



# CHILDREN

## IN THE STATE OF PALESTINE

Child development data from the 2019/2020 multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS)

2021



# Foreword

This Child Rights Brief, which highlights development data on girls and boys in the State of Palestine from the latest Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, comes at a very important time. December 2021 marks 75 years since the inception of UNICEF, when the world came together and agreed that providing relief and supporting the long-term needs of mothers and children was of critical importance. As the current COVID-19 pandemic, among other crises, has shown us this mission is as important now as it ever was, as well as joint efforts with the entire UN family and the importance of multilateralism. Unfortunately, the pandemic continues, and children and young people will be living with the impacts of this pandemic and how the world chooses to respond for years to come. Therefore, it is critical that children and youth be included in decisions that affect their future. Some 75 years on, UNICEF remains committed to the rights of children and is determined to protect and to promote the rights of all children everywhere.

Drawing on the rights articulated in the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) outlining the obligations and responsibilities of all the stakeholders, and driven by the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this Child Rights Brief looks at vital social and developmental indicators for children and adolescents in Palestine. Considerable advances realized in the past decades, notably the near universal coverage in immunization and very high enrolment rates in primary education – including for girls – are particularly commendable due to multiple obstacles that result from the continuing protracted protection crisis, which is itself a product of armed conflict, the occupation, frequent escalations of violence, chronic instability, and the shortage of resources.

At the same time, much remains to be done. Too many children still do not enjoy their full rights and get a fair chance to realize their potential. This may be because they were born with a disability, live in a hard-to-reach area, are discriminated against due to their gender, are affected by movement restrictions or other conflict-related violations, or are exposed to violence at home, at school, or in the streets.

This brief provides recommendations for areas where potential progress can be made. The commitment of Palestinian families, communities, and authorities to the rights of children is clearly manifested every day in investment decisions made by the Palestinian Authority as well as the dedication of professionals in health, education, social work, water and sanitation, and other fields. This brief aims to assist all responders in their efforts to ensure all Palestinian children grow up to realize their full and innate potential. With less than a decade until 2030, when the SDGs are to be achieved, children in the State of Palestine have no time to lose. Every child has rights. It is imperative that all decision makers and stakeholders with the ability to improve children's access to rights in the State of Palestine act to ensure that become reality.

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**State of Palestine**

*This analysis provides information on key child rights indicators from the 2019/20 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) undertaken by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) with UNICEF support. The indicators selected are based upon the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and those for which there is a significant difference either from the 2014 MICS data or with a significant change across the population groups surveyed. Where no disaggregation is provided for an indicator this is due to there being no significant difference between the population groups disaggregated in the MICS.*



# Surviving the early years: Child mortality from birth to the age of five

SDGs 2,3,5 | CRC ARTICLES 6,24

Reducing preventable deaths of new-born babies and young children is a global priority. Child mortality rates are therefore a universal critical indicator of the quality of health systems and programmes that serve women and young children.

There are three key measures of early childhood mortality rates:

- ▶ Neonatal (within the first month)
- ▶ Infant (within the first year)
- ▶ Under five years of age.

In the State of Palestine, the mortality figures for under-fives have fallen significantly over the last five years, from 22 deaths per 1,000 to 14 deaths. This is a decline compared to both the MICS 2014 and the Census in 2017. Despite this considerable progress, improving child survival remains a matter of urgent concern.

Of this figure 9 children per 1,000 died shortly after they were born (up to one month old). This represents an improvement from 2014, when 11 new-born children per 1,000 died within their first month.

Across the State of Palestine boys' chances of dying before they reach their fifth birthday are considerably higher than for girls (16.3 per 1,000 births for boys compared to 12 per 1,000 for girls).

Infant mortality rates for children born in refugee camps are significantly higher than for their counterparts from urban and rural areas. 17 out of 1,000 children in this group die before they reach the age of one, as compared to 12 per 1,000 across the State of Palestine. This figure rises to 19 out of 1,000 for all refugee children up to the age of five.

## Facts



## Antenatal care coverage

Adequate care during pregnancy is important for the health of the mother and the development of the baby. Pregnancy is a crucial time to promote healthy behaviours and parenting skills.

To achieve the full life-saving potential that antenatal care<sup>1</sup> promises for women and babies, four visits providing essential evidence-based interventions are required.

Across the State of Palestine 98.7% of pregnant women receive antenatal care from skilled health personnel.

