

The Establishment of  
**Women's Economic Empowerment**

(WEE) Units in Northern Jordan Municipalities and  
Development of Gender Sensitive Action Plans

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>CBO</b>	Community-Based Organization
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GA</b>	Gender Analysis
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>GEWE</b>	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
<b>JSC</b>	Joint Services Council
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>MoLA</b>	Ministry of Local Administration
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance
<b>SWM</b>	Solid Waste Management
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>WEE</b>	Women Economic Empowerment



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women in rural Jordan face multiple challenges such as high unemployment rates and low labor force participation – factors attributed to underlying social norms, gendered roles, power relations, and lack of income-generating opportunities that meet women's skills and needs exacerbated by economic and the social pressures stemming from regional instability, fiscal constraints and economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown measures. The “Enhancing Women Participation in the Solid Waste Management Sector in Jordan” project tackles economic gender gaps and addresses inequalities in decision-making at the household level as well as the local government policy level. The project targets women in four municipalities in Irbid Governorate: three municipalities of Northern Shouneh County (Moa'th Bin Jabal, Tabqet Fahel & Sharhabeel Bin Hassnah) and Dair Abi Said municipality of Al Kourah County. The number of households in Northern Shouneh is 24,659, with an average family size of 5.8 people, which is higher in comparison to the national family size average of 5.5. Social indicators show that women-headed households constitute 12.2% of the total number of households in Northern Shouneh.

In Jordan, women's economic participation and political empowerment remain a challenge. As evident in demographic trends throughout Jordan, women are lagging behind men in terms of formal economic participation due to well-identified obstacles that include social norms, legal framework, care responsibilities and transportation. In Irbid Governorate in particular, unemployment rate in 2019 was recorded as 18.4%; with women's unemployment rate reaching 24.4% compared to 16.7% among men. As for women's economic participation in Irbid Governorate, the proportion was 15.6% which is near the national rate that ranged between 14% and 16% over the past years.

The objective of this report is to provide a snapshot on gender mainstreaming capacities within the four targeted municipalities of the “Enhancing Women Participation in the Solid Waste Management Sector in Jordan” project. It summarizes adjustment measures required to ensure gender equality and proposes key recommendations to support the establishment of Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Units at a municipal level, taking into consideration their active participation and contribution to local economic development.

To achieve this objective, multiple methodologies and data analysis techniques were used, including a literature review to identify barriers to women's involvement in local governance and strategies, followed by semi-structured interviews with key targeted local government staff. A capacity needs assessment was also conducted utilizing a UNDP capacity assessment tool that analyzes desired future capacities against existing ones to identify core issues or development challenges faced at a municipal level.



# BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, drive and sustain inclusive economic growth to improve the quality of life for everyone. On the ground, in 177 countries and territories, UNDP converts global perspective and local insight towards helping to empower lives and build resilient nations. Inclusive economic growth continues to be an important thematic area for Jordan's Country Programme that aims at addressing vulnerabilities at individual, community, local authority and national institutional levels by supporting initiatives that foster an inclusive enabling environment for livelihoods and job creation for all, especially among vulnerable Jordanian and Syrian refugees' youth and women in crisis-affected areas.

The further evolving impact of the COVID-19 crisis in Jordan has deepened a sense of urgency to tackle the root causes of socio-economic fragility by promoting resilience through systems strengthening, enabling self-reliance among refugees and vulnerable Jordanians and signifies the importance of 'resilience' as core to programming. The UNDP Jordan seeks to provide resilience-based development solutions for local economic recovery, including green economy opportunities and enabling equitable access to financial service solutions to ensure no one is left behind. The core of its programme strategy embraces a mid- to long-term approach to self-reliance

for all including refugees. This report is specifically related to the UNDP's project "Enhancing Women Participation in the Solid Waste Management Sector in Jordan" which aims to improve the socio-economic empowerment, well-being and stability of rural women in Northern Jordan, especially in the Solid Waste Management (SWM) sector.

The "Enhancing Women Participation in the Solid Waste Management Sector in Jordan" project, which is funded by Global Affairs Canada, contributes to improving women's quality of life in North of Jordan through enhancing their livelihoods, participation in public life, and their well-being. The entry point of this project is women's economic empowerment and equality as means to addressing barriers that are hindering women from active participation in their communities as workers, entrepreneurs and change makers, with an understanding that real women's economic empowerment exists when women and girls are given similar opportunities to men and boys in terms of knowledge, economic opportunities, gender-sensitive policies, decision-making power, as well as access to and control over assets and resources. The design of the project is built around three tracks:

- Enhancing and strengthening the role of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) to enable such organizations to work effectively and efficiently with women within the targeted communities to become a vehicle for women and women's voices in decision-making processes.
- Provision of financial support to the targeted CBOs and cooperatives to start working on increasing participation of women in the local economy, particularly in the solid waste sector, through designing and managing green business groups' projects.
- Working with national and local government to enhance gender-informed and responsive policy making in SWM at local and national levels.

The Project aims at providing entrepreneurial opportunities for 600 women through 12 green business groups projects in the SWM sector, and to further capacitate the 60 women from an already existing project of community-based sorting/recycling facility at Northern Shouneh (Ruwad Al Aghwar Al Shamalyeh Cooperative).

## OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS

This report summarizes the outcomes of several assessments that were conducted with the purpose of:

- Undertake a capacity assessment on gender mainstreaming in the four targeted municipalities aiming at evaluating human and institutional abilities, as well as a needs assessment identifying existing gender gaps. The capacity assessment was conducted in active participation of the targeted municipalities to guarantee ownership;
- Review and assess processes and procedures followed to establishing previous municipal Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Units; detail lessons learned and best practices with a focus on impact on WEE in the area;
- Propose corrective actions and measures to consider to build the capacities of the municipalities and their staff to support gender mainstreaming and women's economic empowerment at a local level;



# ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

**1. Literature review:** The literature review aimed at identifying barriers to women's involvement in local governance and strategies, and accordingly developing effective and sustainable approaches to gender-based inclusion and equity within local governance policies and structures. The literature review first highlights thematic individual, structural and systematic barriers to women's involvement in local-level governance, including selecting examples of approaches used in other municipalities.

## **2. Key Informants Interviews:**

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): 10 Semi-structured key informant interviews targeting Mayors, Local Development Unit (LDU) managers and WEE Unit coordinators/managers).

## **3. Capacity Needs Assessment:**

To identify the capacities required to establish the WEE units, a needs assessment was conducted with higher and middle management municipal staff (10 -15 participants), followed by a SWOT analysis conducted in FGDs format in order to identify institutional gender gaps, evaluate available policies, strategies and procedures at a municipal level from a gender perspective. Stakeholders involved in the SWOT analysis were required to have specific knowledge of the municipal structure, institutional memory, operational and programmatic challenges, community needs and to have an overview of the context.

Similarly, a rapid survey was designed and utilized to assess capacity gaps at an interpersonal level within the targeted municipalities.



