To analyze entry into sex work from a gender perspective
- What are the cultural norms surrounding gender equality?
- How common is previous familial physical or sexual violence among sex workers?
- What social stigma exists for women sex workers?
- Do women sex workers have the ability to negotiate sexual relationships?
- What is the nature of the demand for sex work among clientele in the oPt?
- To understand the perceptions of HIV vulnerability among varied groups involved in sex work
- What is the level of awareness of HIV/AIDS?
- Do sex workers and/or clients believe they are at risk of HIV?



- What factors influence the use of condoms?
- To understand the availability and accessibility of medical, legal, and protective services for women sex workers
- Are condoms accessible?
- What services are available for HIV testing and what is the cost?
- What social services are available to women involved in sex work?
- What hindrances to access exist?

## Conceptual Framework

**Rapid Assessment:** The operational research was carried out using a rapid assessment methodology, which seeks to gain valuable information on hidden populations within a relatively short period of time. Rapid assessments are often the selected methodology used in research seeking to investigate complicated situations where little or no data currently exists and where the issues are not yet well defined. Data is collected over a relatively short period of time and research methods are triangulated to obtain information from multiple sources.

**Sex Work:** The definition of sex work utilized for this operational research was “an exchange of money or goods for sexual services, either regularly or occasionally...where the sex worker may or may not consciously define such activity as income-generating” (UNAIDS 2002). Short-term “transactional sex” as a temporary and informal activity was also explored.

It is imperative to note that sex work may be chosen voluntarily as an option for employment or survival. It may also be a situation forced upon an individual or derived through coercion and deception and may involve violence, trafficking, or debt-bondage (UNAIDS 2002). When specifically referring to non-voluntary or coerced sexual services in exchange for money or goods in this research, the term “forced sex work” is used. In situations of forced sex work, psychological and/or physical abuse of the individual is common. Financial gain obtained from the sexual service provided is also often diverted to a third party.

**Human Trafficking:** Article 3 of the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children defines human trafficking as the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion... for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others” (United Nations 2000). Trafficking can be a means of entry into situations of forced prostitution, may occur both across and within national borders, and may or may not involve organized criminal networks (UNODC 2010).





## Chapter 2: Palestinian Context

### 2.1 Demographic Profile

The oPt is composed of two geographically separated regions, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Additional information on the geopolitical context can be found in Section 2.3 of this document.

The oPt ranks 110th out of 182 according to UNDP's Human Development Index, which accounts for statistics beyond Gross Domestic Product (GDP), such as life expectancy, education, and standard of living, in order to provide a more comprehensive analysis of development (2009).

There are approximately four million people living in the oPt with an average fertility rate of 5.1 births per female and an expected population of 5.8 million by the year 2020 (UNDP 2009). The literacy rate is high at 93.8 percent (UNDP 2009) and Palestinian girls receive equal access as Palestinian boys to both basic and secondary education (PCBS 2008).

Although levels of education among girls and boys in the oPt are comparable, women are far less represented in the formal employment sector. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), female participation in the labour force was 15.5 percent compared to 67 percent participation by males in 2010.

### 2.2 Socio-economic Profile

Research has consistently shown that socio-economic status plays a significant role regarding women's entry into sex work (Zimmerman 2003; UNDP 2007; Warnath 2007). Whether voluntarily entering or forced into sex work out of economic necessity, poverty continues to be one of the prominent factors related to entry into sex work.

The pressing need for income-generating opportunities creates fertile ground for exploitation. Unscrupulous traffickers prey on young women seeking work and families may be easily seduced into selling their children, knowingly or unknowingly, into sex work (UNAIDS 2002).

Unemployment in the oPt is increasing and the direct impact of closures and restrictions on movement cannot be overestimated in terms of influencing women's entrance into sex work. In the West Bank, 17.8 percent of the population was unemployed in 2010, while 38.6 percent was unemployed in Gaza (PCBS 2010). In the West Bank, the governorates of Qalqiliya, Hebron, Tulkarem, and Bethlehem reported the highest levels of unemployment (PCBS 2010). Within this context, young women have been on several occasions reported to bear the burden of unemployment to a greater extent than their male counterparts (UNSCO 2008).

The World Bank makes mention that these figures on unemployment do not provide a full picture of the economic situation in the oPt, as they do not account for underemployment, as seen in the large number of residents that have turned to unpaid family labour or seasonal agricultural work, nor do they include discouraged workers who have left the labour force (2008). Nineteen percent of West Bank residents live below the poverty line, while residents of Gaza face much more dire circumstances, with over 50 percent living in poverty (World Bank 2008).

As occupied territory, the oPt has unique and specific geopolitical factors that influence rates of poverty and unemployment. Restrictions on movement, displacement and discrimination resulting from the Israeli occupation are intrinsically related to the problems of poverty, unemployment and the associated vulnerabilities to trafficking and sex work in the oPt.

### 2.3 Geopolitical Context

The State of Israel was created in 1948 following a vote of the United Nations General Assembly that foresaw the partitioning of the British Mandate of Palestine into three entities: a Jewish State, an Arab State and Jerusalem under international control as a *corpus separatum*. In 1967, the Six-Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbours resulted in the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, thereafter known as the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). In 1980, Israel annexed occupied East Jerusalem, declared it part of a unified Jerusalem, and extended Israeli laws to the city's Palestinian residents. This annexation of East Jerusalem was condemned by the United Nations and is not recognized by the international community as part of Israel to this day. Rather, East Jerusalem is still considered occupied territory.

Palestinians that lived in East Jerusalem prior to its annexation by Israel in 1980 were given "permanent residency" status by the State of Israel, the same status provided to foreigners that wish to reside in Israel. Permanent residents have the right to vote in local elections, but not in parliamentary elections. While Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem pay taxes to the Jerusalem municipality, the municipality's discriminatory preference for Jewish areas results in significantly less investment in infrastructure and services in the Arab areas of East Jerusalem (B'Tselem 2008).

Life under Israeli military occupation is characterized by checkpoints, roadblocks, road closures, and bypass roads that facilitate the movement of Israeli settlers living in the West Bank, which is illegal under international law. Under Israeli military control, the residents of the oPt are subjected to a range of human rights abuses including, but not limited to, unlawful administrative detention, restrictions on movement, excessive use of force by Israeli forces, violence perpetrated by Jewish settlers, home demolitions, and unequal access to water, whereby Jewish settlements throughout the West Bank are provided preferential distribution of scarce water resources (B'Tselem 2008).

In conflict settings such as the oPt, characterized by violence, human rights violations, loss of land and property, and political unrest, the capacity of communities to achieve sustainable livelihoods is reduced and their vulnerability to exploitation increases (UNDP 2007). The impact of conflict and weak governance particularly affects the most vulnerable in society, including women and girls.



In recent research on Palestinian women and security, women specifically cited fear of housing demolitions, violence by Israeli forces and settlers, and fears related to the political split between Fatah and Hamas as affecting their perceptions of security in daily life (Chaban 2010). However, Palestinian women's fears were not limited to political unrest, but also included difficulties within their own homes and communities.

## 2.4 Gender

Palestinian women have named sexual harassment in the street, fear of gossip, subsequent repercussions on family "honour", and domestic violence as threats to their personal security in daily life in the oPt (Chaban 2010).

While trends on the treatment of women in a given society often reflect cultural norms, frustrations that Palestinians endure as an occupied population can also manifest in the home. Men who feel insecure and powerless may choose violence as a means to assert control over their family in order to feel a renewed sense of power (Wing 1996; Al-Rafai 2007).

According to a PCBS survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip focusing on domestic violence, 61.7 percent of married women surveyed had been exposed to psychological violence, 23.3 percent to physical violence, and 10.9 percent to sexual violence by their husbands (2006). In the same survey, 27.9 percent of women agreed that a husband should beat his wife if she leaves the house without his permission (2006).

There is great stigma attached to speaking out about domestic violence in Palestinian society. Many women fear the loss of their children, divorce, increased abuse, or even murder as a result of coming forward with accusations of domestic violence (Chaban 2010). The prevailing culture also tends to reject domestic violence as a criminal matter, instead placing emphasis on family privacy and solidarity in addressing such matters (Douki, Nacef et al. 2003). Thus women risk ostracism and social isolation if they give precedence to their own well-being and safety above the reputation of their family (Douki, Nacef et al. 2003).

Divorce is also highly stigmatized within Palestinian society in the oPt. If a divorce occurs, a woman must usually return to her immediate family or the home of her brother and often has difficulty in remarrying.

When family honour is disgraced and a woman is perceived as the cause of this disgrace, some families turn to violence as a means of upholding the honour that they perceive to have been lost. The prospect of honour killings and honour violence seeks to control the sexuality of women with the most grievous of consequences. In the Middle-East, victims of so-called "honour crimes" are almost always women, including women victims of rape or incest, while the incidence of these types of sexual violence within the home is not unusual (Human Rights Watch 2006; Ouis and Myhrman 2007).

In a review of documents collected in the West Bank by the Al-Muntada Coalition to Combat Violence Against Women on so-called "honour-related crimes" from 2004 to 2006, perpetrators included brothers, fathers and mothers. Reasons for murder ranged from

suspicion of sexual relations, being a victim of incest, or becoming pregnant from an *urfi* marriage<sup>3</sup> (Al-Rifai 2007).

At present, within the current Palestinian criminal law, punishment for criminal offences are lessened or alleviated if the circumstances are related to family honour. Suggested changes to the penal code regarding so-called honour-related violence are currently under discussion<sup>4</sup>.

Cultural norms surrounding women's sexuality, gender roles, and the propensity for gender-based violence highly influences the way in which sex work is organized in the oPt. Cultural attitudes of male sexual privilege reinforce the demand for sex work and social norms emphasizing male sexual dominance encourage an environment in which potential for violence against women is endemic (UNAIDS 2002).

Prevailing patriarchal social systems in the oPt, in which power balances are unequal, reinforce women's lower status, promote dependency, and make females vulnerable to exploitation. Madams, pimps, family members, and others that wish to sexually exploit a woman for profit may take advantage of the erosion of a woman's self-confidence that may result from years of inferior treatment and past abuses in the family (Warnath 2007).

Patriarchal social systems also influence who has access to information. In countries where women's power is limited and women's purity and sexual ignorance is expected, women often experience difficulty in accessing information on sexual and reproductive health and possess little to no negotiating power in sexual relationships (UNIFEM, now part of UN Women, 2001). These factors put women at a higher risk for HIV, as they are unable to demand the preventative measures necessary to curb the spread of HIV and STIs.

## 2.5 HIV/AIDS

In the 2008 report on the global AIDS epidemic by UNAIDS, it was estimated that there were approximately 33 million people living with HIV and AIDS globally (2008). Young people aged 15-24 accounted for nearly half of all new HIV infections worldwide and the majority of infections continue to occur in the developing world, where poverty, lack of access to health services, and gender inequalities may contribute to the spread of the disease (2008). According to a recent report on the Millennium Development Goals, in low and middle income countries, it was estimated that only 31 percent of young men aged 15-24 and 19 percent of young women of the same age have an accurate understanding of HIV (United Nations 2009).

Though seldom reported, the HIV epidemic in the Middle East and North Africa region is growing steadily with an increase in estimated cases from 200,000 in 2001 to 310,000 in 2008 (UNAIDS 2010). At present, the PA Ministry of Health has reported a cumulative total of 19 cases of asymptomatic HIV and 47 cases of AIDS since 1986. Of the 47 AIDS cases, the majority were men and in over half of the cases, transmission of HIV occurred through heterosexual sex (2010).

<sup>3</sup> Similar to "common law" marriage in the West, *urfi* marriage occurs without an official contract where couples pledge verbally that they are married. One cannot seek a divorce from an *urfi* marriage, as they are not considered legal unions by the government.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.



Many consider diagnosis and surveillance methods for HIV in the oPt to be impeded by stigma and a general denial of risky practices (Spratt 2000), which may lead to the underestimation of their prevalence. Despite the fact that the reliability of data available is questionable, prevalence of HIV in the oPt is likely low, at less than 1% of the total population (World Health Organization 2009). Even in countries with low HIV prevalence, however, significantly higher rates of STIs and HIV are found among sex workers and clients when compared to other population groups (UNAIDS 2002; UNAIDS 2010).

While sex workers are a population that may be likely to respond positively to prevention programmes for HIV and STIs through increasing condom use with clients (UNAIDS 2002), the nuances of forced sex work in the oPt may necessitate a more in-depth look into how to address sexual violence and abuse as a means of HIV prevention.

Women who have entered sex work involuntarily, whether through human trafficking or other means, may be at even higher risk of HIV infection. In addition to women usually lacking the bargaining power to negotiate the use of condoms, the sexual violence often involved in forced sex work further compounds the risk of HIV, as the physical trauma inflicted on a woman's body during forced sex work can cause mucous membranes to tear and thus increase the possibility of HIV transmission (UNAIDS 2002; World Health Organization 2005). A study by Harvard University researchers demonstrated an HIV prevalence of 23 percent among the study population of women and girls who had escaped sex trafficking situations in Mumbai, India (Silverman, Decker et al. 2006).

Article 14 of the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on HIV/AIDS Declaration of Commitment states that "gender equality and the empowerment of women are fundamental elements in the reduction of the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV/AIDS" (United Nations 2001). Gender-based discrimination can interfere with women's access to information and services needed to ensure sexual and reproductive health. Economic and social dependence on men may also limit the power of women to refuse sex or to negotiate the use of condoms (UNAIDS 2010). Furthermore, sexual violence and cultural practices such as forced and early marriage create additional limitations to negotiating sexual relationships and associated measures to prevent against HIV.