In the West Bank 97% have seen a doctor. For the Gaza Strip this figure is 87.3%.

For those women living in camps, 88.4% have seen a doctor compared to 92.6% living in urban areas.

### Facts



**98.7%**

of pregnant women receive antenatal care from skilled health personnel

### Recommendations:

- Enhance the quality of neonatal and antenatal care through the capacity building of health professionals.
- Harmonize health information system, including updating child-related mortality definitions, data collection, and reporting.



<sup>1</sup> Essential interventions in ANC include identification and management of obstetric complications such as pre-eclampsia, tetanus toxoid immunisation, intermittent preventive treatment for malaria during pregnancy (IPTp), and identification and management of infections including HIV, syphilis and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). ANC is also an opportunity to promote the use of skilled attendance at birth and healthy behaviours such as breastfeeding, early postnatal care, and planning for optimal pregnancy spacing.

# Thriving – Ensuring the healthy development of young children

SDGs 1,2,3,5,10| CRC ARTICLES 5, 23, 24, 27

It is crucially important to monitor key factors, such as nutrition status, birth experience, safe use of contraception and care for acute respiratory infections, that affect the development of children and influence their ability to thrive and prosper in the future.

## Malnutrition

Adequate nutrition in terms of age as well as diverse diet are determining factors contributing to positive health outcomes for children. Having adequate nutrition intake and a healthy diet helps children grow, develop and boost the immune system. Gauging the numbers of children who are stunted and wasted indicates levels of child undernutrition. Unhealthy food habits are a major contributor to overweight and obesity.

### Stunting/ global acute malnutrition (GAM) and severe and moderate acute malnutrition

There were noticeably more stunted children under five years old in 2019/20 compared to 2014. 8.7% were significantly below average height for their age, compared to 7.4% in 2014. Furthermore, the level of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) rose from 1.8% of children under five in 2014 to 2.4% in 2019/20 which is almost one in 25 children.

The increase in GAM is particularly apparent in children aged one to two years old. For children aged 12–17 months the rate increased to over one in ten children, from 7.8% to 10.5%. For children aged 18–23 months the rates rose from 8.2% to 12.4%.

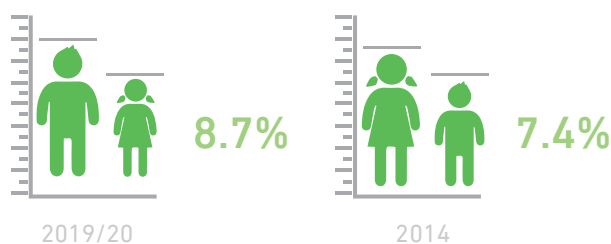
The West Bank continues to have higher SAM rates than Gaza, with over one in 36 children under five (2.8%) having SAM as compared to 1.8% in Gaza.



In 2014 the prevalence of stunting in children from poor and wealthy families was broadly the same. However, over the last five years it has affected children from the poorest families significantly more, with 10.5% of the poorest children stunted compared to 6.4% of the wealthiest.

**Facts**

Number of under five significantly below average height



**Overweight children**

8.6% of children under five are overweight, of whom 1.9% are severely overweight. In 2014, 8.2% of children under five were overweight, however there was no measurement of children who were severely overweight in 2014.

In the West Bank there has been a significant rise in overweight children, from 8% in 2014 to 10.9% in 2019. This represents more than one in ten children.

Children from the wealthiest families are more than twice as likely to be overweight than children from the poorest families (12.4% compared to 5.7%).

**Facts**

**8.6%**

of children under five are overweight



**Recommendations:**

- Increase community awareness and knowledge, particularly in most vulnerable areas, on the importance of a balanced and nutritious diet for pregnant and lactating mothers, and young children during their first 1,000 days of life.
- Enhance the quality of counselling during ante- and post-natal care.
- Implement MOH and MOE maternal, new-born, and adolescent nutrition policies.

**Children's development**

Over the last five years significantly more children aged 3 to 5 years are meeting developmental targets measured by ECD index<sup>2</sup> (72% in 2014 compared to 84% in 2019/20).

This rise is reflected in figures for both boys (68% compared to 82%) and girls (77% compared to 86%), and in camps the figures rose from 63.5% to 82.1%.

In the West Bank figures have risen from 76% to 84%, and in the Gaza Strip from 67.5% to 83%. Literacy-numeracy levels among this age group have jumped from 22% to 38%.