## Analysis and Key Findings:

### Capacity assessment and capacity development plan:

A Capacity Assessment on Gender Mainstreaming was conducted in four main thematic areas: operational, structural, community consultation, as well as practices and attitudes towards solid waste management, with each divided into sub-thematic areas and accordingly:

#### Theme One: Operational Structure

- Municipal leadership and management style
- Transparency and reporting back
- Women's participation in municipal councils
- Female staff presentation at the municipality

#### Theme Two: Municipal Structures including Human resources

- Gender Responsive Budgets
- Internal and External Communications
- Gender Sensitive Recruitment
- Gender-Sensitive Capacity Building in Municipal Planning

#### Theme Three: Community Consultation

- Accountability and Feedback Mechanisms
- Accountability and Complaint Mechanisms
- Stakeholder Identification and Participation

#### Theme Four: Practices and Attitudes towards Solid Waste Management

- Perception of targeted municipalities participation in SWM





# OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

## Municipal leadership and management style

*Leadership in this context refers to members of Municipal councils, mayors and executive managers, with the mayor being the one to lead, supervise and manage staff towards targeted objectives based on existing strategic plans and guidance from the Ministry of Local Administration (MoLA). In addition, it refers to adopted methods for community engagement to guarantee a participatory approach.*

*In general, it was noted that management techniques varied considerably throughout the four municipalities, and this was influenced by the mayor's academic background and professional skills. While some were considered innovative, highly trained and flexible, able to manage teams, coordinate effectively with elected municipal members, others were seen as restricted with procedures, scarce finances, and moderate skills. This diversity between mayors' management style was observed as a challenge by some municipality staff members, as lack of understanding of systems and processes can disable the continuity and sustainability of community development and position the municipality to a limited mandate that focuses on community service only.*

*In some municipalities the mayor was the primary mean for implementation and strongly affected efforts to activate certain units and increase their efficiency, such as the LDUs. The nature and characteristics of existing management style within a municipality strongly influenced the LDU's formation, implementation and sustainability and this directly will affect the formation of WEE Unit in the future. Moreover, lack of political will as well as skills were noted as obstacles to implement strategic plans in the targeted municipalities. A KII mentioned; "we do have a strategic plan, but we don't know what we can do with it?", another said, "we need additional budget for this plan." Additionally, the assessment pointed to a weakness in adopting a participatory approach from the management in decision making and in engaging staff in the municipality projects and work progress. As a result, decisions were solely made by the mayors without involving municipal staff or ensuring that they were always informed about any given update.*



In **Dir Abi Saied**, the above challenges were not highlighted, on the contrary aspects like delegation, community consultations, engagement with local stakeholders, among others, were noted. This had positively impacted the work of the LDU, as the director had been able to design and follow a long-term strategic plan. Also, both the mayor and the executive director were able to recruit women in key senior positions in the municipality namely: regulations, licenses, finance department, engage constantly with international entities, and systematically build the capacity of concerned staff.

**Muath Bin Jabal** Municipality confirmed lack of strategic visions and plans, despite that MoLA provided the tools to design such strategic documents.

**Sharhabil Bin Hasneh** Municipality confirmed having a strategic plan with a vision, which had been developed with the support of USAID project, however the municipality did not move ahead with its implementation due to number of reasons including shortage in available financial resources.

It is worth mentioning that the targeted municipalities confirmed availability of the required tools to develop the municipality's vision and mission, strategic plan, etc., however, staff did not have the skills to administer these tools. If they were trained on the "know how", it would have been more efficient. They added that training sessions were short, not systematic, and most staff who attended them were not directly linked to the process.

### Transparency and reporting

Transparency is the principle of corresponding to "allowing those affected by administrative decisions to know about results and about the processes that led to these decisions"<sup>1</sup>, which means that the municipalities need to provide stakeholders and community members with all data and information related to their scope of work and service provision. One of the tools to ensure transparency is having feedback mechanism where the municipality publishes and shares all information about their achievements, ongoing projects, updates and challenges to all community members.

It is important to differentiate between internal and external accountability systems, namely community feedback mechanisms and staff complaint channels. A community feedback mechanism enables beneficiaries and community members to provide feedback and seek responses in relation to activities, in a safe manner, non-threatening and accessible, while staff complaint channels refer to means where staff can report internal disputes and grievances. In the four targeted municipalities, the two levels on transparency were found. Having said that, the findings revealed that at an internal level the platforms to share information were very limited, through the day-to-day communication, formal correspondence and meetings, while at an external level these mechanisms were limited to social media platforms, for instance, Facebook pages were used to announce achievements and activities. Most KIIs described these processes as "vague and not clear."

1. ICMA, Transparent Governance and Anti-Corruption, <https://bit.ly/36RPual>.



## Women's participation in municipal councils

Women's equal participation in decision-making is a necessary pre-condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Despite comprising more than 50% per cent (on average) of the targeted municipalities, women continued to lack access to political leadership opportunities and resources. Women participants in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) mentioned that if the mayor does not have the will to make any change related to women, "we can not do anything". They mentioned that there were very few women municipality board members who had the power to take decisions or to negotiate strongly for equal participation or voice concerns and ideas. Despite the 50% female presentation in the councils in some areas, women's active participation in decision making was very low, one male interviewee described the participation as passive and have "no voice."

Unfortunately, women were not well represented in local communities, in **Sharhabil Bin Hasneh** municipality. The director mentioned that the main barriers to women representation range from lack of interest to participate, lack of understanding of community participation processes, as well as due to social stigma. Very few women were able to overcome these barriers and voice their issues and concerns.

Furthermore, participants in FGDs and KIs stated that women involved in decision making processes were demotivated to address women's issues because of their fear of being excluded from decisions or seen as only supporters of women and not involved in other matters concerning

the community. LDU women managers in Sharhabil bin Hsna and Tabqet Fahel mentioned that in some instances staff may support us only to attract a certain fund or to show their support to MoLA, or other parties. For example, most men participants in a FGD agreed that "we do not want equality but equity" because they considered equality as opposing to societal norms and traditions.

**Muath bin Jabal's** engagement with local women has been very limited, not well structured and mainly linked to initiatives by INGOs.

## Women staff presentation at the municipality

The director of the LDU in **Dir Abi Saied**, mentioned improving the status of women in his municipality due to efforts made by women groups within the community. He highlighted that these women groups have created greater awareness among women on many subjects, such as, dealing with the municipality and government institutions, improving access to information, etc.

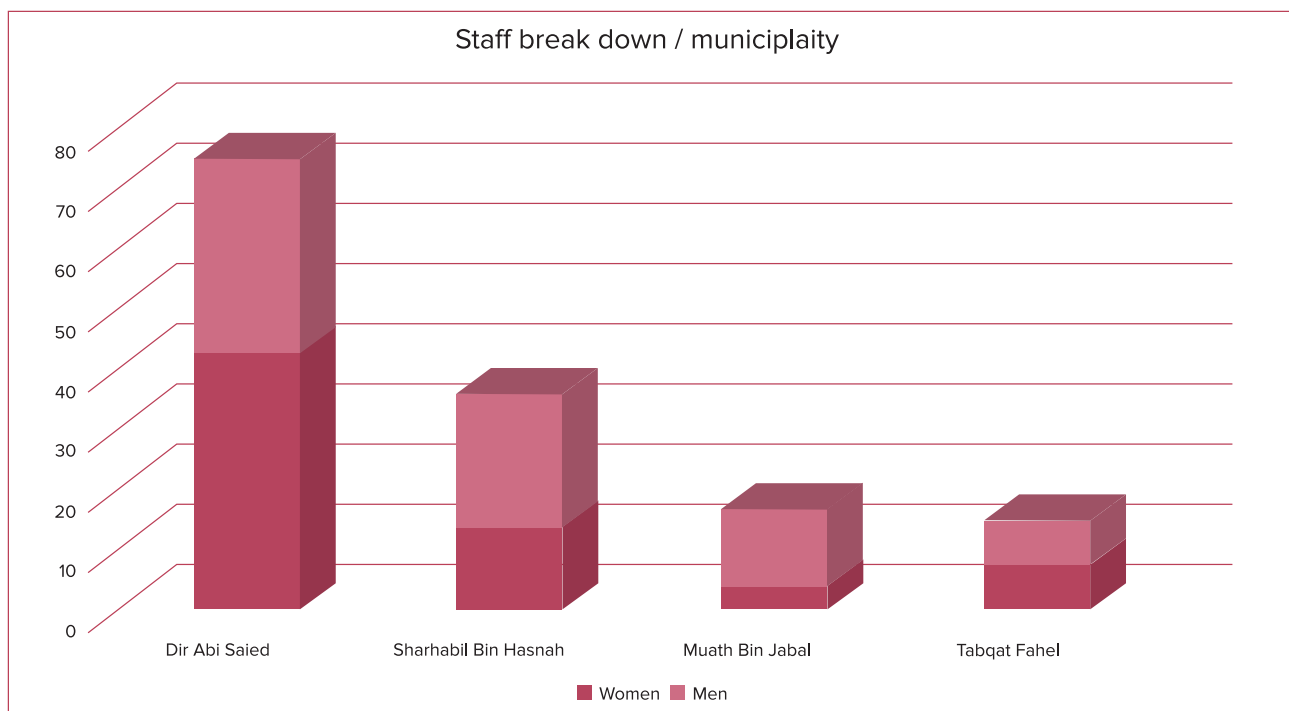
Staff recruitment at a local level is mainly based on the rules and procedures of the Civil Service Bureau however, internal staff management to some extent observed to be influenced by personal relations not only qualifications. This urge for activating a result-oriented employment strategy at a local level.