## 2.6 Human Trafficking

A plethora of discussions and debates exist on the definition of human trafficking. The term is generally used to describe some form of coercive or deceptive recruitment, followed by transport within or beyond the borders of one's home country, and arrival at a destination point, followed by exploitative labour or sexual servitude. Trafficking is considered a means of entry into situations of forced sex work.

At present, the primary international definition of human trafficking comes from the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (also known as the Trafficking Protocol) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000. As defined by this protocol, trafficking in persons is "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability...for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others..." (United Nations 2000).

In a global report on human trafficking, the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UNGIFT) suggests that most trafficking is regional or national, that perpetrators of trafficking crimes are most often the same nationality as their victims, and that females are not only the most vulnerable to becoming victims of trafficking, but are also increasingly responsible for carrying out trafficking offences (UNODC 2009).

Concern over human trafficking is growing globally and a number of countries have developed legislation that criminalizes both the forced sex work of others as well as human trafficking. Certain governments, such as Sweden, have also made efforts to reduce demand by prosecuting clients of sexual services (Government of Sweden 1999). In addition to legislation, numerous governments have also developed specialized police personnel to deal with human trafficking cases and many countries have developed national plans of action to fight the trafficking of persons (UNODC 2009).

While sex work is illegal in the oPt, anecdotal evidence suggests that women and girls are engaged in situations of forced sex work through escort services, brothels, private houses, and house cleaning services, with such activities most commonly occurring in discreet apartments operated by Palestinian madams in the oPt. Within these cases of forced sex work, human trafficking has also been discovered, with victims from Eastern Europe having been trafficked through Israel into the oPt, as well as Palestinian women having been internally trafficked within the territory<sup>5</sup>.

Article Six of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) requires that State parties take "all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution of women" (United Nations 1979). While the PA has endorsed CEDAW, weak governance and the absence of legislation on human trafficking and forced prostitution in the oPt enables those who sexually exploit others for profit to operate without fear of consequence and further acts as a disincentive for victims in seeking justice and legal redress.

<sup>5</sup> Trafficking and Forced Prostitution of Palestinian Women and Girls: Forms of Modern Day Slavery (SAWA, 2008).





## Chapter 3: Legal Framework

### 3.1 Palestinian Authority

At the present time, no unified Palestinian law exists for the oPt as a whole. Rather, different laws are applicable in different parts of the oPt. For instance, Jordanian and Egyptian penal code continue to apply to the West Bank and Gaza Strip respectively, while, since 1967, East Jerusalem has been under the jurisdiction and administration of the State of Israel and thus subject to its laws.

Draft Palestinian unified legal codes exist and have been circulated amongst civil society stakeholders; however, no actual revisions to the mentioned laws have been finalized or endorsed. Existing criminal law for the West Bank is currently based on Jordanian Penal Law No. 16 (1960). Under this present penal code, a number of existing articles discriminate against women. In Article 301, for example, provisions on rape make a distinction between virgin and non-virgin victims of sexual violence, with harsher penalties to those who commit violence against a virgin (Government of Jordan 1960). Article 308 allows a court to cease legal action or suspend the sentence of rapists who agree to marry their victims, while no provisions for marital rape exist, as the Jordanian penal code does not recognize sexual violence committed within marriage (Government of Jordan 1960).

No specific laws currently exist within the penal code to criminalize physical or sexual violence against women within the family. Furthermore, discriminatory provisions abound, such as Article 286 that states that only male family members have the right to file incest charges on behalf of minors (Government of Jordan 1960). This lack of legislative protection within the home is further aggravated by the existence of a law providing a reduction in the penalty for crimes committed in the name of “honour”, including murder. So-called “honour crimes” are provided with reduced penalties under Article 340 of Jordanian Penal Law No. 16 (1960)<sup>6</sup>.

#### Provisions related to sex work do exist within the Jordanian Penal Code from 1960, the current criminal code used in the West Bank:

- Article 310 provides for one month to three years of imprisonment and a fine for incitement to sex work (“prostitution”).
- Article 311 punishes incitement to sex work (“prostitution”) by coercion, including threats and intimidation, with one to three years imprisonment.
- Article 312 provides for up to six months of imprisonment or a fine for preparing, running, or owning a brothel.
- Article 315 states that any male whose livelihood depends all or in part on what

a female earns from sex work (“prostitution”) shall be imprisoned for six months to two years. If that male is cohabitating, controlling, or forcing her into sex work (“prostitution”), he will be considered to be knowingly dependent on her earnings unless otherwise proved.

- Article 316 provides for imprisonment for up to one year and a fine for any woman (madam) that is affecting the mobility of a woman sex worker (“prostitute”) and forcing her into sex work (“prostitution”).
- Article 317 punishes anyone who holds a woman against her will for the practice of sex work (“prostitution”) with two months to two years imprisonment.

While provisions against sex work exist, there are no specific laws that address human trafficking. However, the provisions listed above regarding forced sex work can be used until such trafficking laws are developed and adopted. There is currently a Palestinian Authority committee that was created to discuss the concept on human trafficking and potential legal frameworks for trafficking that may be instituted in the oPt in the future.

The draft Palestinian penal code, most recently amended in 2003, has not yet been approved by the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). Drafts are continually being revised, but it is not yet certain whether changes will be made to provisions of the previous Jordanian penal code that are considered discriminatory towards women, including but not limited to articles 286, 308, and 340.

Beyond the existence of a legislative framework, the applicability of the law must also be taken into consideration when considering women’s protection from and prosecution of perpetrators of crimes and in particular violence against women. The protection of women victims of forced sex work who are willing to file legal complaints against their abusers requires close attention. Women filing complaints potentially face risks of re-victimization by their perpetrators as well as by family members for reasons related to so-called “family honour”. For these reasons, broad consideration of aspects related to legislative frameworks and social protection is required. Currently, only a small percentage of women sex workers get referred to courts and in almost all of these cases, legal intervention is pursued due to the necessity of achieving child custody, because some other measure of child exploitation is involved, or due to the identification of political collaboration of the sex workers with the Israeli government.

With regard to international legal instruments, although the oPt is not recognized as a State and is thus unable to ratify international conventions, in March 2009, the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, signed a decree endorsing CEDAW and its implementation in the oPt. Furthermore, the most recent draft of the Basic Law of Palestine, which provides a constitutional framework for the rights of Palestinians and functions as a temporary constitution for the Palestinian Authority until the establishment of an independent State, affirms that the Palestinian Authority will strive “without delay” to join the regional and international declarations that uphold human rights (Palestinian Legislative Council 2003). As reflected above, in order to fall in-line with international standards on women’s rights, a number of changes will need to be made to the national legislative framework.

<sup>6</sup> ibid., p. 8.



Promoting legislation that provides for greater gender equity will not only be an investment in greater social and economic development, but will also indirectly affect women's vulnerability to HIV.

## 3.2 Israel

Since 1967, following Israel's military occupation of the oPt, East Jerusalem has been under the administration of the State of Israel. Additionally, because Palestinian courts do not have jurisdiction over Israeli settlers that live in the oPt, Israel is responsible for prosecuting, in accordance with Israeli law, criminal activity that occurs in Jewish settlements throughout East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Regarding sex work, while the practice itself is legal in Israel, the organized sex work of others through brothels and pimping is prohibited (Government of Israel 1977). Human trafficking was explicitly included into the Israeli criminal code in 2000 and Israel developed a national action plan to fight human trafficking that was approved in 2007 (UNODC 2009).

In an effort to reduce demand for sex work within Israel, the Knesset<sup>7</sup> drafted and introduced in its assembly in 2009, a law targeting clients of sex workers. The *Prohibition of the Use of Paid Sexual Services Law*, if passed, will criminalize purchasing sexual services and will set a punishment of six months in prison or a community treatment for first-time offenders. The bill is currently under review (U.S. Department of State 2009).

As an occupying power, Israel is responsible for the international treaties and conventions it is party to in all areas under its control, including the oPt. In its 2005 report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Israel indicated that it offers an emergency helpline for battered women through its Ministry of Social Affairs that provides services in Arabic (Government of Israel 2005). Additionally, the Government of Israel cited that nine investigative positions for matters of domestic violence are reserved for Arab women to serve Arab neighbourhoods (2005). However, such efforts only target Arab citizens of Israel. Furthermore, the Israeli occupation and the unilateral annexation of East Jerusalem create a situation in which Palestinian women living in the oPt may refuse or be hesitant to seek assistance or access services from the occupying power, as it is viewed with distrust and anger.

<sup>7</sup> Israeli Parliament

# Chapter 4: Methodology

## 4.1 Study Design

The operational research consisted of a cross-sectional rapid assessment. Rapid assessments are often the selected methodology used when seeking to investigate complicated situations about which little to no data currently exists and where the issues are not yet well defined. Data is collected over a relatively short period of time and research methods are triangulated to obtain information from multiple sources. This research included a diverse collection of primary and secondary data and was structured within the following framework: (a) desk review, (b) interviews with sex workers, (c) interviews with key informants, (d) interviews with clients, (e) case profiles, and (f) focus groups with university students.

## 4.2 Desk Review

A desk review was conducted to obtain background information on the demographics of the oPt, current and proposed legislation on forced sex work and human trafficking, gender issues, data on HIV in the Arab region, and other relevant information on sex work. Data sources included academic research, official statistics, and reports from UN Agencies as well as non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations.

## 4.3 Data Collection

The operational research used both individual interviews and focus group discussions as a means of gathering data. Primary data was collected from target groups during individual interviews using semi-structured questionnaires that elicited both quantitative and qualitative data. Open-ended discussion guides were utilized for focus groups with university students. Consent of respondents was sought prior to both individual interviews and focus groups and assurances of anonymity were provided.

## Survey Data

Under the supervision of the senior researcher, three surveys consisting of both closed and open-ended questions were disseminated. The surveys were structured specifically to the following target groups a) sex workers, b) key informants, and c) clients. Topical areas covered in the surveys included demographics, voluntary or non-voluntary entry into sex work, recruitment techniques, history of physical or sexual violence, perception of HIV risk, availability of health services, and demand for sexual services.

Dissemination of the questionnaire was primarily done in-person with the option of surveying via mobile phone as necessitated by the accessibility of target groups. An online version



of the client survey was also prepared for those clients that sought an additional measure of anonymity when providing information. Interviews were conducted in Arabic with the results of the survey manually recorded by the field researchers. Data was then translated into English for the senior researcher's use.

### Focus Groups

Focus groups with university students were chosen as a means of data collection as they provide a community setting for open dialogue and can be beneficial in gathering rich qualitative data from the perspective of young people. Focus groups were held at Bir Zeit University in Ramallah, Al-Quds University in East Jerusalem, and Bethlehem University with a total of 52 female and 36 male participants. Topics of discussion included gender, knowledge of sex work, and awareness of HIV.

## 4.4 Sampling

A purposeful non-random sampling was employed, using a snowball sampling technique to access sex workers, key informants and clients. The assessment included a total of 243 respondents: 28 sex workers, 63 key informants, 64 clients and 88 university students through focus groups. Efforts were made to include a diverse range of participants with particular emphasis on sex workers themselves, street outreach workers, clients of sex workers, community health personnel, and law enforcement officials. Face-to-face interviews were preferred, with mobile phone interviews and online surveys available as alternatives for groups with difficult access.

Several eligibility criteria existed for respondents in the study. The sex worker survey was conducted for any Palestinian woman living in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, who had sold sexual services, either forced or voluntarily, within the year prior to the research. The key informant survey was provided to social workers, government ministries, lawyers, law enforcement officials, and other persons that were thought to have information on sex work. The client survey was conducted for males living in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, who had purchased sexual services within the year prior to the research.

## 4.5 Ethics and Safety

### Ethics

Participants were informed of the purpose of the study prior to being interviewed and were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. In-person interviews were conducted in private where participants could feel greater freedom to share sensitive experiences. Persons involved in sex work, clients of sex workers, and university students were also provided with informative literature on HIV/AIDS.

### Safety

Safety protocols for field researchers were put in place to ensure security when conducting in-person interviews. Researchers were instructed to attend interviews in pairs when going to locations where they did not feel comfortable. Field researchers were also instructed to be in contact by mobile phone with the Research Coordinator to report their locations and scheduled interviews for the week.

### Training

The field researchers selected for the study are professionals in various realms of social work, counselling, sexuality, and violence against women. Individuals on the research team with specific expertise on sex workers provided some informal training materials to the rest of the team. Additionally, the Senior Researcher provided instruction regarding proper interview techniques for conducting surveys on sensitive topics as well as access strategies for seeking information from hard-to-reach groups.

## 4.6 Data Management and Analysis

Survey data from the target groups was collected from field researchers and entered into a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) programme for analysis. Data was analyzed to establish trends and tables were generated to provide a visual display of data. These tables have been included throughout the report.

Qualitative data from focus groups was collected and analyzed through a process of data reduction (structuring, organizing, and streamlining data) for common patterns and themes.

A gender-analysis framework was used to further explore the dynamics of sex work by assessing access to services, power in decision-making, and how patterns are shaped by structural factors. The social construction of gender roles and power inequalities was investigated, as well as the experience of previous familial violence among sex workers, including both those engaged in sex work voluntarily and by force.

## 4.7 Limitations

This operational research was intended to be exploratory in nature to provide new information on sex work and vulnerabilities to HIV in the oPt. It was based on a non-probability sample and therefore the results should not be generalized to the larger population. However, exploratory studies of this kind provide an excellent initial glimpse into a social issue can inform future research and raise public awareness.