Social-emotional development figures have improved from 71% to 82%: in the West Bank from 76% to 84% and in Gaza Strip from 66% to 79%.

Five years ago, there was a significant difference in the development of children from different economic backgrounds. In 2014 63% of children from the poorest families met developmental targets. The figure for their wealthier counterparts was 82%. In 2019/20 the figures were 81.1% compared to 89.5%.

<sup>2</sup> ECD index is calculated as the percentage of children who are developmentally on track in at least three of these four domains including physical growth, literacy and numeracy skills, socio-emotional development and readiness to learn which are vital domains of a child's overall development.



## Facts

84%

children aged 3 to 5



meeting developmental targets

2019/20

72%

children aged 3 to 5



meeting developmental targets

2014

Children from the poorest families meeting developmental targets

81.1%



2019/20

63%



2014

## Recommendations:

Enhance capacity building of health, education and social professionals on quality screening for early detection of development delays and disabilities focusing on children 0-3 years of age.

Allocate government resources to scale early childhood interventions (ECI).

## Births from adolescent mothers

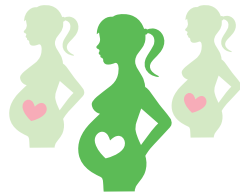
Between 2014 and 2019/20 the level of teenage mothers (aged 15–19) has dropped from 48 to 43 per 1,000 women.

The adolescent birth rate has increased in the West Bank (from 35 compared to 39 per 1,000 women) but dropped significantly in the Gaza Strip (from 66 compared to 48 per 1,000 women).

In urban areas the figures have dropped (from 55 compared to 43 per 1,000 women) but they have risen in rural areas (29 compared to 44 per 1,000 women) and for those living in camps (29 compared to 39 per 1,000 women).

## Facts

Levels of teenage motherhood



2019/20

43  
per 1,000



2014

48  
per 1,000

## Recommendation:

Implementation of article 2 of the Personal Status Law no 16 of 1967 and articles 2 and 3 of the CRC



# Learning – Access to education

## SDGs 4 | CRC ARTICLES 28 & 29

Access to high-quality education and attending school gives children opportunities to succeed, and skills, competencies, and choices about the direction of their future life. An accessible and high-quality education system also encourages child participation, stimulates economic development and reduces poverty levels.

### Pre-school education

Ensuring children are ready to learn when they start primary school allows them to make the most of their schooling when they start. This, in turn, improves children's long-term educational outcomes.

### Attendance at Kindergarten for 3–4-year-olds

Across the State of Palestine over a third of children aged 3–4 years attend Kindergarten (34.2%). For 3-year-olds the figure is 11%. For 4-year-olds it is 60.7%.

39.5% of children with no functional difficulties attend, compared to 21.9% with functional difficulties.<sup>3</sup>

Only 26% of children from the poorest households attend Kindergarten compared to 44.5% of those from the wealthiest households.

### Foundational learning skills

The ability of children to develop required foundational skills in literacy and numeracy in the first six years of formal education is key to their future ability to succeed academically and professionally.



<sup>3</sup> Functional difficulties is defined as children who have functional difficulties in at least one of the following domains: Seeing; Hearing; Walking; Fine Motor; Communication; Learning; Playing; Controlling Behaviour.

## Literacy

In total 52.7% of children aged 7–14 demonstrate foundational reading skills<sup>4</sup>. Less than half of boys achieve this level (47.8%). For girls, the figure is significantly higher at 57.3%.

In the West Bank 57.6% of children achieve this level. This compares to the Gaza Strip where the figure drops to 47%.

Children from rural areas (67.6%) perform better at these tasks than children from urban areas (59.6%) and those from camps (58.4%).

Less than half of refugee children (49.3%) reach this level, compared to 55.2% of non-refugee children.

64.4% of children from the wealthiest households achieve this standard while only 39.6% from the poorest households do so.

## Numeracy

Less than half of children aged 7–14 (45.8%) demonstrate foundational skills. The figure is the same for boys and girls.

In the West Bank 53.7% of children reach this target. The figure for the Gaza Strip is significantly lower at 36.6%.

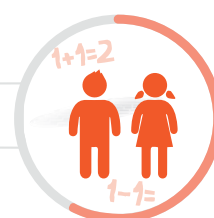
Refugee children are less likely to demonstrate basic numeracy skills (41.8%) than non-refugee children (48.8%).