## Women's Economic Empowerment

(WEE) Units in Northern Jordan Municipalities and Development of Gender Sensitive Action Plans

In **Dir Abi Saeid** Municipality, ensuring equal opportunities spoke not only increasing women's consultation but also was extended to enabling their full and equal participation. While the recruitment process is managed by the Civil Service Bureau, the municipality provided recruitment requests indicating a woman is required for certain jobs. Also, women employees were provided with flexible working arrangements and allowed to work remotely when and where feasible. In terms of professional development, opportunities were equally provided for women and men staff with the main criterion followed for this purpose being budget allocation and staff interest in attending specific training, or based on an invitation to select employees to attend a training, as mentioned by the mayors in a KII. On the contrary, according to some participants in FGDs in certain municipalities, staff development was governed by personal connections with the Municipal Council.

The table below illustrates the number of women vs men staff within the targeted municipalities



# MUNICIPAL STRUCTURES

Municipalities are governed by an elected mayor, and the local “jurisdiction” is confined to a local council whose members are also elected. To ensure the implementation of gender-responsive policies, municipalities in some governorates created WEE Units to support determining local gender priorities and advocating for women’s concerns. One risk of having a separate unit for women is that gender issues may be excluded from other streams and/or resource allocation processes, thus limiting their influence. This problem could be overcome by establishing clear mandate, budget, role, and authority for WEE units, and by building support for their work within municipalities.

On another note, the formal municipal structure has not been approved by the ministry, which creates many issues in clarifying and defining roles and responsibilities. Lack of clear rules and responsibilities could demotivate staff, overload some units on expense of others, create room for unspecified recruitment and may weaken monitoring and evaluation.

## Gender Responsive Budgets



Gender-responsive budget planning is key to equal opportunities. It allows the government to plan and implement based on indicators that contribute to ensuring building a society based on justice and equality. While gender responsive budget is the term currently used by the Ministry of Finance,<sup>2</sup> research recommends using the term gender sensitive budget as gender responsive budgeting would require massive structural changes, while gender sensitive budgeting could be the first step toward this end.

2. Ministry of Finance issued the Official Circular n. 16, stating that “The ministry, department or unit must also take into consideration gender and child issues as identifying its indicators. In addition, number of employees by gender and distribution by program should be specified, with presenting each program’s objectives, main services and divisions responsible for implementing those programs.” This initiative represents a pioneer step for the government of Jordan in advancing towards a transparent and adequate public financing for gender equality.



Both modalities (gender sensitive/responsive planning<sup>3</sup> and gender sensitive budgeting<sup>4</sup>) are additional means to involve women in municipal work, through engaging women in the process of developing such budgets. A gender sensitive budget does not exclusively target women's needs, but rather includes a gender perspective into budgetary provisions ensuring that both men and women benefit equally from social policies. A successful example of engaging women in creating gender sensitive budgets was found in the Municipality of Dir Abi Saied. For the past few years, the municipality has successfully worked with the local community to create participatory budgeting that ensures women's inclusiveness in budgetary decision-making.

As elaborated previously, both Dir Abi Saied and Sharhabil bin Hasnah municipalities followed a structured community consultation process, and this was attributed to the high capacities within their LDUs. Also, semi sensitive gender budgeting supported these municipalities in targeting the needs of the most vulnerable and improved their overall planning. This was mainly linked to many projects funded by different donors that were able to build municipal staff capacities.

Main challenges facing the design, planning and implementation of the gender-responsive budget is the poor capacity of municipal and local council members to prepare this budget, in addition to lack of gender-based data.

### Internal and External Communications

Internal communication refers to the forms and channels of communication among municipality staff. The analysis found that communication mechanisms used within municipalities were not structured and depended on verbal face to face communication or phone communication. In some cases municipal staff mentioned the use of internal memos. Also, some staff had the required digital knowledge to use emails, online meetings platforms, among others, while others were not able to adapt to new technologies and were resistant to change. Moreover, some municipalities were well equipped with the required tools, computers and internet connections etc. while others were not. It is observed that staff needed a well-structured capacity building in communication, the use of emails, drafting memos and letters.

External communication mechanisms of the municipalities needs to be utilized based on the identification of the most efficient tools to communicate with the community (be it social media engagement, information dissemination, ect.), in addition to ensuring activating the type of communication channel that reaches the most vulnerable who do not have access to internet and/or cannot reach the municipality.

3. The European Commission defines gender planning as 'an active approach to planning which takes gender as a key variable or criterion and which seeks to incorporate an explicit gender dimension into policy or action'

4. Gender sensitive budgeting is an approach designed to mainstream the gender dimension into all stages of the budget cycle. It refers to the process of conceiving, planning, approving, executing, monitoring, analyzing and auditing budgets in a gender-sensitive way.



## Gender Sensitive Recruitment

Women equal representation in municipalities is linked to women's improved economic status, their leadership and participation in decision making. Within the assessed municipalities number of indicators reflected the existence of biases towards women in general, represented by behavioral aspects in addressing female colleagues, acknowledging female peers, as well as in attitudes towards responding to women and girls' needs. For instance, two of the targeted municipalities mentioned that women cannot work as technical engineers within the municipality, as these jobs are designed for men, not women. Gendered stereotypes and expectations continue to affect hiring and promotion processes.

## Gender-Sensitive Capacity Building in Municipal Planning

Emphasizing gender equality in municipal planning frequently requires sensitization and capacity building of municipal authorities. This has meant greater attention to participatory consultation mechanisms, understanding gender roles and dynamics, data collection, designing projects with a gender focus, and, more recently, incorporating gender criteria into municipal budgets. It was noticed that capacity building was an area of weakness across municipalities.

Some international organizations and funded projects such as USAID Cities and GIZ provided support for municipal institutional strengthening and capacity building of municipal staff to integrate gender issues into municipal planning, women equal presentation, and the wider engagement of women in community consultations. Having said that, many key informants confirmed that once the project ends these efforts would end too. Lack of sustainability can be contributed to poorly designed exit strategies, lack of investment in local capacities and poor linkages with local initiatives.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Procedures Manual for Preparing Municipal Needs and Development Plans<sup>5</sup> is a main reference point to determine needs and select responsive projects at a municipal level. Concerned municipal personnel were trained on how to prepare and implement the guide, in order to be one of the methods used to promote a participatory approach at a community level.

### Accountability and Feedback Mechanisms

Public accountability is an important component of local governance as it promotes community involvement and participation. Local government is viewed as the vehicle for service delivery, and if channels to communicate and report back to the community were not well established, the overall accountability would negatively be impacted.