Difficulties with access to individuals involved in sex work was foreseen and encountered to some extent. The research team actively pursued as many connections as possible through the snowball sampling technique and gathered a commendable amount of data given the strong stigma attached to such activities in the oPt.





As with any survey on topics that are considered taboo, social desirability bias can occur when respondents tend to provide answers that would be seen as more socially acceptable. After a review of the data, it was found that questions related to sexual practices and HIV awareness, in general, appeared to elicit very candid responses that did not seemingly reflect a large degree of response bias. The only area that may be affected by some limited social desirability bias was that of condom use by male clients. See Section 9.2 for further explanation.

## Chapter 5: Presentation of Study Findings

This chapter presents a discussion and analysis of findings from the rapid assessment. The chapter is divided into four sections to include demographic information on study respondents, findings on sex work, findings on gender, and findings on HIV/AIDS.

### 5.1 Demographic Information on Study Respondents

In total, 243 individuals participated in this study: 155 completed a survey with field researchers and 88 participated in focus groups. Of the respondents for the surveys, 28 were women sex workers, 64 were men who had purchased sexual services and 63 were key informants. All 88 participants in the focus groups were university students. Key informants included social workers, medical personnel, law enforcement officials, professors, activists, and others who were well-informed on social issues within their communities.

While the geographic focus was on Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Ramallah governorates, some data was gathered from the remaining eight governorates within the West Bank, as available. The experiences and perceptions of these individuals are detailed in the following sections.

Figure 1: Types of Respondents

Type of Respondent	Male	Female	Total
Sex Worker	0	28	28
Key Informant	24	39	63
Client	64	0	64
Focus Group Participant (University Student)	36	52	88
Totals	124	119	243

Figure 2: Respondents by Sector and Governorate

Type of Respondent	Jerusalem	Nablus	Jericho	Jenin	Ramallah	Bethlehem	Hebron	Tubas	Salfit69	Tulkarem	Qalqilya
Sex Worker	3	0	2	2	7	9	3	0	0	1	1
Key Informant	22	1	0	0	12	18	8	1	1	0	0
Client	45	0	0	0	5	13	0	0	0	1	0
Focus Group Participant (University Student)	30	0	0	0	32	26	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	100	1	2	2	56	66	11	1	1	2	1



## Chapter 6: Findings on Sex Work

Of the women sex workers who served as respondents for the study, 35.7 percent (n=10) self-reported to be in elective sex work, while 64.3 percent (n=18) reported that they were in forced sex work. Among those who reported to be in elective sex work, 20 percent (n=2) stated that they were originally forced or coerced into sex work, but currently practice voluntarily, including one woman who now also serves as a madam (see Section 7.3).

When key informants were asked whether or not they believe women predominately entered into sex work willingly, 30.7 percent (n=19) said yes, 66.1 percent (n=41) said no they did not enter willingly, and 3.2 percent (n=2) said it was a mix of both elective and forced entry. When key informants were asked who, in their experience, they thought was the individual organizing the sex work, 38.1 percent (n=24) stated the husband was the organizer, 36.5 percent (n=23) cited the parent, 31.8 percent (n=20) said the woman herself, and 28.6 (n=18) said a stranger, followed by lesser numbers of respondents who reported friends, relatives, and neighbours as organizers. Respondents were able to report more than one answer.

While interviews with key informants and women sex workers reflected relatively high rates of force and coercion as a means of entry into sex work, clients of sex workers had different perceptions on the means of entry. When clients were asked whether or not they believed that women predominately entered into sex work willingly, of those who responded, 80.3 percent (n=49) reported that "yes," they believed women entered into sex work willingly, 14.8 percent (n=9) responded that "no," women did not enter sex work willingly, and 4.9 percent (n=3) said that it was a combination of women who entered sex work willingly and those who did not.

Fifty-two percent (n=33) of clients believed that women themselves were the primary organizers of their sex work, 25 percent (n=16) believed that friends were the organizers, 10.9 percent (n=7) thought a stranger was the primary organizer, followed by lesser numbers of clients who considered parents, husbands, or others to be in charge of the sex work.

Women sex workers who responded to the survey were between the ages of 19 and 45, with over half between the ages of 19 and 25. Of the sex workers surveyed, 39 percent (n=11) were single, 36 percent

*The areas where sexual services are being bought and sold are reported to include, but are not limited to:*

*Ramallah and surrounding (Al Bireh, Al Jalazon camp, Al Amari camp, Al Tireh, Bir Zeit, Bitunia, UmAlsharayet)*

*Jerusalem and surrounding (Abu Dis, Al Ezariya, Al Tur, Al Ram, Beit Hanina, Beit Safafa, El Azaria, Old City, Shu'fat, Silwan, Sur Baher, Talpiot, and Wadi Joz)*

*Jewish settlements in and around Jerusalem (Pisgat Ze'ev, Neve Yaakov, Atarot, Ma'alee Addumim)*

*Bethlehem and surrounding (Beit Jala, Beit Sahour, Husan)*

*Jericho*

*Jenin*

*Nablus*

*Hebron and surrounding (Dura, Halhol, Yatta)*

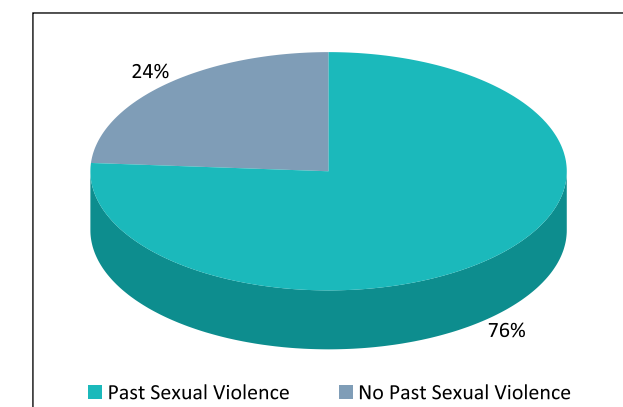
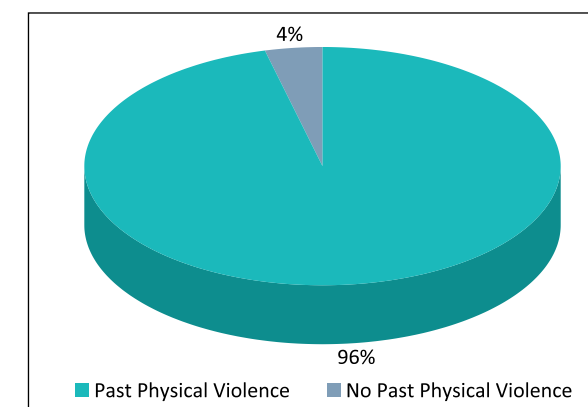
*Salfit*

*Qalqilya*

(n=10) were divorced, 18 percent (n=5) were married and 7 percent (n=2) were widowed. Of those women who were currently or previously married, 43 percent (n=12) were married between 13 and 15 years of age; 7 percent (n=2) between 16 and 17 years of age; 11 percent (n=3) between 18 and 22 years of age; and 39 percent (n=11) did not answer the question.

A high percentage of the women sex workers surveyed reported previous experience of physical violence; 96.3 percent (n=26) indicated that they had been victims of physical violence, over half of whom cited a husband or father as the perpetrator this violence.

The women sex workers surveyed also reported a relatively high rate of previous experience of sexual violence, with 76 percent (n=19) reporting to have been victims of sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner or family member.



### 6.1 Demand

The demand for sexual services from those clients surveyed for the study came from men ranging from 19 to 68 years of age. Of those surveyed for this study, clients were primarily between the ages of 31 to 40 (48.4 percent; n=31) and the ages of 21 to 30 (34.4 percent; n=22), followed by men between the ages of 41 to 50 (14.1 percent; n=9), and lesser numbers of those over 51 and under 20 years of age.

Professions of clients included, but were not limited to, farmers, migrant workers in Israel, public employees, construction workers, shop owners, taxi drivers, lawyers and doctors. Fifty-eight percent (n=37) of the clients surveyed were married, 32.8 percent (n=21) were single, 7.8 percent (n=5) were divorced and 1.6% (n=1) was widowed. Those who were married most often cited desire and sexual variety as the reason for seeking paid sexual services, while singles reported the taboo in engaging in consensual sexual relationships outside of marriage as a driving factor.

*The society is closed and there is no possibility to engage in sex comfortably in any other way.<sup>8</sup>*

While not a primary target in the purposive sampling technique, key informants indicated that teenage boys were another category of clientele who are having sexual relationships with sex workers.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with client in East Jerusalem, 25 April 2010.

*There are men who call themselves “teachers”. They will supply teenagers with rides and alcohol or drugs and then take them to private houses where they can have a sex worker. I used to be one of those boys. There were five of us that went with a “teacher”.<sup>9</sup>*

Across survey data, information was provided on the general types of locations where sex work is conducted within the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Given the illegal and taboo nature of the activities, sex work was reported to occur in private houses, abandoned homes, and unfinished buildings. Israeli houses in Jewish settlements were also cited.

## 6.2 Sex Work

Of the ten women who self-reported to be in situations of elective sex work, seven reported receiving monetary remuneration for sexual services and three reported receiving gifts or small necessities such as food, clothing, or mobile phone credit in exchange for sex.

Women sex workers most often named a private house of a non-relative as the most frequent location where paid sexual services occurred, followed by their own home, hotels, and the house of a relative.

Key informants and clients surveyed also described restaurants and coffee shops where women will “fish” for clients, often through the use of mobile devices, to provide a description of identity and to arrange secret meeting locations. Mobile phones were also reported to be used to make arrangements through madams.

*There is a woman in Al-Aram that you could call and she sends you a girl to the place that you want, or you can go pick the girl up.<sup>10</sup>*

From the surveys, examples of interconnectedness were found to exist between elective and forced sex work. In some cases, husbands and wives were reported to work together as a team, where the husband “encouraged” the wife to enter into sex work. The freedom of the wife to say yes or no is debatable and influenced by the availability of alternative economic options and the status of women in society.

*There was a case of a woman in Ramallah. She and her husband had a lot of loans so she, with her husband’s encouragement, had to engage in sex with borrowers to cancel the debts. She has two babies.<sup>11</sup>*

In the 35.7 percent (n=10) of cases of women that reported to be engaged in sex work voluntarily, 20 percent (n=2) had previously been exploited through some form of force or coercion into sex work. In one case, an addiction to drugs was noted as the primary element in continuing sex work.

*There is a woman whose husband gave her drugs until she became addicted and then he began to sell her for his friends. She has two children. After two years, her husband was found killed in Bethlehem. She asked the church and sought help, but no one cared for her. She started to work in prostitution...sometimes only for 20 NIS.*

<sup>9</sup> Interview with key informant/social worker in East Jerusalem. 24 May 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with client in Jerusalem. 10 April 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with key informant/lawyer from Jerusalem. 21 April 2010.



*She started to come to Shufat camp to use drugs. I went there as part of my job on outreach to try and help them.<sup>12</sup>*

*Reem<sup>13</sup> is a 38-year-old widow from Hebron living in Al-Ezariya. Her husband developed a drug habit and forced her into prostitution as a means of paying for drugs. He then got her addicted to drugs as well and after his death she began sex work voluntarily in order to pay for her own drug addiction.*

Previous accounts of forced sex work were reported in the surveys provided by one woman who now not only considers herself to be in elective sex work, but who also organizes the sex work of others as a madam. Key informants also discussed situations of coercive sex work in the past as part of the case histories of madams in the community. One male key informant who knew the dynamics of sex work in Jerusalem well spoke of a woman in the area who, in her youth, was sold for sex by her father, but who is today a well-known madam in the community:

*In the beginning, her father was selling her. And later on men who were with her started to bring her clients.<sup>14</sup>*

Poverty was also identified as a key vulnerability factor influencing women’s entry into sex work, providing an economic incentive for women to either enter into sex work on their own, or used as a means of coercing women into it.

*Prostitution always exists wherever there are poor people.<sup>15</sup>*

*The women that I met (in sex work), they were seeking money, most of these women came from very complicated families and also poor families.<sup>16</sup>*

*Women ages 15-20 are most vulnerable. We had a case of two sisters from Masyoun. The reason for offering sexual services was poverty.<sup>17</sup>*

*In the old city of Hebron, girls go to work in this (sex work) because they need money. The fathers can’t go to work because there are no factories or any good places to work... Israel closed in on us with settlers... so what is the easiest way to bring food and money to your family?<sup>18</sup>*

*My husband was all the time in and out of prison. We had a bad financial situation and I did not know how to handle the children.<sup>19</sup>*

As stated above, transactional sex can be defined as an exchange of goods or gifts for sexual services.

*I don’t pay (for sex). I give lunch and a phone and other personal needs.<sup>20</sup>*

<sup>12</sup> Interview with key informant/social worker in East Jerusalem. 24 April 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Name has been changed for confidentiality.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with key informant/medic in East Jerusalem. 19 April 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Male university student from Bir Zeit University in Ramallah. 05 May 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with key informant/investigator in East Jerusalem. 24 April 2010.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with key informant/law enforcement in Bethlehem. 27 April 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with key informant/researcher in Hebron. 30 April 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with sex worker from Ramallah. 29 April 2010.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with a client in Jerusalem. 20 April 2010.



*I knew a girl from Gaza. She was living in Ramallah and offering sex for a sandwich.<sup>21</sup>*

In other cases, transactional sex can be used as a means to obtain more expensive gifts or school tuition.