### Facts

7-14 year olds achieving reading level



Less than half of children aged 7-14 demonstrate foundation numeracy skills



## School attendance

### Basic education

96.9% of children of basic school age attend school, with fewer boys attending (95.4%) compared to girls (98.4%).

2.8% of children of basic school age are out of school. Again, the figure for boys (4.3%) is higher than for girls (1.3%).

Non-attendance of boys is higher in rural areas (6.2% compared to 4.1% of boys from urban areas and 3.8% of those living in camps.)

More than one in 20 boys from the West Bank (5.2%) do not attend school, compared to one in 31 girls (3.2%) from the Gaza Strip.

<sup>4</sup> Foundational reading skills requires children surveyed to read a short text and to answer comprehension questions.

Figures for non-attendance rise as boys get older, ranging from 1.6% of children aged 6 to 13.9% for those aged 15.

Mothers' educational background affects attendance of children: 7.9% of boys whose mothers have basic or no education do not attend school. For mothers with higher education the figure was only 1.1%.

More than one in 20 boys from the poorest backgrounds (5.3%) do not attend school. 1.6% of boys from the wealthiest background do not attend.

## Secondary school

74.5% of children of secondary school age attend school. This means more than one in four children from this age group do not attend school.

21.5% of all children of secondary school age are out of school. More than twice the number of boys do not attend school (29.8%) compared to girls (11.6%).

In the West Bank over a third of boys (36.8%) do not attend. For the Gaza Strip this figure is 21.3%.

Economic background seems to be a factor in non-attendance, with 38% of children from the poorest households not attending. This contrasts with 20.7% of children from the wealthiest households.

### Facts

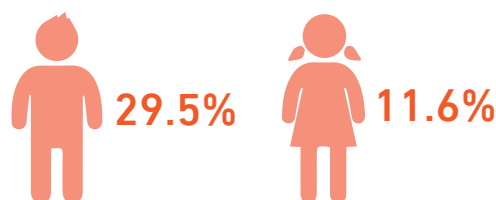
96.9%

Basic school attending



74.5%

Secondary school attending



Number children of secondary school age non-attending

**At the foundation level, attainment levels in literacy and numeracy skills need to improve significantly. Attendance levels at secondary school must also improve.**

### Recommendations:

- Develop a strategy to operationalize the law of one-year compulsory and free pre-primary education (PPE) by MoE to expand children's access to pre-primary with a focus on the vulnerable children.
- Enhance the quality of pre-primary education through teacher training, accreditation and roll out of a child-centred framework
- Invest in and scale-up programmes on life skills to improve students' lifelong learning and employability skills.
- Strengthen data collection and analysis on the causes of drop-out in areas with high drop-out rates to support adequate provision of services to prevent and respond to drop-out, including remedial education, reintegration services through alternative programmes, poverty alleviation, mental health and psychosocial support, and technical and vocational education and training.

# Protecting children from violence and exploitation

SDGs 5 & 16 | CRC ARTICLES 19, 34-38

Exposing children to violent discipline has harmful consequences and can have a long-term negative effect. Violence against children hampers children's development, learning abilities and school performance. It can also provoke low self-esteem and affect mental health and wellbeing.

## Child discipline

Nine out of ten (90.1%) children experience some form of violent discipline (92.3% for boys; 87.9% for girls).

Over one in five children (20.1%) experience severe physical punishment. 87.5% experience psychological aggression. Only 7.4% received non-violent discipline.

More children experience severe physical punishment in the Gaza Strip (28.5%) than in the West Bank (13.7%).

Children of refugees were significantly more likely to experience severe physical punishment (24.5%) compared to children of non-refugees (17%).

Children from the poorest households are more than twice as likely to experience severe physical punishment (29.9%) than those from the wealthiest households (11.4%).

20% of mothers believe in physical punishment.

### Facts

90%

Children violent discipline



Over one in five children experience severe physical punishment

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## Children involved in economic activities

7.3% of children aged 5-17 years in the State of Palestine are involved in child labour.<sup>5</sup> 10% of all 10-14-year-olds are involved. Boys (9.6%) are more likely to be affected than girls (4.8%).

For all children aged over five, those from rural areas are more involved in economic activity than those from urban area or camps.

22.8% of 15-17-year-olds from poorer backgrounds work (less than 43 hours), compared to 16.4% of those from the wealthiest backgrounds.