The findings of the assessment show that some of the targeted municipalities activated feedback mechanisms through suggestion boxes and social media channels (Facebook and WhatsApp of some employees), however these efforts were not systematic, and often were subjected to personal connections. For instance, KIIs revealed that in many instances feedback was directly provided to the mayor or one of the staff through a phone call. Often, available feedback mechanisms were not effective and in some instances depended mainly on personal connections with the municipal councils and the mayor. Key Informants also mentioned that the level of education and available expertise within municipal staff affected the quality of service provision including the level of accountability and transparency practised within a municipality and the existence of appropriate systems and tools.

### Accountability and Complaint Mechanisms

Some of the targeted municipalities voiced concerns regarding favoritism in service provision and a lack of standard internal complaint systems making it difficult to flag such practices to higher authorities. Moreover, in the four targeted municipalities it was found that staff didn't have enough information about the grievance or complain mechanisms standard procedures. In some instances, the municipality had a complaint log where staff documented complaints (type, name, procedures), but still the system was influence to an extent by personal relationships with the Mayor and members of the municipal council.

To ensure accountability individuals must be encouraged to report issues or challenges through official reporting channels, that include also reporting sexual harassment and

5. <https://bit.ly/3OBUnWj>





exploitation cases faced by women. This could only happen when individuals are able to file complaints discretely, quickly and conveniently, and their privacy and the information share are protected. One KII noted that “usually, women are hesitate to file a complaint related to any type of sexual harassment.”

### **Stakeholder Identification and Participation**

The purpose of Stakeholder Engagement is to develop and maintain good and sustainable relationship with stakeholders. The first stage of a community engagement is to identify key actors from the community, civil society and local institutions whom the municipality want to maintain contact with. A stakeholder analysis that includes a focus on women and other disadvantaged groups (including PWD and refugees) could help identifying opportunities and obstacles to gender equality.

A good practice was found in Dir Abi Saied Municipality where local leaders were sensitized on the valuable contribution of women to the local community; and separate focus group meetings were held to facilitate women open exchange of ideas. In the other targeted municipalities stakeholder identification processes were found to be inadequate and limited to a list of names and phone numbers without any further analysis of the level of impact, the authority or the type of support that they could provide.



## Practices and Attitudes towards Solid Waste Management

Perception of targeted municipalities participation in SWM The National Solid Waste Management Strategy<sup>6</sup> is the main reference point for managing the solid waste sector in Jordan. To date, the strategy has not been fully integrated at the targeted municipalities which hampered efforts to resolving the waste management situation. Moreover, it was noted that municipalities didn't have the financial means to improve the waste collection infrastructure, recycling facilities and waste disposal systems.

Regarding societal perceptions on women's participation in SWM, in general women welcomed the idea and believed that they could benefit from the existence of projects targeting SWM in their communities, however, men interviewees were hesitant to agree that women could engage in SWM activities and noted if women were to engage in such activities they need to have a suitable work environment that meets community expectations. Participants stated that "the community will welcome this initiative only if it is designed to fit cultural norms and expectations namely: working hours are reasonable, gender segregated and the financial reward is appropriate."

At a household level, the role of women in managing SWM was presented as equal to men, where both of them engaged in recycling, sorting and managing collected waste. At a community level, women had no role in SWM, as it appeared to be a male dominated sector, managed by informal waste pickers and trash traders. It seems that roles, traditional expectations, and cultural limitations continue to bound women's advancement and systematically excluded them from decision-making processes at a community level. Men were believed to be more capable to make decisions in this sector compared to women.

6. <https://bit.ly/3klLeDa>



# SWOT Analysis of Targeted Municipalities

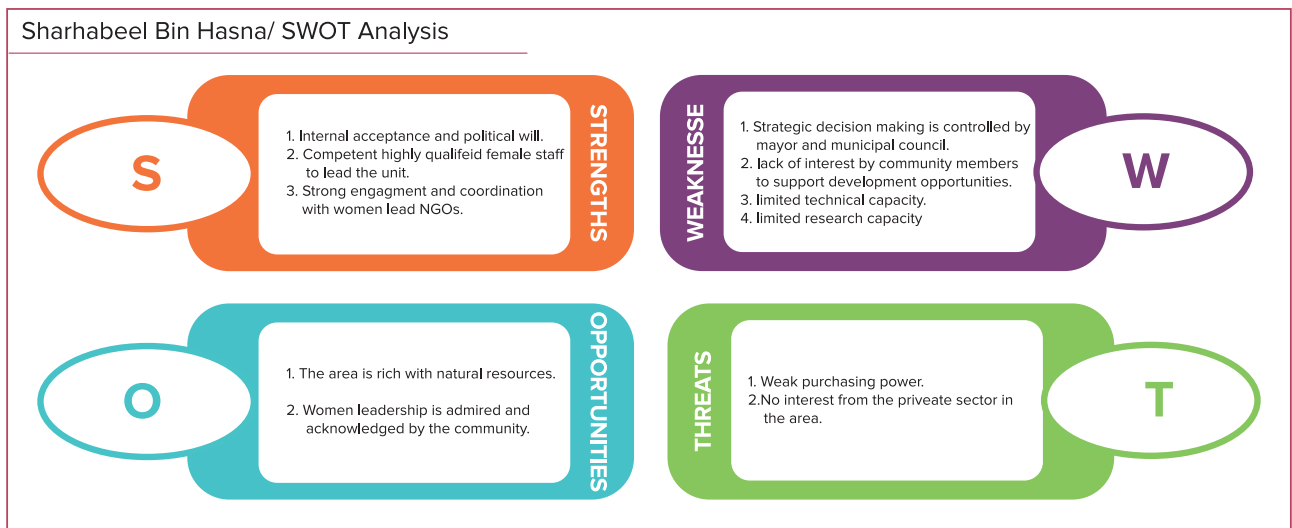
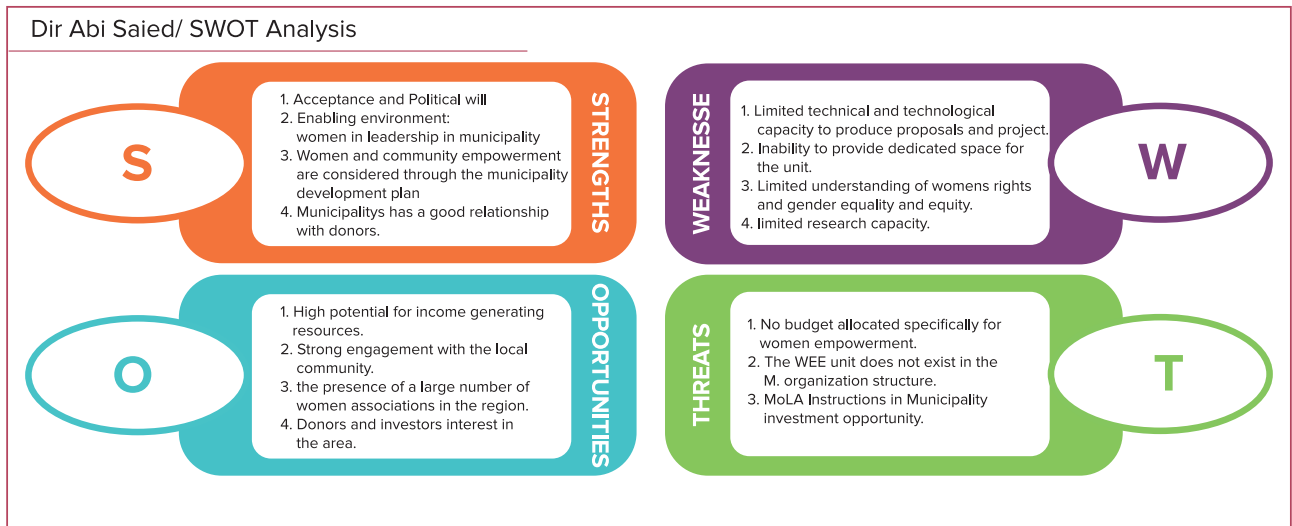
A SWOT analysis tool is used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in the four targeted municipalities. The strength of this method lies in its simplicity which makes it easily understood by participants and applicable in different contexts.