*I meet women in the hospital who come with a serious sexual disease. They told me they need to pay for yearly tuition.<sup>22</sup>*

*One of the girls told me that she was very poor and [the madam] used to give her in the beginning food and clothes. Then she once told her that she is very pretty and she's wasting her time in this job, she told her that men, when they need a woman, they are ready to give whatever she asks for... presents. And this is what happened; she started to get expensive presents.<sup>23</sup>*

While the study did not focus on children, some information was provided by key informants on transactional sex and exploitation of children:

*There are children who work in the street. Men tell me that they provide them with food or money and go with them to places (...). Amazingly, they provide sex for 50-100 NIS. This money could save the child from violence at night. Their parents then think they sold all the products they had to sell.<sup>24</sup>*

Sixty-four percent (n=18) of women surveyed for this study self-reported to have been forced or coerced into sex work by another person. The 18 women who were in situations of forced sex work did not report receiving any compensation for the sex work, as the payments were taken by the individual organizing the operation. Of those that were coerced into forced sex work and responded to the question, the organizers were most often reported to be unrelated female madams (37.5 percent; n=6), unrelated male pimps (25 percent; n=4), and husbands (18.8 percent; n=3), followed by lesser numbers reporting parents, boyfriends, and neighbours.

*Also what I noticed is that a woman, after she is in (sex work,) she has to bring another – it is a deal with the pimps.<sup>25</sup>*

The organization of forced sex work of women by a spouse or relative was documented by both women in situations of forced sex work and key informants.

*My husband was bringing men to have sex with me. I think I was a deal to get his drugs.<sup>26</sup>  
I knew of a stepmother who was using the daughters of her husband for prostitution in Al-Ezariya.<sup>27</sup>  
I know cases where the husbands are the pimps, especially men who are involved in alcohol and gambling, they sell their women to get money.<sup>28</sup>  
Our neighbours had 14 children. One of the daughters is my age (19 years old). Her parents*

<sup>21</sup> Male university student from Bir Zeit University in Ramallah. 05 May 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with nurse in Ramallah. 17 April 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with key informant/investigator in East Jerusalem. 24 April 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with key informant in Ramallah. 29 April 2010.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with key informant/investigator in East Jerusalem. 24 April 2010.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with woman in forced sex work in Al-Ezaria. 20 May 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Male university student from Bir Zeit University in Ramallah. 05 May 2010.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with key informant/therapist in Jenin. 29 April 2010.



*forced her to marry a man who was not good. Following the marriage, she called me and told me that he had abused her sexually and asked her to be with his friends in an unusual way. He locked her in the bathroom and hit her. She tried to run away and wanted to tell a priest, but no one would help her.<sup>29</sup>*

*We had one case of a husband who was selling his wife for 100-150 NIS. He would take her to the location for sex and bring her back. If she refused to go, he would hit her or hit one of the children. These women are "prisoners".<sup>30</sup>*

In regard to law enforcement, 94.1 percent (n=16) of sex workers surveyed stated that they did not believe that the police could help them, with only 5.9 percent (n=1) reporting that the police could be of assistance. When key informants were asked whether or not they believed law enforcement officers were adequately trained to recognize victims of sex work or trafficking, 13 percent (n=7) said yes and 87 percent (n=47) said no. While some informants did note that the capacity of law enforcement officials is increasing, it was reported that society and religion interfere and force the hand of officials into the "practical application of the law," which often involves keeping situations hidden.

*The qualifications of law enforcement officials are increasing (on forced sex work/trafficking) but society is interfering a lot and does not allow the law to be implemented.<sup>31</sup>*

*Tribal law plays a serious role. A lot of cases, in the end, get solved by this law. We had a case of sex work with the police and her family came with more than 100 people to take her from the police station. The police couldn't do anything. They took her without resistance.<sup>32</sup>*

While law enforcement was primarily cited as being ill-equipped to provide protection for those in situations of forced sex work and trafficking, some respondents also indicated occasional involvement of law enforcement officials in either the purchasing and organizing of sex work or the further abuse of those who have been victimized.

*I know a law enforcement officer who used to own a place in Ramallah. He had a lot of girls there. He paid little for the girls that would work there. Around 100-150 NIS.<sup>33</sup>*

## 6.3 Trafficking

Human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation was cited by survey respondents as occurring among Palestinian women both within the West Bank and from the West Bank into East Jerusalem. In some of the cases reported, women were promised offers of jobs in the cleaning business, provided fake identification documents to cross checkpoints into Jerusalem, and then once in Jerusalem placed under the control of a madam or pimp and unable or unwilling to seek assistance from Israeli authorities. Physical violence and threats were also used to keep the women from running away or pressing formal charges. Fifty-five percent (n=29) of key informants reported that through the course of their work they had assisted what they believed to be a victim of trafficking.

<sup>29</sup> Female university student from Bethlehem University. 20 May 2010.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with key informant/psychologist in Hebron. 28 May 2010.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with key informant/doctor in Beit Sahour. 18 May 2010.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with key informant/psychologist in Hebron. 29 May 2010.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with sex worker in Ramallah. 18 May 2010.



*We don't have any laws on trafficking so we cannot go to the Palestinian police and it is hard to go to the Israeli authorities due to political issues. We are a lost cause.<sup>34</sup>*

*Pimps who are strangers to these women, they promise them a good profitable job. And the girls are dying for money to provide to their families. We call it a trap.<sup>35</sup>*

*There is this new thing with advertising for work. You can see a lot of advertising seeking women to work for a good salary. Yesterday, I saw an ad asking for beautiful young girls to work and receive a salary between 2,500-3,500 NIS. I also had a girl tell me that she responded to an ad like this. But she was not that pretty and a bit fat so they refused to take her. She told me also that they asked her a lot of strange questions, such as if she was married and how was her family's economic situation.<sup>36</sup>*

*We asked these women billions of times to press charges against the madams, but they refused, they don't dare. This madam will kill them. A lot of the girls told me that. She hit them so hard and a few of them need days to recover from the beating.<sup>37</sup>*

## 6.4 Case Profile (Trafficking)

Case #1: Rula<sup>38</sup> is a 23-year-old single Muslim woman from Hebron. She completed secondary school, but did not go any further in her education, as her family prevented her from continuing. When asked if she had ever been a victim of domestic violence she answered, "yes, my brother used to take off my clothes, hang me from the ceiling, and beat me." Rula had also been a victim of sexual abuse by her uncle since the age of 12. Her uncle made her promise not to tell the rest of her family. She ran away from home and at the age of 21 and was recruited into sex work by a stranger who promised her that he would rent her a home in which she could live. The recruiter was described as a 30-year-old Palestinian man. Rula was then forced into sex work in private houses and "buildings that were in the process of being built" in Bethlehem, Ramallah, and Israel. The pimp who worked a side business as a driver would transport her to the location where she would work. The pimp himself used to forcibly rape her and also made her sniff an unidentified white powdery substance before taking clients. Rula noted that she had, on average, five sexual partners per night. She did not recall if the clients used condoms, but suspected they did not. Though she is familiar with HIV and AIDS from the media and believes she may have been vulnerable to the infection, she has not been tested.

Case #2: Randa<sup>39</sup> is from Beit Fajar and was brought to Jerusalem to work in cleaning. Her husband had left her and gone to Amman. She had children and was seeking work. A woman began to give her food and clothes for her children. The woman brought Randa and another girl into Jerusalem from the West Bank with fake IDs. At the checkpoint, she presented one of them as her daughter and the other one as a friend of the daughter. Randa was used for cleaning, but later she was used for sex. The woman who had assisted Randa with food, clothing and the cleaning job in Jerusalem was actually a madam and had a house for sex work in Al-Tur.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with key informant/activist in East Jerusalem, 17 April 2010.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with key informant/investigator in East Jerusalem, 24 April 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with key informant/gynecologist in Jerusalem governorate, 05 May 2010.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with key informant/investigator in East Jerusalem, 24 April 2010.

<sup>38</sup> Name has been changed to protect confidentiality.

<sup>39</sup> Name has been changed to protect confidentiality.

# Chapter 7: Sex Work and Physical and Sexual Violence

When key informants participating in the research were asked about the biggest challenges faced by Palestinian women, answers included the occupation, absence of a protective legal framework, traditions, violence, and low economic status.

*The biggest challenge is the power of a woman to make decisions over her own life...how to dress or how to choose a partner. There is always someone making these decisions for the woman. Even a man has to approve for a woman to open a bank account.<sup>40</sup>*

*The biggest limitation for Palestinian women is the lack of freedom in self-expression because women are oppressed by men under the pretext of reputation, social norms, and traditions.<sup>41</sup>*

*Women do not have the right to say "no".<sup>42</sup>*

*It is not my abilities that are limited... but my opportunities<sup>43</sup>.*

When women sex workers were asked the same question, only 25 percent (n=7) provided answers, which ranged from economics, to lack of social support, culture and tradition as the primary limitations facing Palestinian women. Field researchers noted that for those women who did not respond, it seemed that their contemplation of rights and limitations was not developed or that they were too frightened to speak their mind.

Gender disparities were also reflected in the educational histories of the women sex workers interviewed in the research. Of the women sex workers who responded to the study, 74 percent (n=20) did not complete their formal education. Of those who did not complete school, 75 percent (n=15) cited family pulling her out as the reason for leaving school. In comparison with male clients who were asked the same question, 46 percent (n=29) of the respondents did not complete their formal education, but only 6.9 percent (n=2) of those who did not complete their education specifically cited family as the reason for leaving school, while 20.7 percent (n=6) stated financial reasons and the remainder of respondents stated factors such as level of intelligence, lack of desire, or the Intifada as reasons why they could no longer attend.

## 7.1 Physical Violence

The percentage of women sex workers surveyed, both in forced and elective sex work, that have had a history of previous physical violence was remarkably high, with 92.8 percent (n=26) indicating that they had suffered physical abuse in the past. Nearly all women who reported having experienced physical violence cited a member of their immediate family

<sup>40</sup> Interview with key informant/executive director of NGO in Ramallah, 19 April 2010.

<sup>41</sup> Female university student from Bethlehem University, 20 May 2010.

<sup>42</sup> Female university student from Bethlehem University, 20 May 2010.

<sup>43</sup> Female university student from Bir Zeit University in Ramallah, 05 May 2010.



and/or spouse as the perpetrator of violence. Key informants in the services sectors and university students also discussed the prevalence of physical violence against women within their communities.

*I meet a lot of women who come to the clinic with bruises. They won't discuss it. They have headaches and then you discover that they were beaten heavily on the head or on the back. They don't want to say it was their husband<sup>44</sup>.*

The reasons given by those surveyed and in focus groups for the propensity of physical violence in Palestinian society ranged from poverty, frustrations due to the occupation, religion, and social pressures.

*The occupation is a major factor in the oppression of women. If men are humiliated at a checkpoint, sometimes they go back and humiliate their wives.<sup>45</sup>*

*There is a misunderstanding of religion that gives an excuse for the use of physical violence.<sup>46</sup>*

*There can be social pressure for physical violence. I know of two men who were friends and one came to the other's home. The man of the home asked the wife to bring coffee. She said she would in a few minutes. The friend asked the man of the home 'why do you let her answer you like that and not bring coffee quickly?'. So the husband went and hit her. Sometimes the man is a victim of social pressures.<sup>47</sup>*

*The female herself will start believing that he is not a real man if he doesn't hit her.<sup>48</sup>*

Lack of enforced legal repercussions against perpetrators of physical violence against women and women's economic dependency on men were also cited as driving factors behind the seemingly high incidence of domestic violence in the oPt.

*We can say that the reasons for all forms of violence against women are the absence of a legal system, poverty, and the economic dependency of women.<sup>49</sup>*

*We (women) do not have the right education about our bodies, our sexuality. No newspaper or T.V. programme talks about it. Women ask for help and awareness and don't know where to go... And in the end, she can't rely on her family because she becomes an economic burden. So just keep your mouth closed and stay with your man, even if he cheats on you or hits you. He owns you.<sup>50</sup>*

<sup>44</sup> Interview with key informant/gynecologist in Anata, Jerusalem governorate. 05 May 2010.

<sup>45</sup> Male university student from Bir Zeit University in Ramallah. 05 May 2010.

<sup>46</sup> Male university student from Bir Zeit University in Ramallah. 05 May 2010.

<sup>47</sup> Male university student from Al Quds University in Jerusalem governorate. 06 May 2010.

<sup>48</sup> Male university student from Bir Zeit University in Ramallah. 05 May 2010.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with key informant/psychological counseling centre in Bethlehem. 04 May 2010.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with key informant/gynecologist in Jerusalem Governorate. 05 May 2010.

## 7.2 Sexual Violence

The percentage of those sex workers surveyed, both in elective and forced sex work, that had a history of previously experiencing sexual violence was also high, with 76 percent (n=19) indicating that they had been victims of sexual violence. Of the women who provided information on their first sexual experiences, 58.3 percent (n=14) reported that their first sexual experience had been forced, with 41.7 percent (n=10) reporting their first sexual experience to be voluntary.

Key informants in the services sectors and university students also discussed the prevalence of sexual violence against women within their communities and its correlation with sex work.

*We had a case of a girl that was raped by her father and ran away from home. She started working in sex work. Our organization provided her support and therapy.<sup>51</sup>*

*I know a girl who was raped by two of her uncles when she was ten years old, but the family didn't say anything because they did not want people to think they were a bad family.<sup>52</sup>*

*Once I went to my supervisor on a heavy case with a nine-year-old girl (victim of sexual violence). I wanted him to call the police and I cannot forget his answer, 'This is not your business. You are only a doctor. Don't put your nose in something that you are not allowed.'<sup>53</sup>*

Nearly all those who reported experiencing some form of sexual violence had been victimized within their own homes by a family member and/or spouse. Key informants also discussed this issue of intra-familial sexual violence within their communities.