## Hazardous work<sup>6</sup>

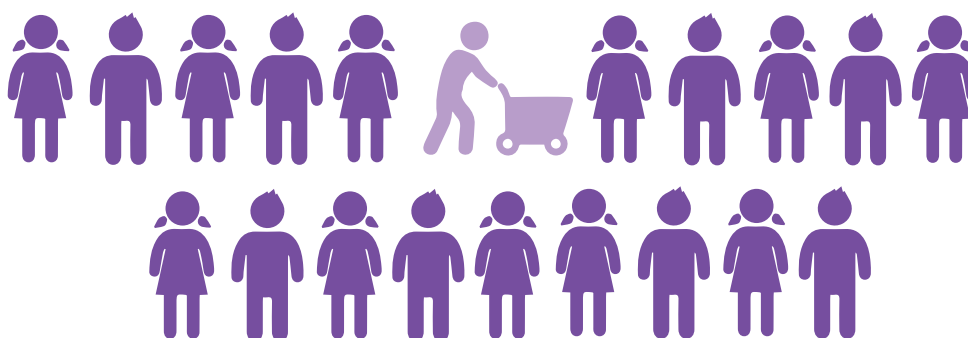
Over one in twenty (5.1%) of all children are engaging in hazardous tasks while working.

Over one in ten (10.3%) are working or carrying out chores beyond the hours permitted or under hazardous conditions. This represents 14.8% of boys and 5.7% of girls.

24.7% of children not attending school are involved in such hazardous work.

### Facts

Over one in twenty children are engaging in hazardous tasks while working



## Child marriage

More than one in seven women aged 20-24 (13.4%) married under the age of 18.

The figure is higher for women in the Gaza Strip (16.5%, or one in six) compared to those in the West Bank (11.4%).

And over half of women with no or basic education (50.8%) married under this age, compared to 2.3% of women with higher education.

More than twice as many women from the poorest households (18.3%) married under 18 compared to those from the wealthiest households (7.5%).

### Facts

Over one in 7 women aged 20-24 married under the age of 18.



<sup>5</sup> Involvement in economic activities or household chores during the last week. The definition of child labour used for SDG reporting does not include hazardous working conditions; this is a change from the previous indicator definition.

<sup>6</sup> Hazardous work covers the following categories: Carrying heavy loads; Working with dangerous tools or operating heavy machinery; Exposed to dust, fumes or gas; Exposed to extreme cold, or heat; Exposed to loud

## Domestic violence

15.7% of women believe husbands are justified in beating their wives.

Almost one in four women from the Gaza Strip believe this (24.2%), compared to one in ten women from the West Bank.

Young women are more likely than older women to believe husbands are justified in beating their wives.

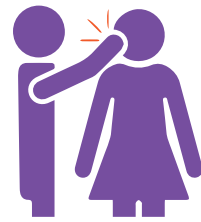
This belief is more prevalent among women from the poorest households (29.7%) than those from the wealthiest (7.5%).

Education also seems to affect beliefs: over one in ten women with basic or limited education (10.8%) believe husbands are justified in beating their wives if they argue with them. The comparable figure for women with higher education is 2.8%.

Facts

+15%

of women believe husbands are justified in beating their wives



**Children in the State of Palestine, especially the most vulnerable, must be protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, and abuse to ensure they can grow to fulfil their potential.**

### Recommendation:

- Support lead agencies and the National Children's Committee (NCC) to operationalize and implement the National Inter-Sectoral Violence Against Children Strategy (NIVACS) focusing on strengthening national child protection systems, improving access to quality child protection services, and supporting families' role in protecting children.



# Providing children with clean and safe environments

SDGs 6,11 & 13 | CRC ARTICLE 24

**Access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is essential for good health, wellbeing and welfare. Inadequate access to WASH can lead to a wide range of illnesses and diseases including cholera, diarrhoea and dysentery, and also has negative consequences for nutritional status.**

## Access to drinking water

59% of households have drinking water on the premises. However, this figure disguises large regional differences. 95.1% of households in the West Bank have drinking water in their household compared to only 6.3% in the Gaza Strip.

91.1% of the poorest households do not have access to safe drinking water on their premises. This contrasts with 3.2% of the wealthiest households.