In this SWOT analysis both internal attributes and external conditions were described as follows:

- Strengths were internal attributes of the municipalities.
- Weaknesses were internal attributes of the municipalities that needed to be addressed.
- Opportunities were external conditions that may facilitate gender integration and strengthen the WEE units' mandate.
- Threats were external conditions that may stand in the way of the WEE units' implementation.



The below figures represent the SWOT analysis of each municipality



### Muath Bin Jabal / SWAT Analysis

**S**

**STRENGTHS**

1. Internal acceptance and acknowledgment of the WEE unit mandate/ Farm - work.
2. The acceptance of womens participation in municipality work by the community.
4. Strong Coordination between WVE unit & LDU
4. Competent WEE unit leadership.

**W**

**WEAKNESSE**

1. Limited understanding of womens right and gender equality and equity
2. Conflicts in the municipality are based on tribal dynamics.
3. Limited technical programmatic and research capacity.
4. Professional frustration in implementing the SWM plan and transferring supervivion to the Irbid services board

**O**

**OPPORTUNITIES**

1. The area ic rich with natural resources.
2. Young Community members interest to
3. Active and effective women associations
4. The area is considered as Jordans Food basket.

**T**

**THREATS**

1. Lack of ownership by the community, Vandalism act
2. Limited community areas / Children play areas
3. Weak local market / Limited demand
4. Communitys misperception is that it makes women powerful and rebel against men

### Tabaket Fahel / SWAT Analysis

**S**

**STRENGTHS**

1. Acceptance and political will
2. Enabling environment: Women in ledership in municipality.

**W**

**WEAKNESSE**

1. Limited technical and technological capacity to produce proposals and project
2. Inability to provide dedicated space for the unit
3. Limited understanding of women's right and gender equality and equity.
4. Limited research capacity

**O**

**OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Strong engagement with the local community

**T**

**THREATS**

1. No budget allocated specifically for women empowerment.
2. Unsustainable strategic directions.
3. No interest by private sector or national institutions.

# A Capacity Development Action Plan

## Capacity Development Needs/ Themes

The following areas of improvement were identified by the interviewees themselves, while some were proposed based on the findings from the analysis:

1. Understanding gender equality and gender mainstreaming
2. Community empowerment elements, application and sustainability
3. Mapping community needs and capacity
4. Understanding vulnerabilities
5. Communication skills internal and external
6. Strategic planning and implementing
7. Leadership and advocacy
8. Monitoring and evaluation
9. Digital literacy
10. Stakeholders' mapping
11. Project management
12. Gender based violence



## Skills Framework

The below table lists the skills to be considered for capacity development.

Skill	Capacity competency
Strategic and practical understanding of the problem and context	Ability to understand existing operating context macro-economic, political, policy, administrative challenges
Strategic analysis	<p>Ability to define objective/s and engage with partners in a competent manner, to understand the municipality's objectives and define the requirements of a partnership arrangement</p> <p>Basic knowledge of finance, budgeting and investment plans</p> <p>Strategic understanding of potential risks affecting the most vulnerable</p>
Capacity to analyze needs and develop a strategic response	<p>Understanding of information and knowledge requirements to ensure thorough identification of problems, and design need-based services.</p> <p>Capacity to formulate municipal objectives with all stakeholders through participatory processes.</p>
Capacity to maintain effective communication	<p>Establish effective communication procedures.</p> <p>Establish external communication systems with the community to ensure meaningful feedback mechanisms in place.</p>
Capacity to engage with stakeholders	<p>Ability to implement meaningful participatory processes with the most vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Ability to ensure participation of women and other vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Understanding of and ability to engage the civil society and private sector actors.</p>
Understanding of capacity needs and ability to take responsive actions	<p>Ability to undertake training-needs assessments, identify skills required and gaps in municipal skills.</p> <p>Initiate and facilitate sustainable capacity building processes.</p> <p>Documenting capacity building efforts.</p>

## Other Capacity Development Considerations

### Developing political capacities of women members of municipal councils

The data analysis shows the need to improve the skills of women members of municipal councils in decision-making, so that they become able to assume greater responsibility. It is suggested that women municipal members to be engaged in specific capacity building related to life skills and negotiation skills, as well as to expose them to other strong models in other municipalities.

### Extending WEE Units' mandate to include other directorates

Establishing a WEE Committee from other units (representatives) to ensure participatory support and buy in. "The Committee will commit to women empowerment and gender mainstreaming at different levels and across other departments such as the finance, regulation and licenses departments. The WEE units will lead the committee, define the role of each focal point."

### Coaching and mentoring

It is important to establish linkages with organization that could provide different types of knowledge and levels of expertise. For example, the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) started implementing a mentorship modality which led to tangible and visible result for all stakeholders. This approach would give both trainees and mentors (entities and individuals) the chance to complement theory with practice.

## An action Framework for gender mainstreaming

### Formalizing Commitments to Gender Equality

A key step that municipalities could take to signal their commitment to gender equality is to adopt a municipal strategy or plan that is gender sensitive, and to ensure its implementation. In some cases, such as in Dir Abi Saeid, the principle of gender equality is imbedded in the vision and mission of the municipality and structured within community development activities. These formal commitments to gender equality usually are translated into specific goals and allocated budgets that would support improving women's social and economic conditions, such as counseling to end gender-based violence and enhancing women's access to economic and social resources.

### Create Gender Sensitive Municipal Action Plans

A key step to achieve gender equality is by strengthening the role of the WEE Units and deepen their coordination with the LDUs. This could be ensured while drafting municipal actions plans that are gender sensitive and have clear objectives and course to generate equal opportunities and capabilities to all.





# Processes and structures within already-established municipal Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) Units

This section outlines best practices and success factors in the establishment of previous Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) units, as well as challenges faced. These elements engineered the proposed roadmap and timeline required for establishing the WEE units within the targeted municipalities.

## 1. Background: Establishing the WEE unit in Jerash Municipality

The establishment of a WEE unit was firstly originated in Jerash municipality in 2017, through cooperation between the Arab Women Projects Fund (AWEP) and the municipality. The first step included conducting a survey targeting women who managed home-based food industry such as dairy products and other kinds of food production. The municipality staff who carried out the survey and conducted the field visits, saw this as a potential opportunity for the municipality to start working on women development.

The above realization was followed by wider consultations with the Mayor, council members and local women organizations. The consultation sessions tackled the importance of supporting women economic empowerment by the municipality. The mayor was very interested and aware of women's rights and was able to link this initiative with the municipality development mandate, providing job opportunities for all in the community, particularly women.

The establishment of a women empowerment unit was approved by the Municipal Council, and then work started with supporting the capabilities of women workers in the unit through several training programs, developing actions and mechanisms for designing and implementing many activities.

The municipality of Jerash is considered an "inspiration" to other municipalities. Several meetings were held by the Mayor of Jerash with other municipalities in which he talked about the importance of establishing the unit, objectives and role in achieving economic, social and cultural empowerment.

## 2. Best Practices and Considerations in Establishing the WEE Units

### Perceptions of the Local Community

In Jerash, the municipality established the Women Empowerment Unit and assigned an office for the unit within the municipality premises. It was noted that women's participation in the unit's activities was very limited, and when staff tried to understand what was the reason, they found that women were hesitant to visit the municipality because it was socially not acceptable for them to enter the municipality. Therefore, a decision was taken to relocate the unit to another independent building next to the municipality and from that moment the WEE unit was well received and more welcomed by the community.