*My father began to rape me when I was eight years old. Then my brother. They both knew what the other was doing.<sup>54</sup>*

*Since I was a child, I used to go to my grandmother to take care of her. She was old and alone and when I was there, my uncle used to come over.<sup>55</sup>*

*Sexual violence exists... especially against women under eighteen and within the family.<sup>56</sup>*

Figure 3: Women in Sex Work, Incidence of Past Physical and Sexual Violence\*

	Husband	Father	Brother	Uncle	Other
Previous Physical Violence (n=26)	50% (n=13)	50% (n=13)	28% (n=6)	8% (n=2)	8% (n=2)
Previous Sexual Violence (n=19)	26% (n=5)	26% (n=5)	16% (n= 2)	21% (n=4)	21% (n=4)

\*Several respondents identified more than one perpetrator.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with key informant/social worker in East Jerusalem. 24 April 2010.

<sup>52</sup> Female university student from Al-Quds University in Abu Dis. 05 May 2010.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with key informant/gynecologist in Jerusalem governorate. 05 May 2010.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with woman in forced prostitution from Qalqilya. 30 April 2010.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with sex worker from Al-Ezariya. 30 April 2010.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with key informant/lawyer from Jerusalem. 21 April 2010.





Sexual violence is not only a human rights abuse against women and girls, but in certain societies also puts victims at risk of so-called “honour crime,” used as a means of covering a family’s shame from sexual relations outside of marriage, even those that are non-consensual and where the woman or girl has been victimized by a family member.

*I know of a “good” family. The daughter fell ill and they went to the doctor and discovered she was pregnant. She had been raped by her two brothers. The family killed the girl.<sup>57</sup>*

While issues of sexual violence are still considered taboo, some key informants that participated in the research believed that changes are coming and that more Palestinian women are now willing to discuss sexual violence openly.

*You need courage to talk about it (sexual violence). Palestinian women nowadays are making big changes in these issues. They are ready to talk about it.<sup>58</sup>*

### 7.3 Access to Services

Currently in the oPt, there is a notable shortage of facilities available for women in crisis, including those who have been victims of physical or sexual violence, or those who have been found in situations of forced sex work. At the time of writing, only one shelter for female victims of physical or sexual violence is functioning in the oPt and is located in Bethlehem. An emergency shelter in Jericho does exist, but limits, at the time of writing, the duration of stay for victims to a few nights. Another shelter in Nablus was in operation for some time, but at the time of writing, has reportedly closed due to lack of funding.

Other organizations are able to provide some services to women in crisis, but respondents participating in the research acknowledged that these types of services for women are mostly found in cities rather than villages, leaving rural women without options for assistance.

For those woman who reported to have been involved in situations of sex work, reintegration back into the community was noted to be difficult, if not impossible, and potentially fatal for women whose families might seek violence as a means of covering the perceived shame of the situation.

*No one would believe me. Including my family... they would kill me.<sup>59</sup>*

For those respondents residing in Jerusalem, it was reported that some assistance may be able to be provided by Israeli organizations, however the political situation can impede a woman’s willingness to seek assistance from the occupying power.

*For those of us that live in Jerusalem, we can go to Israel for receiving assistance when facing a problem, but people will look at us strangely. How can you ask help from your enemy?<sup>60</sup>*

<sup>57</sup> Female university student from Al-Quds University in Abu Dis. 05 May 2010.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with key informant/lawyer from Jerusalem. 30 May 2010.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with woman in forced prostitution from Hebron. 31 March 2010.

<sup>60</sup> Female university student from Al-Quds University in Abu Dis. 05 May 2010.

The absence of protective legislation was also continually cited by key informants and university students as an impediment to seeking assistance.

*There are no laws that protect women. The law in our society criminalizes women; [socio-cultural norms] blame the woman for her clothes, her behaviour... whatever.<sup>61</sup>*

*The laws in our society come from a male perspective and not a female perspective.<sup>62</sup>*

*Our penal code is devoted to the discrimination against and oppression of women. We need to fight on the content of the law, the problems with its structure, and the application.<sup>63</sup>*

<sup>61</sup> Female university student from Bir Zeit University in Ramallah. 05 May 2010.

<sup>62</sup> Female university student from Bir Zeit University in Ramallah. 05 May 2010.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with key informant/freelance media in Ramallah. 11 April 2010.



## Chapter 8: Findings on HIV/AIDS

The gender dimensions of HIV vulnerability are numerous, particularly in relation to vulnerable populations such as women in sex work. Disparities in education, societal acceptance of gender-based violence, and unequal access to information and services are all factors in the unique vulnerabilities of women to HIV.

This study uncovered a number of interesting findings on HIV awareness, prevention, and stigma within the Palestinian context. Disparities in knowledge between males and females were found to exist and perceptions of vulnerability and societal limitations to awareness were documented.

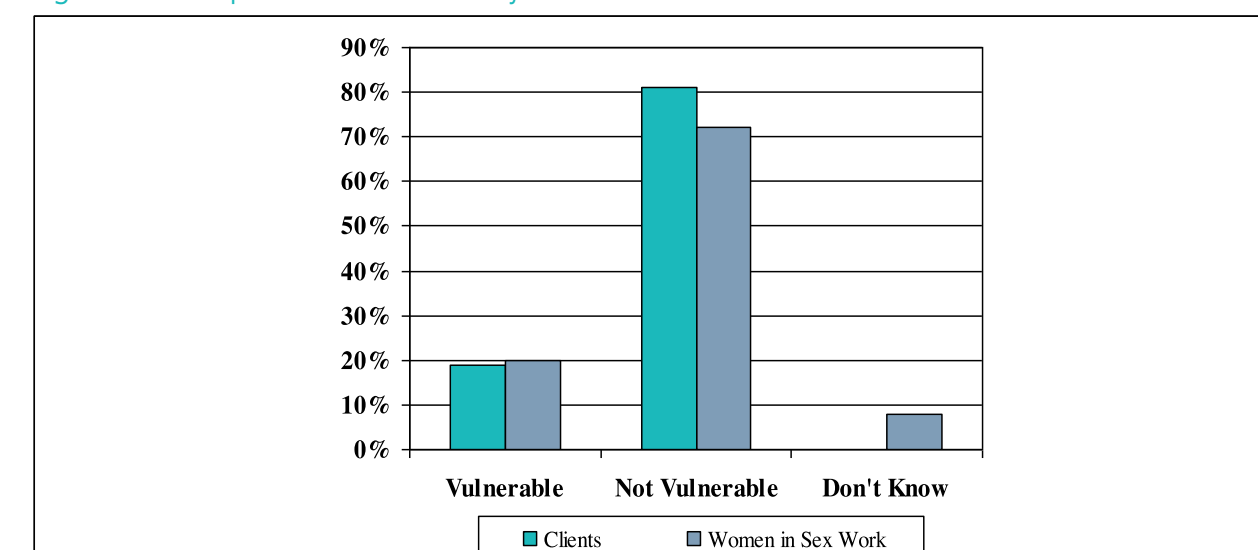
### 8.1 HIV/AIDS Awareness

Of the women sex workers interviewed as part of the research, 61 reported (n=17) to be aware of HIV, while the remaining 39 percent (n=11) reported no familiarity with the subject. For the men surveyed who purchased sexual services, 98.4 percent (n=63) reported to be aware of HIV, while the remaining 1.6 percent (n=1) reported no familiarity with the subject.

Both clients and women sex workers were asked about their perceived vulnerability to HIV. For clients, 81.2 percent (n=52) did not consider themselves to be vulnerable, while 18.8 percent (n=12) did believe they were at risk of HIV infection. Among women sex workers, 72 percent (n=18) did not consider themselves to be vulnerable to HIV, 20 percent (n=5) did believe that they were at risk, and 8 percent (n=2) reported that they did not know whether or not they might be vulnerable.

Qualitative data collected on limitations to HIV awareness suggest that societal taboos, traditions, and religion are primary factors that limit the ability to disseminate information on HIV to the general public. The inability to discuss sexuality openly was also noted to have a negative effect on HIV awareness.

Figure 4: Perceptions of Vulnerability to HIV



*The culture refuses those infected with HIV because it is considered to be transmitted through an illegitimate act of sexual activity.<sup>64</sup>*

*Society doesn't accept the idea [of HIV awareness] because they think those infected with the virus are "bad" people.<sup>65</sup>*

*We have many secrets in our society, even in the health sector. I think that is why we don't have the right statistics concerning AIDS and STIs.<sup>66</sup>*

When the clients interviewed were asked about the limitations to HIV awareness in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, two main themes emerged. Of the clients who responded to the question, 38 percent (n=23) cited fear of scandal/embarrassment/disgrace as the primary limitation to awareness and 33.3 percent (n=20) reported tradition and religion as the main limitation, followed by smaller numbers of respondents who reported lack of information and lack of funding.

When key informants were asked what they considered to be the biggest limitation to HIV awareness, three main themes emerged. Of key informants who responded, 31 percent (n=19) cited stigma as the primary limitation to awareness, 29.5 percent (n=18) said that lack of adequate information was a primary limitation, and 18 percent (n=11) considered tradition to be a limiting factor. Smaller numbers of respondents reported denial of the problem, lack of funding, and efforts focused on the occupation as the primary boundaries to HIV awareness.

*There is bias on these kinds of issues. We have to hide everything without trying to understand the problems. It's taboo. We live in denial.<sup>67</sup>*

*There is a fear of discussing these issues and of talking about sexual topics in a direct and honest way.<sup>68</sup>*

*Speaking about these issues is a problem... people here don't even talk about cancer.<sup>69</sup>*

<sup>64</sup> Interview with client in East Jerusalem. 25 April 2010.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with key informant/government official from Nablus. 27 April 2010.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with key informant/doctor in Ramallah. 20 April 2010.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with key informant/social worker in Bethlehem. 13 April 2010.

<sup>68</sup> Interview with key informant/psychologist in East Jerusalem. 12 April 2010.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with key informant/executive director of NGO in Ramallah. 19 April 2010.

Gender disparities in relation to HIV awareness were also discussed.

*Even if a woman is forty years old, she does not know of these subjects (sexual health). People tell her that she must be shy about these things.<sup>70</sup>*

A number of key informants cited the lack of proper educational material on HIV/AIDS included in school curriculum.

*There is no education about these issues in the schools and not in the house either. People still believe that if you get married a virgin this disease will not reach you.<sup>71</sup>*

*Palestinian society deals with the issues of sex work and HIV from a religious perspective rather than a health perspective.<sup>72</sup>*

Others interviewed believe that because the rate of HIV infection in the oPt is considered to be low, there is some indifference on the part of Palestinian society to raising awareness about these issues.

*There is neglect and indifference of people on this issue. They are convinced that they won't get infected.<sup>73</sup>*

Some respondents also suggested that programmes that provide services related to sexual health and give information on HIV are seen as promoting sex outside of marriage and sex work.

*People are afraid to deal with the societal reaction concerning this issue. A lot of organizations refuse these kinds of projects because the society will immediately consider them to be promoting sex work.<sup>74</sup>*

## 8.2 HIV Prevention

### Condom Use

When asked how often clients used condoms during sex, 72 percent (n=18) of the women sex workers surveyed who answered reported "never", 12 percent (n=3) reported "sometimes", 12 percent (n=3) did not know and four percent (n=1) stated "often". No respondents cited that clients "always" use condoms. Those who reported that they did not know if clients used condoms stated that they were often under the influence of drugs and therefore could not recall. Reasons provided for not using condoms included client preference, the objection of madams, lack of money, infertility, and simply that it was not considered. For those women respondents who reported to be under the control of a madam or pimp, 100 percent stated that the madam or pimp did not provide them with condoms.

<sup>70</sup> Female university student from Al-Quds University in Abu Dis. 05 May 2010.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with key informant/gynecologist in Jerusalem governorate. 05 May 2010.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with client in East Jerusalem. 04 June 2010.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with client in East Jerusalem. 27 April 2010.

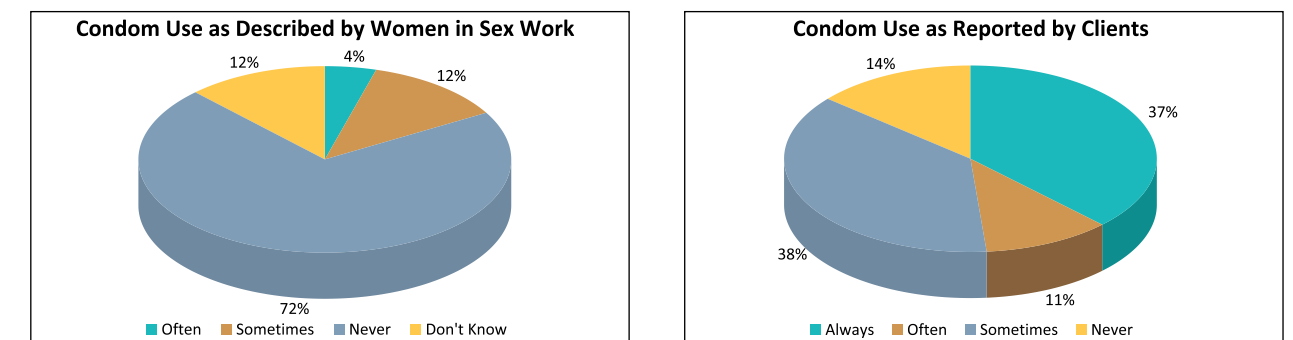
<sup>74</sup> Interview with key informant/social worker in East Jerusalem. 24 April 2010.