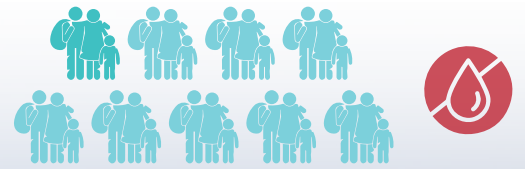
Rural households are more likely to have drinking water at home (95.5%) compared to urban households (54.4%) and those living in camps (37.4%).

## Recommendations:

- Strengthen institutional and organizational systems to plan and implement effective and efficient WASH service delivery.
- Increase household access to piped water services, particularly in vulnerable areas.
- Upgrade current desalination plants for bulk production of desalinated water; construct new ones.
- Implement community engagement campaigns at household level on the safe use of desalinated water as drinking water.

## Facts

Over nine out of ten of the poorest households do not have access to safe drinking water on their premises.





## Contamination of water

When assessing the overall quality of water both the quality of water households drink at home and the quality of water at its source are evaluated.

### Contamination of source drinking water:

22.6% of households in the West Bank use water sources that were found to contain E. coli. This is higher than the figure for the Gaza Strip (15.2%).

In total across the State of Palestine 19.4% of households use water sources that were found to contain E. coli. That represents almost one in five households. 79% of households that use rainwater collection as their main source of drinking water have E. coli contamination and 51% use protected wells or springs that have E. coli contamination.

### Recommendations

- Upgrade wastewater systems, particularly in vulnerable areas.
- Improve water networks' efficiency to prevent leakages.
- Strengthen the capacity of water authorities (PWA and the water service providers) to monitor the water from other sources, such as trucked water and spring water.
- Improve households' awareness and knowledge on safe water management.
- Increase household-level water treatment and safe storage initiatives to improve the quality of drinking water and reduce transmission of waterborne diseases.
- Build capacity of water service providers and communities on water safety planning.

### Safe water

39.5% have improved drinking water on the premises free of E. coli and available when needed.

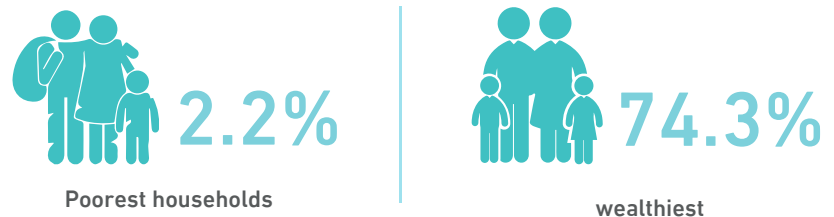
However, less than one in twenty (4.3%) households in the Gaza Strip have improved drinking water on the premises free of E. coli and available when needed, compared to almost two thirds (66.2%) of their counterparts living in the West Bank.

40.8% of all households source their water from protected wells or springs, and 65.2% have piped water.

However only 2.2% of the poorest households have piped water, compared to 74.3% of the wealthiest households.

#### Facts

Households with piped water



Almost one in five households uses water sources that were found to contain E.coli.



### Recommendations:

- Develop water safety plans.
- Promote safely managed rainwater harvesting.

### Handwashing

Handwashing with soap and water is the most cost-effective way to combat diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections in children under five.

95.2% of households have handwashing facilities where water and soap are present. However, this falls to 89.6% in poorest households.

### Sanitation facilities

98.8% of households are using improved sanitation. Only 0.1% of the population practise open defecation, all of whom are in the poorest households in rural areas of the West Bank.

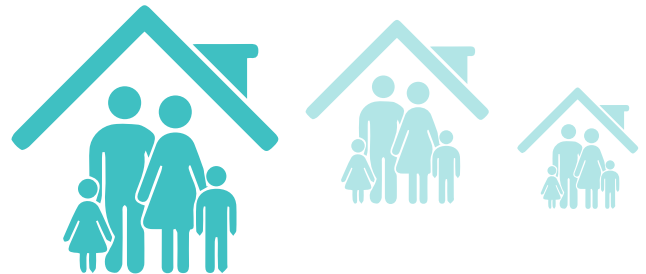
58.8% of all households' toilets are flushed or piped to the sewage system. 11.8% use septic tanks, 28% pit latrines and 1% open drains.

59.4% of households' sanitation facilities are in their own dwelling. For 22.1% of households, they are in their plot or yard.

#### Facts

98.8%

of households are using improved sanitation



### Recommendations:

- Increase sanitation awareness and knowledge in households.
- Strengthen the most vulnerable household's capacity in the rehabilitation/installation of household latrines
- Conduct community engagement activities on WASH infection prevention and control measures in schools and at community level.