### Monitoring and Utilizing Available Resources

In Irbid, the establishment of the WEE Unit could be tracked back to a female municipal employee who heard about the WEE Units from other municipalities and then started working on the concept. She started contacting women associations informally and conducted several meetings in the community which triggered further advocacy to establish the unit. The municipal employee was able to establish the unit by utilizing available resources, and the unit started developing databases, exploring women's home-based business in Irbid and preparing a list of stakeholders who would provide technical guidance and support.

### Sensitize women's needs in Home Based Businesses (HBB)

In Ajloun, the municipality received financial and technical support from the AWEF. The establishment of the unit was supported by the mayor who assigned the head of the Local Development Unit with managing the WEE Unit. The LDU manager initiated the work of the WEE Unit by conducting a market analysis taken into consideration the marketing needs of the women HBBs and accordingly she designed responsive projects.

## 3. Achievements of Women Economic Empowerment Units

The successes of the WEE Units were uneven among municipalities. In Jerash, the WEE Unit has made various achievements, and below are some examples :

1. The WEE Unit provided the local community with various awareness sessions covering a number of topics including legal, economic and social, the latter sessions were conducted in collaboration with national and international organizations.
2. The Unit linked women working in dairy productions with the "Dairy Farm" company through an official agreement.



3. The Unit facilitated women's regular participation in the Jerash Annual Festival.
4. The Unit opened marketing channels for women with the private sector especially with companies working in dairy products.
5. The Municipality prepared a training guide for HBB licensing and created a guide for establishing a Women Empowerment Unit. Part of the guide included discussions with the local community, namely HBB owners, overall challenges and relationship with the National Aid Fund, and good practices to secure social protection.
6. The WEE Unit in Jerash is placed within the municipality organizational structure, which ensured the necessary financial allocation within the municipal budget. This step was approved by MOLA.

**In Irbid, the WEE Unit highlighted the below achievements:**

1. Establishing a nursery at the Municipality and obtaining fund from the National Council for Family Affairs to equip the nursery.
2. The Unit supported some local HBB and initiatives such as: "Sultant El Hedeb"(In Arabic: سلطنة الهدب); and "shmagh making" (Jordanian head men cover) which succeeded in expanding its marketing internationally and employed more than 15 women workers.

**In Ajloun, the WEE Unit supported the following:**

1. The WEE Unit contributed to the Municipality's success in the "Public Market" project which was considered an important step towards women economic empowerment in Ajloun and created a safe working space for women.
2. The WEE Unit established a comprehensive database and effective communication channels with the local community, with the aim of strengthening collaboration and building bridges between local communities and the private sector.

#### 4. WEE unit's Critical Success Factors

The sustainability of the WEE unit's success presents an ongoing challenge for managers. The purpose of this section is to explore from different perspectives key success factors that could contribute to the establishment and sustainability of the WEE Units. The degree of importance of each factor varies from one municipality to another, where some factors had a significant impact on some units, while others had a significant impact only in certain phases and areas.

##### **Factors related to internal municipal characteristics**

1. The existence of institutional support and understanding of the WEE Unit developmental mandate and how it could benefit the community beyond the service provision and the traditional role of the municipality.
2. Institutional support to the WEE Units allows the local community, particularly women, to benefit from the administrative, technical and financial services offered by municipalities and other stakeholders.
3. To take into account the specific needs of the community, and willingness to implement and support projects that meet the expectations of the community.
4. Strong internal communication channels are key to sustain linkages within the municipality.
5. To align the strategic objective of the WEE Unit with the overall strategic vision of the Municipality.

##### **Factors related to the external environment**

1. Effective community consultation process assists in promoting the WEE Unit, and leads to a higher degree of stakeholders' commitment to the goals and objectives of the unit.
2. A sense of ownership amongst the local community to the WEE Unit is an essential factor contributing to its success.
3. Strong external communication channels are key to sustain linkages with the community and other concerned stakeholders.

#### 5. WEE Units - Challenges and Obstacles

1. Limited capacity in English language, digital literacy, and proposal writing amongst staff hindering benefiting from international and national programmatic support.
2. Limited monitoring and evaluation systems which minimize tracking impact and results of municipal development plans and policies.



3. Limited financial and planning skills. For instance, no specific plans for communication, mobilizing finances or in drafting annual WEE unit workplans.
4. Overlap in roles between the Local Development Units (LDUs) and the Women Empowerment Units in some municipalities.
5. Competitive culture between LDU and WEE Units; few municipalities felt threatened by the misconception that the WEE Units would acquire resources from the LDUs, especially funding support received from development projects, donor and investors.
6. Unclear organizational structure, for staff of the WEE Units; they did not have job descriptions as any other position within the municipalities, and had unclear roles and responsibilities.

## 6. Recommendations

In order to activate/establish the WEE Units, the targeted municipalities need to take into consideration number of internal and external recommendations:

1. Actively engage with MOLA to integrate the WEE Unit into the structure of the municipality. The case of Jerash confirms the feasibility of this step.
2. WEE Units needs to centralize their mandate and programs around community needs, priorities, and social norms.
3. The establishment of the WEE Units' and its operationalization require engagement with local CBOs and NGOs who could provide technical and financial support.
4. The mandate of the WEE Units should be clearly communicated to the community and linked to promote the municipality's development role in economic growth.
5. There are internal and external contributing factors to the success of the WEE Units; internally, the political will to support the unit by both the mayor and members of municipal councils, as well as the skills and qualification of staff in the WEE Unit. Externally, community acceptance and social attitudes towards women empowerment, particularly economic empowerment.
6. Active participation and creation of support networks at the community level.
7. Creation of transparent and clear communication channels internally and externally.



## Road Map to Establish New Women Economic Empowerment Units

Equipped with the right tools, municipalities could utilize the following roadmap to establish the WEE Units:

### 3. WEE Unit Objectives

The Unit is mainly responsible for prompting and encouraging women's rights, participation and economic empowerment. Ensuring a harmonious engagement with the community and the municipality namely the mayor and the municipal council.

This unit manager will work on a range of tasks, focusing on gender equality initiatives, women's rights and economic empowerment activities, the below detailed objectives guide the direction of the WEE unit:

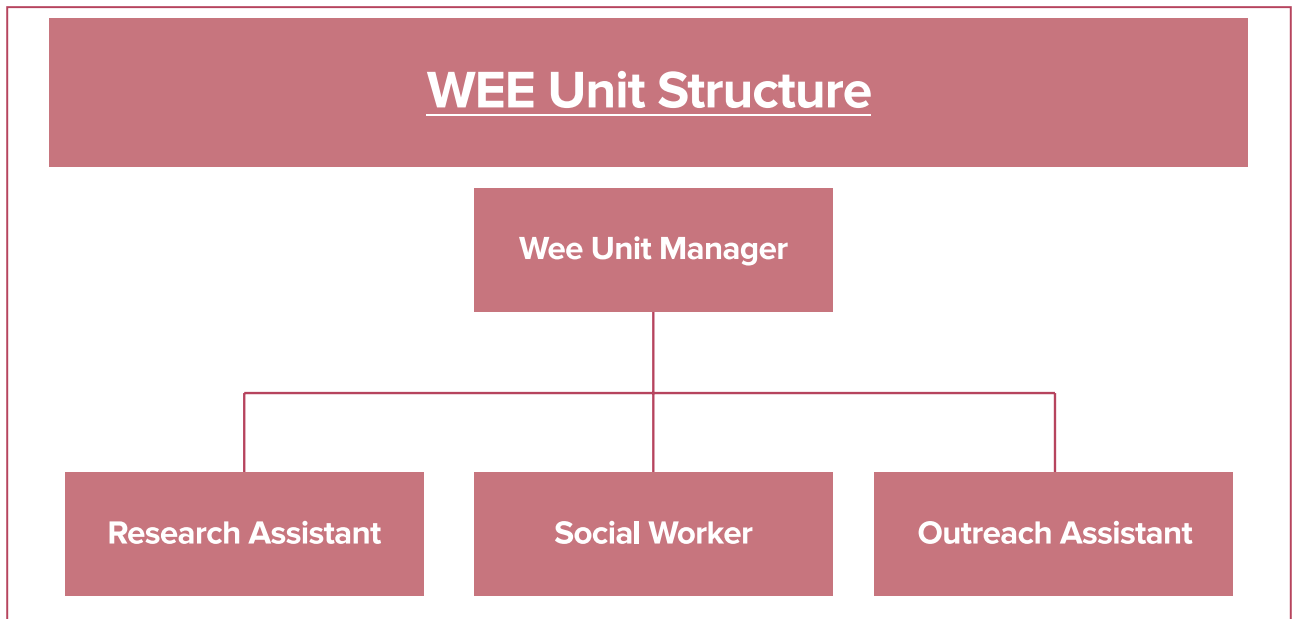
- Create linkages between the municipality and other governmental, national and international organizations,
- Provide the municipality with a comprehensive database related to number of women NGOs, studies related to women economic participation, labor skill and women SMES,
- Ensure gender mainstreaming in all municipality projects and services,
- Contribute to eliminating poverty and unemployment amongst women and youth,
- Promote social entrepreneurship and livelihoods initiatives,
- Facilitate access to information, job opportunities and any available resources in the municipality,
- Participate in municipal strategic planning sessions to identify and develop actions that address the priorities and strategic advantages of the community including women,
- Create a platform for NGOs to share and exchange their experiences and knowledge,