*One of the girls told this police officer that they are not allowed to use condoms. There is no medical check for them. This is only in heavy cases like pregnancy. A lot of the girls...they don't know much. The madam's husband is the main pimp; he is also a drug dealer.<sup>75</sup>*

When asked how often they used condoms when having sex with a sex worker, 37.5 percent (n=24) of clients surveyed stated "always", 11 percent (n=7) stated "often", 37.5 percent (n=24) stated "sometimes", and 14 percent (n=9) stated "never". The relatively higher percentage of men who stated that they always wear condoms could be a reflection of some social desirability bias, where respondents provide answers that they think will be more socially acceptable. The higher percentage could also be reflective of men seeking out sexual services in West Jerusalem, where condom use may be more common and even mandated.

Figure 5: Condom Use



For those clients interviewed who chose not to use condoms during sexual intercourse, the primary reason given for not using a condom was a reduction in pleasure, while some others did not consider themselves to be at risk of HIV.

*AIDS isn't widespread in Jerusalem and the West Bank like it is in the U.S. and Africa. Condoms reduce pleasure and we have a healthy environment.<sup>76</sup>*

*I have sex with clean young women. There is no AIDS in our part of the world.<sup>77</sup>*

When clients were asked if they had ever objected to a sex worker who requested to use a condom, of those who responded, 25 percent (n=15) said "yes," they had objected, and 75 percent (n=46) said "no," they had not objected.

Access to condoms can be difficult for both men and women in the oPt. Men reported societal taboos that make it uncomfortable to access condoms in the pharmacy.

*You can get condoms from pharmacies, but you need to write what you want on a small piece of paper. And you will get some looks from the person behind the counter. So a lot of men seek to get condoms from the Israeli Pharmacies.<sup>78</sup>*

<sup>75</sup> Interview with key informant/investigator in East Jerusalem. 24 April 2010.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with client in East Jerusalem. 29 April 2010.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with client in East Jerusalem. 01 May 2010.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with key informant/social worker in East Jerusalem. 24 April 2010.



Women have even greater difficulty in accessing condoms. Married women may be able to receive condoms through health clinics. A nurse from a United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)<sup>79</sup> clinic in Hebron stated that married women were coming to the clinic to obtain condoms, especially those whose husbands were migrant workers in Israel. However, because of the cultural taboos associated with sex outside of marriage, particularly for females, the ability for single women to have access to condoms is limited.

While 70 percent (n=45) of the sample of clients interviewed reported having an intimate partner such as a girlfriend or wife with whom they have sexual intercourse, no clients reported that they “always” used a condom with their intimate partner, no clients cited that they “often” use a condom with their intimate partner, 26.6 percent (n=12) reported to “sometimes” use a condom with their intimate partner, and 73.3 percent (n=33) stated that they never use condoms with their intimate partner.

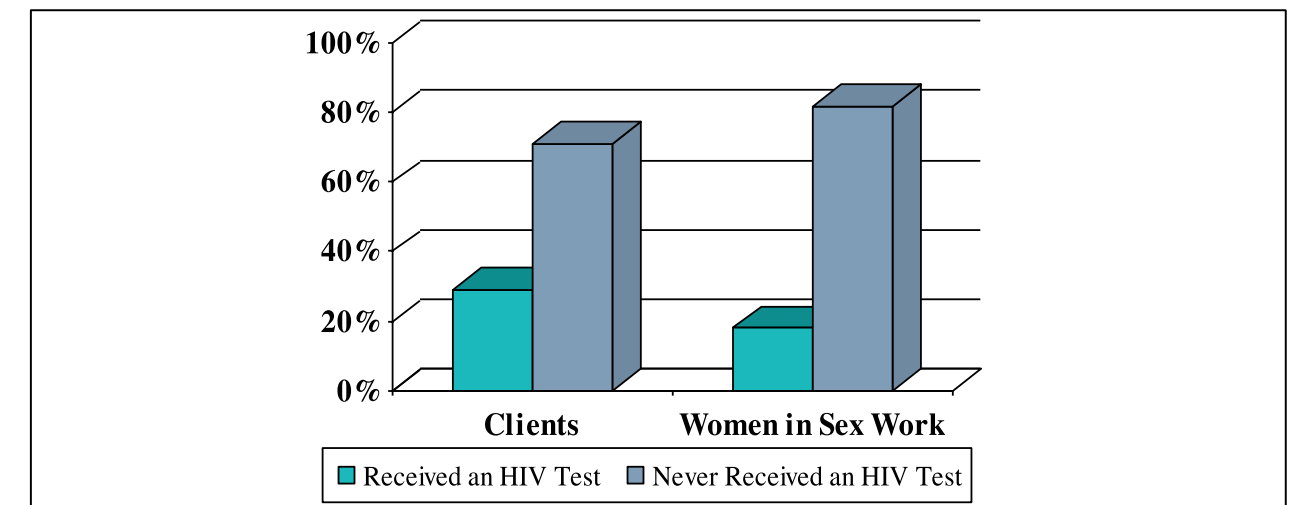
Among the women sex workers interviewed involved in sex work, 32 percent (n=9) reported having an intimate partner such as a boyfriend or husband with whom they have sexual intercourse. Among these women, none cited that they “always” used a condom with their intimate partner, 11 percent (n=1) stated that they “often” use a condom with their intimate partner, 11 percent (n=1) cited that they “sometimes” use a condom with their intimate partner, and 78 percent (n=7) reported that they “never” use condoms with their intimate partner.

## HIV Testing

Across all groups surveyed, there was a low level of knowledge on where an individual could obtain an HIV test. While 28.6 percent (n=18) of male clients interviewed reported that they had been tested for HIV, only 12.7 percent (n=8) reported that they knew where they could receive a confidential HIV test in their own community, suggesting that certain males are going outside of their own communities to seek confidential testing. This finding correlates with the anecdotal information provided by several clients and key informants in East Jerusalem, who stated that men who have the access to do so, feel more comfortable seeking an HIV test from an Israeli medical clinic, where their confidentiality can be ensured.

Among women involved in sex work interviewed, 18.5 percent (n=5) reported that they had been tested for HIV, while the remaining 81.5 percent (n=22) reported that they had never been tested. Only 3.5 percent (n=1) of those who responded to the question knew where they could receive a confidential HIV test in their own community, suggesting that some of the women sex workers who had been tested had been sent or travelled to different locations outside of their communities to receive a test. Only 3.5 percent (n=1) of the interviewees reported to get regular check-ups, including STIs tests.

Figure 6: Percentage of HIV Testing



When key informants were asked about their knowledge of HIV testing services within their communities, 49.6 percent (n=25) said that they did know of testing facilities in their communities, while 55.5 percent (n=35) said that they did not know of facilities within their communities where a confidential HIV test could be performed.

*Our clinic does not supply this test and I am not allowed to ask for it. We cannot. There is no law in the Palestinian Medical Relief Society for this test. They don't consider it as an important test... I had a woman once request to have the test. Her husband was cheating on her while he worked in Israel. She was afraid that she has AIDS. In Ramallah, the laboratory refused to give her the test and I had to send her, unofficially, to the Israeli clinic in West Jerusalem.<sup>80</sup>*

## HIV Stigma

Key informants were asked whether or not they would want to keep it a secret if a member of their family had HIV. Of those who responded, 71.4 percent (n=40) stated that they would want to keep it a secret, while the remaining 28.6 percent (n=16) reported that they would not hide the information.

*For the society, it (HIV) is a crime. I am for getting rid of this stigma and for dealing with persons who are infected, talking and discussing about it. This will wake up our minds and we will be able to be more open to things in our society. I should start with myself.<sup>81</sup>*

Of those clients who responded to the same question, 73.2 percent (n=41) cited that they would want to keep the HIV a secret, while 26.8 percent (n=15) said they would not hide it.

*I think that nurses and doctors would reject them. Maybe that is why people don't seek this kind of assistance, for fear of being rejected.<sup>82</sup>*

<sup>80</sup> Interview with key informant/gynecologist in Jerusalem governorate. 05 May 2010.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with key informant/psychologist in Hebron. 28 May 2010.

<sup>82</sup> Male university student from Al Quds University in Jerusalem governorate. 06 May 2010.



Currently, a great deal of stigma is associated with HIV in the oPt, as the infection is generally associated with forbidden behaviours in the Palestinian context. Data across the different groups interviewed indicate that a person with HIV would not be accepted in Palestinian society.

*If the person has HIV through sex I would have to shun them. But if they got it in a different way, I would try to help them and empathize with them.<sup>83</sup>*

Because of the stigma surrounding HIV, it was suggested by university students in focus groups that barriers be broken by encouraging those with the infection to speak in public, as hearing a personal story might help others empathize with those infected, as well as help them assess their own personal vulnerabilities.

*I think that an HIV patient should come and speak at the university. Then we could see what it is like in real life.<sup>84</sup>*

<sup>83</sup> Male university student from Al Quds University in Jerusalem governorate. 06 May 2010.

<sup>84</sup> Male university student from Al Quds University in Jerusalem governorate. 06 May 2010.



## Chapter 9: Conclusion and Recommendations

In some countries initiatives for HIV prevention among sex workers have included the mobilization and organization of sex workers as a means of increasing condom use. Such initiatives have proven fruitful in countries such as Thailand and Cambodia (UN 2003). However, these initiatives may not be appropriate within the Palestinian context or in the broader Middle East due to the clandestine nature of sex work, the prevailing religious and social norms, and the reality of physical violence perpetrated under the guise of family “honour.” In order to address HIV prevention in sex work in the present Palestinian context, the results of this operational research suggest that policy makers, law enforcement officials, social service organizations and the general public should not only bring greater attention to issues of sexual and reproductive health through widespread information campaigns, but should also greatly increase efforts to combat forced sex work and violence against women and work to improve women’s rights in general.

### 9.1 Legislation

Changes to national legislation are a primary means of addressing the environment in which exploitation and violence against women can occur without fear of redress. Only by ensuring women’s equality under the law, through its implementation and through socio-cultural change, can an environment exist in which women have greater ability to protect themselves from HIV.

- Legislation regarding human trafficking should be enacted that allows victims to obtain justice and provide appropriate penalties for perpetrators.
- Until the new unified Palestinian penal code is enacted, current provisions on forced sex work under the Jordanian Penal Code (Articles 310-318) enforceable in the West Bank, can and should be used as a means of protecting women against forced sex work.
- Article 308 of the Jordanian Penal Code in effect in the West Bank, which provides for a ceasing of legal action should a rapist marry his victim, should be repealed and not be included within the draft unified Palestinian penal code.
- Article 286 of the Jordanian Penal Code in effect in the West Bank, which states that only male family members can file charges of incest, should be repealed and not be included within the draft unified Palestinian penal code.
- Article 340 of the Jordanian Penal Code in effect in the West Bank, which provides for a reduced sentence for those who commit crimes in the name of “honour”,

should be repealed and not be included within the draft unified Palestinian penal code<sup>85</sup>.

- As previous experiences of physical and sexual violence appears to be a factor in future sexual exploitation, it is imperative to include provisions in the draft unified Palestinian penal code that criminalize physical and sexual violence against women in both public and private spheres.
- Until such time that the unified Palestinian penal code is enacted, judges can and should use provisions under penal law (such as Jordanian Law No. 16) that includes sexual violence as a crime “against public morals and ethics”.

## 9.2 Policy

Increased attention should be given to the national HIV/AIDS policy and to the National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women. National policy should include formal written action plans as well as further efforts for training and surveillance. Steps should be taken to:

- Strengthen the current national HIV and AIDS policy in the oPt.
- Expand the work of and provide greater information to the public on the mission and activities of the Palestinian National AIDS Committee (NAC).
- Improve surveillance of HIV through the PA Ministry of Health.
- Build further capacity within the health sector to identify and address physical and sexual violence and to develop protocols and referral mechanisms to ensure that victims receive appropriate services.
- Facilitate the participation of women in the shaping of governance structures to protect women.
- Appoint more women in the Palestinian judiciary and provide court and police officials with compulsory training in women’s rights.
- Develop a comprehensive national action plan to address gender-based violence, physical and sexual violence, as well as forced sex work and human trafficking.
- Investigate, arrest, and prosecute those who commit crimes under the guise of “honour” and provide sentencing that is equitable to the crime committed, without a reduction in penalty for reasons of “honour”<sup>86</sup>.
- Train police forces to identify and assist victims of gender-based violence, including forced sex work and human trafficking.
- Train social workers to assist victims of forced sex work and human trafficking.
- Continue and improve surveillance of gender-based violence through the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>86</sup> Violence under the guise of “honour” creates an environment in which women who are victims of sexual abuse and forced sex work do not come forward because they are at risk of being murdered by members of their family. Fear of violence perpetrated against women under the guise of “honour” on behalf of law enforcement and the judiciary promotes a “practical application of the law,” where tribal justice reigns and perpetrators are not held accountable for their actions.



- Strengthen police family protection units to serve cases of family violence.
- Create special units within the police to serve cases of trafficking and forced sex work.