### Menstrual hygiene

78.8% of women use appropriate materials and have access to a private place to wash and change at home.

### Exclusion of activities during menstruation

13.9% of women did not participate in social activities, school or work due to their last menstruation.

### Recommendations

- Increase awareness and knowledge among school aged girls through sessions and other awareness materials on menstrual hygiene, alongside hygiene promotion.

# Giving children fair life chances: disability and social benefits

SDGs 1,5 & 10 | CRC ARTICLES 2, 12, 23, 26 & 30

Having a disability can mean that children are not given a fair chance to reach their developmental potential. They may not receive the same opportunities as other children and may face discrimination and exclusion. It's therefore important to detect disabilities in children early, provide tailored programmes and measure their experiences and progress.

## Disability

Of children aged 2–4 years, 2.4% have one or more functional challenges. One in forty boys are affected compared to one in fifty girls (2.5% compared to 2%).

Far more children from the poorest households are affected by functional challenges (3.5%) compared to children from the most affluent households (0.3%).

Looking at all children aged 2–17, 12.3% have at least one functional challenge. This affects almost 15% (14.6%) of all boys from this age group and just under 10% (9.8%) of girls.

13.4% of children from the West Bank are affected, compared to 9.8% of children from the Gaza Strip.

Almost a third (32.1%) of these children have mothers with a functional challenge, whereas the figure for those whose mothers have no such challenge is 11.8%.

## Facts

Children with a disability.

1/40   
Boys

1/50   
Girls

## Social benefits

Social transfers or benefits aim to protect poor households from threats posed by poverty and deprivation and strengthen their resilience to cope with shocks.

**Children with disabilities and those from the poorest households must have access to quality services and opportunities, including targeted services which meet their specific needs.**

### Facts

# 73%

of households in the poorest wealth quintile had received a social transfer or benefit in the last two months.



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# Gaining access to information and technology

SDGs 11, 17 | CRC ARTICLES: 17

**Using home computers and mobile phones and access to the internet are assets that allow women to access information, make informed decisions and participate fully in society.**

## Home computers

Across the State of Palestine almost two thirds (64.8%) of all households and over 93% of the poorest households do not have a home computer.

Significantly more households in the West Bank (41.5%) have a home computer compared to those in the Gaza Strip (24%).

## Women's computer usage

Economic background appears to affect women's use of computers. Only 17.4% of women from the poorest households used a computer during the previous three months compared to 75.8% of women from the wealthiest.

66% of women in the West Bank and 72.6% in the Gaza Strip did not (34%) use a computer at all during the same period.

## Mobile phone ownership

Over a third (34.8%) of women from the poorest households do not own a mobile phone. For women from the wealthiest households the figure is less than 5%.

## Women's use of internet

The vast majority of all women (88.3%) have used the internet during their lifetime. However, levels of internet usage appear to be linked to education attainment. Over a quarter of women with basic or no education (28.5%) have never used the internet and over two thirds (68.2%) haven't used the internet over the last three months.

## Women's ICT skills

Over a quarter (28.3%) of women have performed one of the nine most common computer related tasks over the past three months. However, for women from the poorest households the figure is only 15.8%. This compares to 43.1% for women from the wealthiest households.



## Recommendations:

Access to mobile phones, home computers and the internet must be available for all women to ensure they can make informed decisions for themselves and their children.

### Facts

Households with home computers



West Bank

41%



Gaza Strip

27.4%

Over 1 in 4 women with basic or no education have never used the internet.



## Transitioning into adulthood – youth and adolescents

Children's experiences during adolescence can have a critical influence on their long-term prospects. Monitoring key indicators for adolescent children is therefore important to gauge children's development and how they transition into adulthood, and provide skills and competencies so they can reach their full potential.

### Adolescent Literacy and Computer Skills

#### Literacy

99.7% of women aged 15-24 can read a short simple statement about everyday life or have attended secondary or higher education.

#### ICT Skills

Less than half of women aged 15-24 (44.9%) have carried out at least one of nine specific computer related activities during the last three months.



## Learn

74.5% of children of secondary school age were attending secondary school or higher, with 3.9% attending basic school and 21.5% out of school. Wealth and the mother's educational attainment rate both have an impact on children's attendance in secondary education. 62.5% of children from the poorest households attended secondary school, while 84.3% of children from the wealthiest households attended secondary school. Furthermore, there are more children of secondary school age out of school in the West Bank than in Gaza with almost a quarter (24.9%) out of school in the West Bank, compared to 16.9% in Gaza.