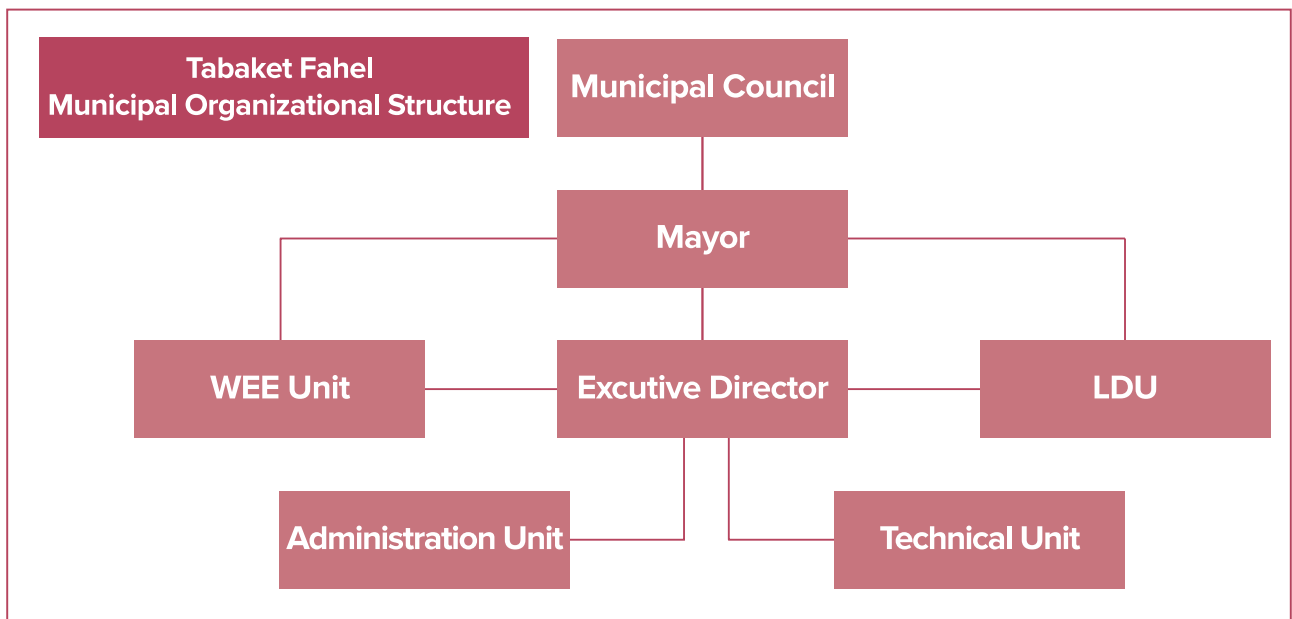
- Engage NGOs and other concerned stakeholders in the decision-making process in the municipality,
- Initiate rapid needs assessment for the community to ensure regularity of understanding needs and community priorities,
- Collect and analyze data to determine appropriate economic development strategies and activities,
- Mobilizing local resources (people, capital, institutions, organizations, etc.) to meet local community needs,
- Liaise and regularly coordinate with concerned stakeholder externally and internally to encourage women economic empowerment through solid waste management,
- Coordinate and support local women engagement in SWM and green economic growth as applicable,
- Facilitate and provide mentorship activities to local business owners with advice on sales tax, regulatory requirements, accounting, etc.
- Support new businesses and startups by providing access to information on available resources (ex: funding programs, developing agencies, etc.) with research, promotion among other,.
- Regularly collect information to find potential new opportunities for the community by networking at local level, and participating in national conferences or/or business-related workshops,
- Organize or facilitate industry, labour and/or business management courses and seminars including managing financial loans,



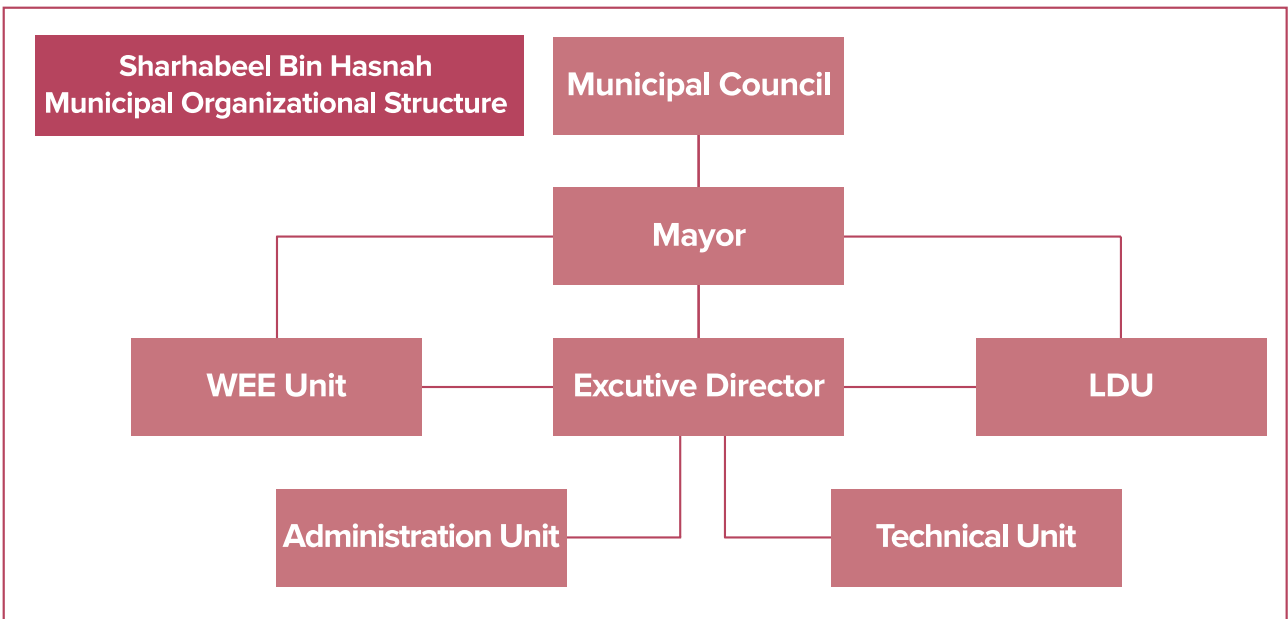
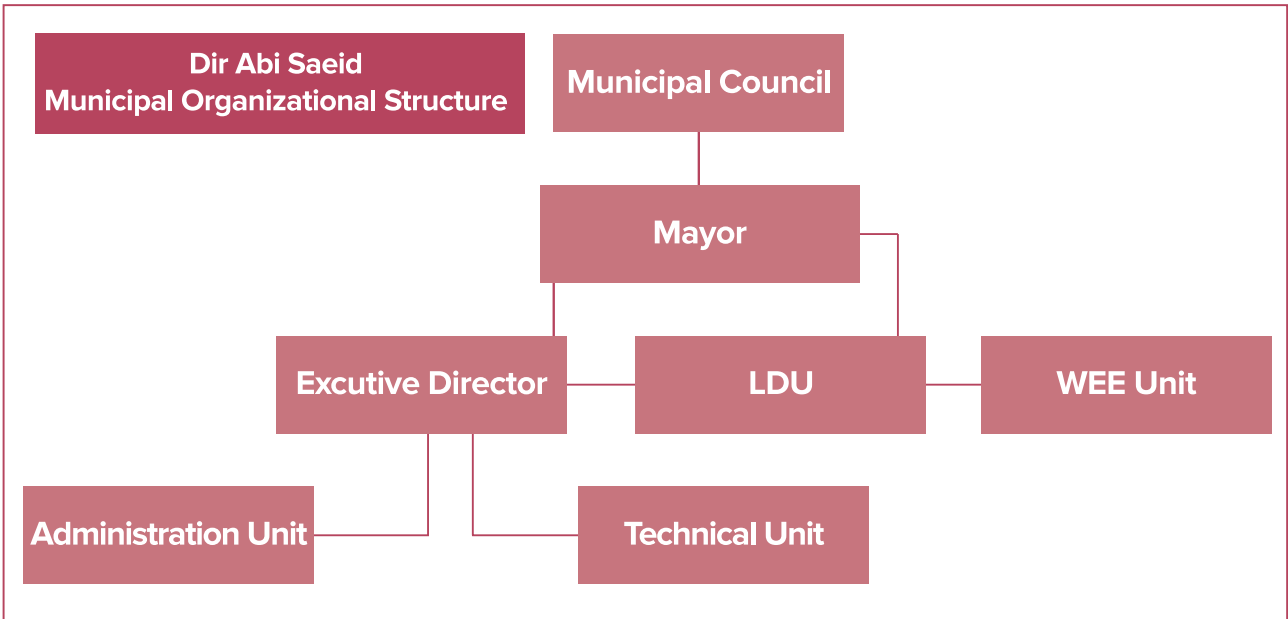
#### 4. WEE Unit Organogram