## 9.3 Programmes

Programmes that promote access to information for both men and women on sexual and reproductive health can be seen as a primary tool for HIV prevention. Additionally, programmes which seek to promote the social and economic empowerment of women may also be beneficial in reducing women’s entry into sex work and subsequent vulnerability to HIV. Steps should be taken to:

- Create and ensure access to voluntary and confidential HIV testing services.
- Implement programmes that empower women to make informed decisions related to sexual and reproductive health. Educational materials on HIV, STIs and sexual health should be readily available to both women and men regardless of marital status. Efforts should be made to provide education materials to both urban and rural areas and to bridge socio-economic divides.
- Make use of media outlets as a mean of sensitization about HIV to reduce stigma and dispel clichés around the issue through sharing stories and testimonies of people who contracted HIV.
- Increase the number of shelters and safe houses available for women victims of violence, applying international standards in both protecting women victims of violence and in reintegrating them back into society. Employees of these shelters should be adequately trained on issues of gender-based violence, forced sex work, and human trafficking. Referral networks should be created from shelters to clinics where women can access voluntary and confidential HIV testing.
- Increase efforts to integrate women into the formal labour market and ensure their access to assets. Skills training should be promoted for women in non-traditional areas to ensure that women have the opportunity to enter innovative and expanding sectors.
- Implement programmes which promote strong families and protect women and girls from physical abuse and sexual exploitation. Programmes should emphasize a no tolerance policy on both physical and sexual abuse.
- Develop school curricula that address gender-based violence, women’s human rights, and sexual and reproductive health.
- Create programmes that enlist influential men as advocates to raise awareness on violence against women and HIV prevention.
- Use media outlets to raise public awareness about gender-based violence. Media can be influential in transforming attitudes and breaking the silence on gender issues and should thus integrate no-tolerance messaging about gender-based violence into public service announcements and popular drama series.





## References

Al-Rifai, A. (2007). "Political Instability and Nation-Building: Sexual Violence against Female Teenagers in the Occupied Palestinian Territories." *Gender-Based Sexual Violence Against Teenage Girls in the Middle East*: 69.

B'Tselem (2008). *Human Rights in the Occupied Territories: Annual Report*.

Chaban, S., R. Daraghmeh, et al. (2010). *Palestinian Women and Security: Why Palestinian Women and Girls Do Not Feel Secure*. Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.

Douki, S., F. Nacef, et al. (2003). "Violence against women in Arab and Islamic countries." *Archives of Women's Mental Health* 6(3): 165-171.

Government of Israel (1977). *Penal Law, 5737-1977*.

Government of Israel (2005). *Fourth periodic report of States parties: Israel. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Government of Jordan (1960). *Jordanian Penal Law No. 16*.

Government of Jordan (1976). *Jordanian Personal Status Law*.

Government of Sweden (1999). *Law that Prohibits the Purchase of Sexual Services*.

Human Rights Watch (2006). *A Question of Security: Violence against Palestinian Women and Girls*. 18.

IRIN (2007) "OPT: Few legal options for abused Palestinian women, say activists." *IRIN Middle East*.

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) (2002). *Sex Work and HIV/AIDS: UNAIDS Technical Update*.

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) (2008). *Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*.

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). (2010). "Key Populations: Women and Girls." Retrieved 26 April 2010, from [www.unaids.org/en/PolicyAndPractice/KeyPopulations/WomenGirls/default.asp](http://www.unaids.org/en/PolicyAndPractice/KeyPopulations/WomenGirls/default.asp).

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) (2010) "Spotlight on the Middle East and North Africa Region."

Ouis, P. and T. Myhrman (2007). *Gender-Based Sexual Violence Against Teenage Girls in the Middle East, Save the Children Sweden*.

PCBS(2006) "Domestic Violence Survey: Main Findings."

PCBS(2008) "Number of Students in Schools by Region, Supervising Authority, Stage and Sex."

PCBS(2010) "Press Release on Labour Force Survey 2009."

Palestinian Legislative Council (2003). *Amended Basic Law of Palestine*.

Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Health (2010). *AIDS/HIV Surveillance Report*.

Silverman, J., M. Decker, et al. (2006). "HIV prevalence and predictors among rescued sex-trafficked women and girls in Mumbai, India." *JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes* 43(5): 588.

Spratt, K. (2000). *HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) in the West Bank and Gaza*, United States Agency for International Development.

U.S. Department of State (2009). *Trafficking in Persons Report: Israel*.

UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Gender and HIV/AIDS (2002). *HIV/AIDS, Gender and Sex Work*. UNAIDS.

United Nations (1979). *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*.

United Nations (2000). *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children to the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*.

United Nations (2001). *UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS Declaration of Commitment*.

United Nations (2003) "Sex Workers Mobilize to Fight HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS Says."

United Nations (2009). *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2009*. New York, NY.

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (2001). *Turning the Tide: CEDAW and the Gender Dimensions of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic*.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2007). *Human Trafficking and HIV: Exploring vulnerabilities and responses in South Asia*.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2009). *Human Development Report. Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development. occupied Palestinian Territory*.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2010). "Human Trafficking." Retrieved 26 April 2010, from [www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/what-is-human-trafficking.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/what-is-human-trafficking.html).

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2009). *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking*.

United Nations Special Coordinator Office for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) (2008). *Humanitarian and Development Situation in oPt: Background Paper for the AHLC*.

Warnath, S. (2007). *Examining the Intersection Between Trafficking in Persons and Domestic Violence*, United States Agency for International Development.

Wing, A. (1996). "Critical Race Feminist Conceptualization of Violence: South African and Palestinian Women, A." *Alb. L. Rev.* 60: 943.

Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (2005). *The Legal and Social Status of Palestinian Women: A gap analysis report using CEDAW as reference*.

World Bank (2008) "Country Brief: West Bank and Gaza."

World Health Organization (2005) "Violence against sex workers and HIV prevention." *Violence Against Women and HIV/AIDS: Critical Intersections Information Bulletin Series, Number 3*.

World Health Organization (2009). *Eastern Mediterranean Regional Health System Observatory. AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Country Profiles: Palestine*.

Zimmerman, C. (2003). *The Health Risks and Consequences of Trafficking in Women and Adolescents*, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.



## Appendix I: Survey for Sex Workers/ Former Sex Workers

Section 1: Identification	
1. Name of Interviewer (UN Women Staff)	
2. First Name of Respondent *All information will be confidential & anonymous	
3. Location of Interview	
4. Date & Time	

Section 2: Background Information			
	Question	Answer	Notes
201	What is your sex?	(a) Male (b) Female	
202	What is your age?	(a) Under 18 (b) 19-25 (c) 25-30 (d) 31-40 (e) 41-50 (f) 50+	
203	Where were you born?		
204	What is your residency status?	(a) Israeli citizen (b) Jerusalem ID holder (c) West Bank ID holder (d) Gaza ID holder	
205	What is your marital status?	(a) Single (b) Engaged (c) Married (d) Divorced (e) Widowed	
206	If currently or previously married, at what age did you marry?		

207	If currently or previously married, does/did your husband have more than one wife?	(a) Yes (b) No	
208	If yes, what number are you?	(a) 1 (b) 2 (c) 3	
209	Where do you now live?		
210	Are you a refugee?	(a) Yes (b) No	
211	If yes, are you UNRWA registered?	(a) Yes (b) No	
212	What is your religion?	(a) Muslim (b) Christian (c) Other	
213	Do you have children?	(a) Yes (b) No	
214	If yes, how many?	(a) 1-5 (b) 6-10 (c) > 10	
215	Are you literate?	(a) Yes (b) No	
216	What is the highest level of education you have attained?	(a) No schooling (b) Primary (c) Secondary (d) High School (e) University	
217	Did you receive your Tawjihi?	(a) Yes (b) No	
218	If you left school prior to completion, why did you leave?		
219	How would you describe the socio-economic status of your family?	(a) Upper class (b) Middle class (c) Poor (d) Very Poor	
Section 3: Gender			
301	What do you think is the biggest challenge you face today as a Palestinian woman?		
302	Have you ever been a victim of domestic violence?	(a) Yes (b) No	

303	If yes, who was the perpetrator?	(a) Husband (b) Father (c) Uncle (d) Brother (e) Other (specify)	
304	What do you think could be the consequences of physical violence on you or women in your community?		
305	Have you ever been a victim of sexual violence?	(a) Yes (b) No	
306	If yes, who was the perpetrator?	(a) Husband (b) Father (c) Uncle (d) Brother (e) Other (specify)	
307	What do you think could be the consequences of sexual violence against you or women in your community?		
308	If no limitations existed and you could perform any job, what would you choose to do?		
309	What is the biggest limitation to achieving that goal?		
Section 4: Sex Work			
401	At what age did you first have sexual intercourse?	(a) Less than 10 years (b) 10-13 (c) 14-18 (d) 19-22 (e) 23+	
402	Was this sexual experience voluntary or by force?	(a) Voluntary (b) By force	
403	At what age did you get involved in sex work?	(a) Less than 10 years (b) 10-13 (c) 14-18 (d) 19-22 (e) 23-27 (f) 28+	



404	Were you coerced into sex work by another person? If no, skip to question 410.	(a) Yes (b) No	
405	If yes, by whom? If relative, specify.	(a) Husband (b) Relative (c) Friend (d) Acquaintance (e) Stranger	
406	Did someone recruit you into sex work with a promise?	(a) Yes (b) No	
407	If yes, what was the nature of this promise?		
408	What was the sex of the person who recruited you?	(a) Male (b) Female	
409	What was the nationality of the person who recruited you?	(a) Palestinian (b) Israeli (c) Other	
410	If you were not coerced by another person, why did you decide to enter into sex work?		
411	How long have you been involved in this activity?	(a) 0-6 months (b) 6-12 month (c) 1-2 years (d) 3-5 years (e) 5+ years	
412	Do your parents know of your work?	(a) Yes (b) No (c) n/a (parents not alive)	
413	Did your parents give consent for the work?	(a) Yes (b) No (c) n/a (parents not alive)	
414	Does your husband know of the work?	(a) Yes (b) No (c) n/a (not married)	
415	Was anyone in your family promised anything in exchange for your work? If yes, describe.	(a) Yes (b) No	
416	Has anyone else in your family been involved in sex work? If yes, describe.	(a) Yes (b) No	

417	Were/are you financially supporting anyone (children/parents) with money you earn from sex work?	(a) Yes (b) No	
418	Did/Do you have another job in addition to sex work?	(a) Yes (b) No	
419	If yes, what is/was the nature of this job?		
420	Where were/are you based for the sex work?	(a) Your home (b) Home of a relative (c) Private house of a non-relative (d) Hotel (e) Other	
421	What is the name of the city where you were/are based for sex work?		
422	If not based in your hometown, how did you arrive at the location for sex work?		
423	Were there other individuals in the place where you were based who were also doing sex work?	(a) Yes (b) No	
424	Were/are you allowed to move about freely?	(a) Yes (b) No	
425	If not, what methods were used to keep you from leaving?		
426	How did/do you receive clients? Explain (through madam/pimp, relative, internet)		
427	If through a madam or pimp, please describe this individual (sex, age, etc)		
428	Approximately, how much did/do you earn per day? (in NIS)		
429	Approximately, what percentage of those earnings were/are you able to keep for yourself?		
430	Have you ever become pregnant as a result of sex work? If no, skip to 431.	(a) Yes (b) No	
431	If yes, did you terminate the pregnancy?	(a) Yes (b) No	
432	If yes, was the termination voluntary or forced by another person?	(a) Voluntary (b) Forced by another	



433	Were you ever physically beaten as a sex worker?	(a) Yes (b) No	
434	Was sexual violence ever used on you?	(a) Yes (b) No	
435	Was psychological violence ever used on you? (i.e. threats, curses) Explain.	(a) Yes (b) No	
436	Were you given drugs? If yes, please describe what kind.	(a) Yes (b) No	
437	When first provided with a substance, did you choose it or was it forced on you?	(a) By choice (b) By force	
438	Do you believe that the police could help you?	(a) Yes (b) No	
439	Have you ever been arrested for sex work?	(a) Yes (b) No	
440	Do you believe that you have legal rights that protect you from forced prostitution?	(a) Yes (b) No	
Section 5: Vulnerabilities to HIV			
501	In your experience, predominately, what was the nationality of the clients seeking to purchase sex?	(a) Palestinian (b) Israeli (c) Other	
502	Are the clients primarily persons that are known to you or strangers?	(a) Known to you (b) Strangers	
503	Predominately, what was the age of the clients?	(a) 18-22 (b) 23-30 (c) 31-40 (d) 41-50 (e) 50+	
504	From what city were the clients?		
505	On average, how many sexual partners would you have in a 24 hour period?	(a) 1-3 (b) 4-6 (c) 7-10 (d) More than 10	
506	Did you have a choice on the clients you accepted?	(a) Yes (b) No	
507	Are you familiar with condoms?	(a) Yes (b) No	
508	How often did clients use condoms?	(a) Always (b) Often (c) Sometimes (d) Never	*follow-up inquiry here as possible

509	If you did not use condoms, what is the reason for not using them?		
510	If you worked for another individual (pimp/madam) did they provide you with condoms?	(a) Yes (b) No (c) n/a (self-employed)	
511	Are you familiar with the disease HIV, the virus that causes AIDS?	(a) Yes (b) No	
512	If yes, how did you hear about HIV/AIDS?	(a) Media (b) Friend (c) Family (d) School (e) Other	
513	Do you know anyone that has had HIV?	(a) Yes (b) No	
514	Do you know how HIV is transmitted?	(a) Yes (b) No	
515	Do you believe that you were/are vulnerable to HIV?	(a) Yes (b) No	
516	Have you been tested for HIV?	(a) Yes (b) No	
517	If so, when was the date of your last test?	(a) In the last year (b) 1-2 years (c) 3-4 years (d) 5+ years	
518	Are you familiar with the term Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)?	(a) Yes (b) No	
519	Do you get regular medical check-ups that include checks for STIs? If no, explain.	(a) Yes (b) No	
520	Is your doctor aware that you are/were a sex worker?	(a) Yes (b) No	
521	Have you ever faced any difficulties in accessing medical services because you are a sex worker?	(a) Yes (b) No	
522	Do you have a romantic partner (boyfriend/husband) with whom you have sexual intercourse?	(a) Yes (b) No	
523	How often do you use condoms when you are intimate with your partner?	(a) Always (b) Often (c) Sometimes (d) Never	



524	If you had HIV, would you make your romantic partner aware of your status?	(a) Yes (b) No	
525	Do you know of any place where someone can get a confidential HIV test?	(a) Yes (b) No	
526	Do you know of any place where you can obtain free condoms?	(a) Yes (b) No	
527	What do you think should be done by your community to improve access to medical and prevention services for sex workers?		