Almost one in ten boys (9.3%) drop out of education between finishing basic school and starting secondary school. The comparable figure for girls is 2.7%. These challenges in transitioning to secondary school are focused in the West Bank where only 90.7% of children move on to secondary education as compared to 97.4% in Gaza.

### Facts

Almost one in ten boys drop out of education before they start secondary school



## Protection

One in ten children aged 10–14 years (10%) were involved in child labour, with 2.1% of children aged 15–17 involved in child labour. This is defined as economic activities or household chores which surpassed the age specific threshold.

Of those engaged in work 11.6% of children aged 15-17 and 6.4% of children aged 12-14 were involved in hazardous work.

## Births from adolescent mothers

Between 2014 and 2019/20 the rate of births to teenage mothers (aged 15–19) has dropped from 48 to 43 per 1,000 women.

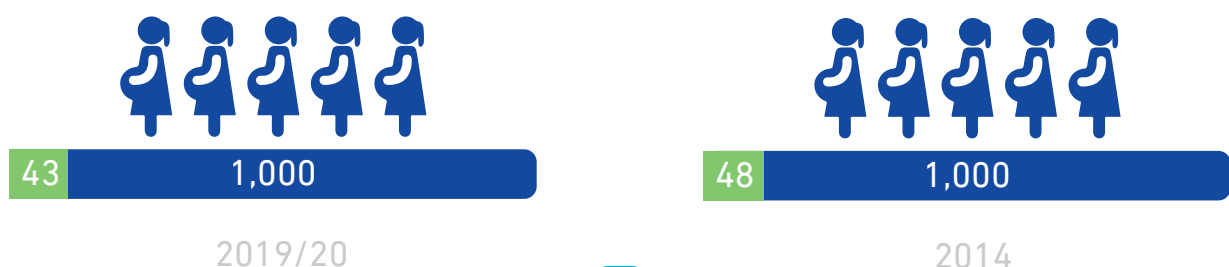
The adolescent birth rate has increased in the West Bank (from 35 compared to 39 per 1,000 women) but dropped significantly in the Gaza Strip (from 66 compared to 48 per 1,000 women).

In urban areas the figures have dropped (from 55 to 43 per 1,000 women), but they have risen in rural areas (from 29 to 44 per 1,000 women) and for those living in camps (from 29 to 39 per 1,000 women).

There are more children born to teenage mothers (15-19) from lower wealth households and among women who have lower education attainment. Teenage mothers with no or basic education had 116 births per 1,000 women as compared to 16 per 1,000 per women with higher education and 50 per 1,000 women with secondary education. Teenage mothers from the poorest households had 72 births per 1,000 women as compared to 21 per 1,000 per women from the wealthiest households.

### Facts

Levels of teenage motherhood





## **Water, sanitation and hygiene**

Only 77.4% of women and girls aged 15-19 used appropriate menstrual hygiene materials and had a private place to wash and change while at home. This is caused by the lack of a private place for women and girls to wash and change while at home.

Furthermore in relation to exclusion from activities due to menstruation, 14.8% of women and girls aged 15-19 years reported that they did not participate in social activities, school or work due to their last menstruation at some point in the last 12 months.

## **Fair chances in life**

84.8% of women and girls aged 15-19 said that they are very or somewhat happy. The figure for women from the poorest households was lower (76.6%). Fewer women and girls in Gaza said they were very or somewhat happy (81.1%) as compared to those in the West Bank (87.3%).

**Children must be given the best possible help, guidance and support as they pass through adolescence into adulthood.**

## **Recommendations:**

- ▶ Increase ICT education opportunities for adolescent girls and women, complemented by the provision of adequate ICT equipment and internet connectivity, particularly in vulnerable areas.
- ▶ Expand and strengthen existing reintegration services (technical and vocational education and training, poverty alleviation, mental health, and psychosocial support) for out-of-school children, and develop a multi-sectoral package of reintegration services across ministries and integrate this into existing systems.
- ▶ Amend the Labour Law to raise the minimum age of employment to 16, which will bring it into line with the Law on Education. Support the operationalization of this law at the national level.
- ▶ Scale up awareness raising on child marriage and teenage pregnancy at all levels.





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