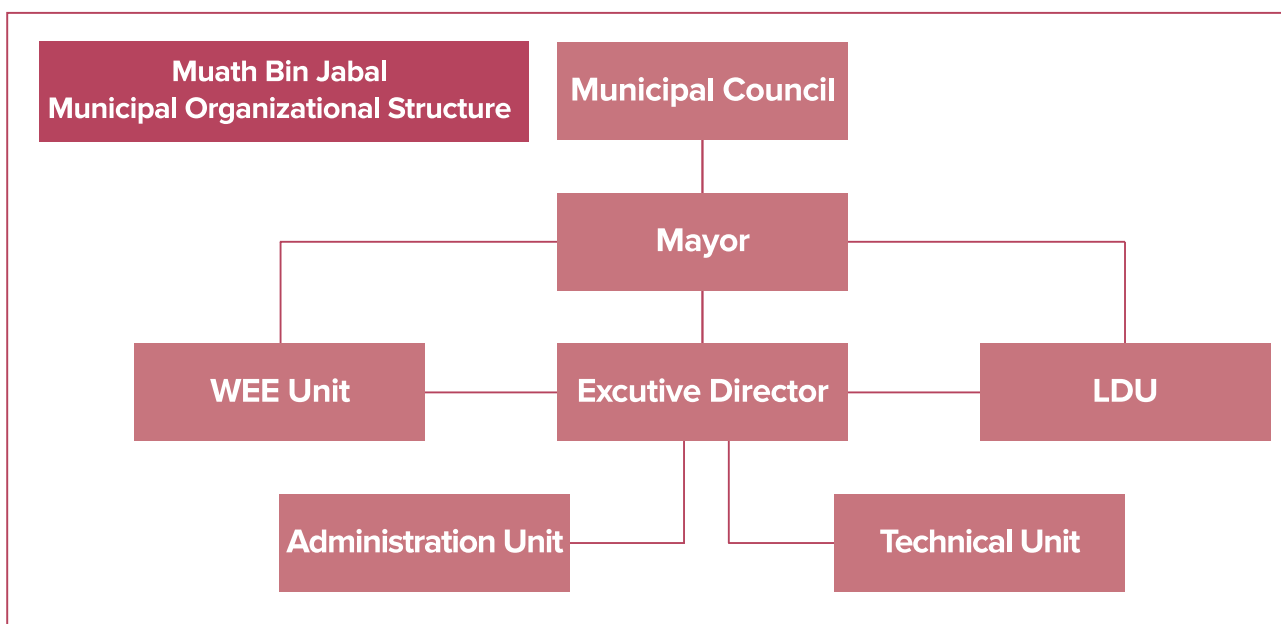


#### 5. WEE unit Structure / municipality









## 6. WEE Unit Manager Job Description

- Provide ongoing supervision, leadership, support, guidance and mentorship to the WEE team technical staff and Country Office teams in women economic empowerment and rights programming,
- Liaise and provide support to the LDU and the Executive Director on day-to-day matters, to ensure that tasks are on track, achieving their objectives and are compliant with municipality strategic plan,
- Provide technical and strategic assistance to the unit, especially in the area of women's economic empowerment, and support staff to do the same,
- Work effectively with counterpart and national organizations, academic institutions, and other prospective program partners,
- Conduct community consultation sessions,
- Ensure the quality of services provided by municipality,
- Regularly conduct stakeholder mapping,
- Coordinate with private sector to connect them with HBBs,
- Conduct sessions to raise awareness on women's political, economic and social rights,



- Network with all women national organizations such as JNCW and donors.
- Mobilize local resources (people, capital, institutions, organizations, etc.) to meet local community needs,
- Liaise and regularly coordinate with concerned stakeholders externally and internally to encourage women economic empowerment through solid waste management,
- Coordinate and support local women led SWM initiatives,
- Collect and analyze data to determine appropriate economic development strategies and activities,
- Participate and play a leadership role in community and organizational strategic planning sessions to identify and then develop actions to address the priorities and strategic advantages of the community.
- Facilitate and provide mentorship activities to local business owners with advice on sales tax, regulatory requirements, accounting, etc.
- Regularly conduct market analysis to assess the need for new initiatives and areas,
- Promote local initiatives and achievements and encourage growth and competitiveness,
- Regularly collect information to find potential new opportunities for the community by:
- Networking at local, provincial or national conferences or business gatherings.
- Researching business and government publications.
- Promote locally-made products through development of local initiatives such as farmers' markets and fairs,
- Organize or facilitate industry, labor and/or business management courses and seminars, including managing financial loans,
- Provide access to small business financing programs, or assist in finding appropriate sources of business financing,
- Perform other roles based on the priorities of the community.

**Required Skills.**

- Bachelor's degree in engineering, social science, administration, public relations or other related fields. A Master's Degree is a plus,
- More than 5 years of experience in municipalities.
- Proposal writing skills, program management skills
- Monitoring and evaluation skills
- Community engagement skills
- Good command in English (reading, writing and speaking)
- Communication skills

**Suggested internal Recruitment Process**

- Announce the advertisement (TOR and deadline),
- Collect the applications,
- Establish a committee for selection,
- Evaluate applications,
- Identify the best candidate for the position,