## Appendix II: Survey for Key Informants

Section 1: Identification			
5.	Name of Interviewer (UN Women Staff)		
6.	First Name of Respondent *All information will be confidential & anonymous		
7.	Location of Interview		
8.	Date & Time		
Section 2: Background Information			
	Question	Answer	Notes
201	What is your gender?	(a) Male (b) Female	
202	What is your age?	(a) 21-30 (b) 31-40 (c) 41-50 (d) 51-60 (e) 61-70 (f) 71-80	
203	What is your marital status?	(a) Single (b) Married (c) Divorced (d) Widowed	
204	Where do you live?		
205	What is your occupation?		
Section 3: Gender			
301	What do you think are the biggest challenges facing Palestinian women in East Jerusalem and the West Bank today?		
302	How would you describe the incidence of physical violence against women in the community where you currently reside?		
303	How would you describe the incidence of sexual violence against women in the community where you currently reside?		

Section 4: Sex Work			
401	Do you know of people who provide sex in exchange for money?	(a) Yes (b) No	
402	In what areas of East Jerusalem and the West Bank does this occur?		
403	In your opinion, what is the primary reason that men seek sex with prostitutes?		
404	Are there ways in which the internet is used in soliciting sex? If yes, please describe.	(a) Yes (b) No	
405	In your experience, predominately, what is the nationality of the men who pay for sex?	(a) Palestinian (b) Israeli (c) Other	
406	Predominately, what was the age of men who pay for sex?	(a) 18-22 (b) 23-30 (c) 31-40 (d) 41-50 (e) 50+	
407	In your opinion, predominately, do you believe that women enter into sex work willingly?	(a) Yes (b) No	
408	In your experience, who was organizing the sex work for the woman? Describe.	(a) Woman herself (b) Parent (c) Relative (non-parent) (d) Neighbor (e) Husband (f) Friend (g) Stranger	
409	Do you know of individuals that have exchanged sexual favours for money or other necessities such as food or clothing? If yes, please describe.	(a) Yes (b) No	



410	Do you know of incidences of girls under the age of 18 that have exchanged sexual favours for money or other necessities such as food or clothing? If yes, please describe.	(a) Yes (b) No	
411	Do you know of incidences of boys under the age of 18 that have exchanged sexual favours for money or other necessities such as food or clothing? If yes, please describe.	(a) (b)	
Section 5: Trafficking in Persons			
501	Are you familiar with the term "trafficking in persons" for the purpose of sexual exploitation?	(a) Yes (b) No	If no, provide an example. If still no, skip to section 5.
502	How did you hear about trafficking?	(a) Media (b) Work (c) Friends (d) Family (e) School (f) I have not heard	
503	Do you believe that a person can be trafficked within his/her own country?	(a) Yes (b) No	
504	Have you ever assisted a trafficking victim in the context of your work?	(a) Yes (b) No	
505	What was the age of the victim?	(a) Less than 10 years (b) 10-13 (c) 14-18 (d) 19-22 (e) 23-27 (f) 28+	**Please provide descriptive detail on case(s)
506	What was the gender of the victim?	(a) Male (b) Female	
507	Has your organization received reports of trafficking in other areas of East Jerusalem or the West Bank?	(a) Yes (b) No	**Please provide descriptive detail on case(s)



508	In your opinion, what is the main reason that trafficking occurs?		
509	What social services are available for victims of trafficking?		
510	Are you familiar with any legal protections that exist for victims of trafficking? If yes, please describe.	(a) Yes (b) No	
511	In your opinion, are law enforcement officers adequately trained to recognize victims of trafficking?	(a) Yes (b) No	
Section 6: HIV/AIDS			
601	Are you familiar with the disease HIV, the virus that causes AIDS?	(a) Yes (b) No	
602	How did you hear about HIV/AIDS?	(a) Media (b) Friend (c) Family (d) School (e) Other	
603	Do you know of any services that are available to a person with HIV? If yes, please describe.	(a) Yes (b) No	
604	Does the organization in which you work address the issue of HIV? If yes, please describe in what ways.	(a) Yes (b) No	
605	Do you believe that people in your community are aware of HIV/AIDS?	(a) Yes (b) No	
606	Do you know of any place where you can obtain free condoms?	(a) Yes (b) No	
607	Do you know of any place in your community where someone can get a confidential HIV test?	(a) Yes (b) No	
608	If a member of your family became ill with HIV, would you want to keep it a secret?	(a) Yes (b) No	
609	In your opinion, what is the biggest limitation to HIV awareness in East Jerusalem and the West Bank?		



## Appendix III: Survey for Clients

Section 1: Identification			
9.	Name of Interviewer (UN Women Staff)		
10.	First Name of Respondent *All information will be confidential & anonymous		
11.	Location of Interview		
12.	Date & Time		
Section 2: Background Information			
	Question	Answer	Notes
201	What is your gender?	(a) Male (b) Female	
202	What is your age?	(a) 16-20 (b) 21-30 (c) 31-40 (d) 41-50 (e) 51+	
203	What is your marital status?	(a) Single (b) Married (c) Divorced (d) Widowed	
204	What is your nationality?	(a) Palestinian (b) Israeli (c) Other	
205	What is your residency status?	(a) Israeli citizen (b) Jerusalem ID holder (c) West Bank ID holder (d) Gaza ID holder	
206	In what city do you live?		
207	What is your religion?	(a) Muslim (b) Christian (c) Other	
208	Do you have children?	(a) Yes (b) No	

209	If yes, how many?	(a) 1-5 (b) 6-10 (c) > 10	
210	Are you literate?	(a) Yes (b) No	
211	What is the highest level of education you have attained?	(a) No schooling (b) Primary (c) Secondary (d) High School (e) University	
212	Did you receive your Tawjihi?	(a) Yes (b) No	
213	If you left school prior to completion, why did you leave?		
214	How would you describe your socio-economic status?	(a) Upper class (b) Middle class (c) Poor (d) Very Poor	
Section 3: Gender			
301	What are your feelings on the status of women?	(a) Women are in a lower position than men (b) Women are equal with men (c) Don't know	
302	Have you ever been physically violent with a woman?	(a) Yes (b) No	
303	Have you ever been sexually violent with a woman?	(a) (b)	
Section 4: Sex Work			
401	Have you ever purchased sex?	(a) Yes (b) No	
402	In what areas of East Jerusalem and the West Bank have you purchased sex?		
403	In your opinion, what is the primary reason that you seek to purchase sex?		



404	Through whom did you find about how to purchase sex? Specify other.	(c) Father (d) Brother (e) Friend (f) Stranger (g) Other	
405	Are there ways in which the internet is used to purchase sex? If yes, please describe.	(a) Yes (b) No	
406	In your opinion, predominately, do you believe that women enter into sex work willingly?	(a) Yes (b) No	
407	In your experience, who is organizing the sex work for the woman? Describe. Specify other.	(a) Woman herself (b) Parent (c) Husband (d) Friend (e) Stranger (f) Other	
408	Approximately, how much do you pay for sex in NIS?		
409	Have you ever provided food, clothing, or other necessities to an individual in exchange for sexual favours?	(a) Yes (b) No	
410	If yes, what was the gender of the recipient?	(a) Male (b) Female	
411	If yes, what was the age of the recipient?	(a) Less than 18 (b) 19-25 (c) 25-30 (d) 31-40 (e) 40+	
412	How often do you purchase sex?		
Section 5: HIV/AIDS			
501	Are you familiar with condoms?	(a) Yes (b) No	
502	When having sex with a sex worker, how often do you use condoms?	(a) Always (b) Often (c) Sometimes (d) Never	

503	Do you use a condom for all kinds of sexual behaviour (vaginal, anal, oral)? If no, explain.	(a) Yes (b) No	
504	If you do not use condoms, what is the reason for not using? Please specify.		
505	Have you ever objected to a sex worker who requested to use a condom?	(a) Yes (b) No	
506	Do you have a romantic partner (girlfriend, wife) with whom you have sexual intercourse?	(a) Yes (b) No	
507	How often do you use condoms when you are intimate with your partner?	(a) Always (b) Often (c) Sometimes (d) Never	
508	Are you familiar with the term Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)?	(a) Yes (b) No	
509	Have you ever used intravenous drugs?	(a) Yes (b) No	
510	Are you familiar with the disease HIV, the virus that causes AIDS?	(a) Yes (b) No	
511	How did you hear about HIV/AIDS? Specify other.	(a) Media (b) Friend (c) Family (d) School (e) Other	
512	Do you know anyone that has HIV?	(a) Yes (b) No	
513	Do you know how HIV is transmitted?	(a) Yes (b) No	
514	Do you believe that you are vulnerable to HIV?	(a) Yes (b) No	
515	Have you been tested for HIV?	(a) Yes (b) No	
516	If so, when was the date of your last test?	(a) In the last year (b) 1-2 years (c) 3-4 years (d) 5+ years	

517	Do you know of any services that are available to a person with HIV? If yes, please describe.	(a) Yes (b) No	
518	Do you know of any place where you can obtain free condoms?	(a) Yes (b) No	
519	Do you know of any place in your community where someone can get a confidential HIV test?	(a) Yes (b) No	
520	If a member of your family became ill with HIV, would you want to keep it a secret?	(a) Yes (b) No	
521	In your opinion, what is the biggest limitation to HIV awareness in East Jerusalem and the West Bank?		



## Annex IV: Focus Group Discussion Guide (Female)

Introduction on the purpose of the research

Statement of confidentiality

### Basic Concerns:

1. What are the biggest concerns you face as a woman living in East Jerusalem/West Bank today?
2. What are the prospects for employment for women who have attended university?
3. What are the prospects for employment for women who have not attended university?

### Gender:

1. What is the attitude of your parents about your schooling? About entering the workforce?
2. Have you known a woman or girl who has been the victim of physical violence? Of sexual violence?
3. How does your community respond to domestic violence?
4. If a woman were a victim of physical or sexual violence, to whom could she go for assistance?
5. Are there any laws that you know of that protect women from violence?

### Sex Work:

1. Have you known women that have exchanged sex for money or goods?
2. How are the arrangements for sex work made? Through escort services, parties, brothels?
3. Who are the men that are seeking to purchase sex? (age range, nationality, level of education)
4. Have you known women who have engaged in sex work as a means of securing income for college?
5. Do you know ways in which the internet is used to promote or solicit sex?
6. In your opinion, what is the primary reason that men seek to purchase sex?
7. In your opinion, predominately, do you believe that women enter into sex work willingly?





### Forced Prostitution:

1. Have you ever heard of individuals that have been forced into prostitution? Who was organizing the prostitution of the woman?
2. Do you know of instances where persons were forced into prostitution by their family members or husbands?
3. Do you believe the police would help a woman who has been in forced prostitution?
4. How would a woman be treated in her community if she escaped a forced prostitution situation and returned home to her family?

### HIV/AIDS:

1. Have you ever heard of HIV/AIDS? Have you heard of STIs?
2. How did you learn about them? How are these viruses passed? How can they be prevented?
3. Are university women knowledgeable about the risks of HIV?
4. What measures are taken to prevent against HIV?
5. What services are available for persons seeking an HIV test? What are the costs?
6. If someone were known to have HIV in your community, how would they be treated?
7. In your opinion, what is the biggest limitation to HIV awareness in East Jerusalem and the West Bank?

## Annex V: Focus Group Discussion Guide (Male)

Introduction on the purpose of the research

Statement of confidentiality/anonymity

### Gender:

1. What are your feelings on the status of women? Do you believe that women are equal to men in all areas of life? Why or why not? Explain.
2. How would you describe the incidence of physical violence against women in the oPt?
3. How would you describe the incidence of sexual violence against women in the oPt?
4. If a woman were a victim of physical or sexual violence, to whom could she go for assistance?
5. Are there any laws that you know of that protect women from violence?

### Sex Work:

1. Have you known women that have exchanged sex for money or goods?
2. How are the arrangements for sex work made? Through escort services, parties, brothels?
3. Who are the men that are seeking to purchase sex? (age range, nationality, level of education)
4. Have you known women who have engaged in sex work as a means of securing income for college?
5. Do you know ways in which the internet is used to promote or solicit sex?
6. In your opinion, what is the primary reason that men seek to purchase sex?
7. In your opinion, predominately, do you believe that women enter into sex work willingly?
8. Forced Prostitution:
9. Have you ever heard of individuals that have been forced into prostitution? Who was organizing the prostitution of the woman?
10. Do you know of instances where persons were forced into prostitution by their family members or husbands?
11. Do you believe the police would help a woman who has been in forced prostitution?
12. How would a woman be treated in her community if she escaped a forced prostitution situation and returned home to her family?

### HIV/AIDS:

1. Have you ever heard of HIV/AIDS or STIs?
2. How did you learn about them? How are these viruses passed? How can they be prevented?
3. Are university men knowledgeable about the risks of HIV?
4. What measures are taken to prevent against HIV?
5. What services are available for persons seeking an HIV test? What are the costs?
6. If someone were known to have HIV in your community, how would they be treated?
7. In your opinion, what is the biggest limitation to HIV awareness in East Jerusalem and the West Bank?



