



Regional Analysis of Resilience-focused Programmes in Arab States Region

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During the past number of years, the concept of resilience has become increasingly important within international development and humanitarian organisations and a critical concept bridging the humanitarian and development nexus.

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit¹ reached a consensus on the need to better bridge humanitarian assistance with development cooperation. However, the agreement did not appropriately delve into how this can best be done in practice. Different actors have been invested in understanding how individuals and households cope with shocks and stressors to streamline *resilience* into programming and measurements. Various attempts have been proposed to define and measure *resilience* quantitatively and qualitatively. Despite progress made by many actors on the theoretical, conceptual, and academic fronts, programmatically and practically, measuring, monitoring, and evaluating resilience interventions remains challenging.

In 2008, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) proposed an econometric approach for measuring household resilience. Since then, it has been at the forefront of developing, testing, and rolling out the Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA)² in many countries. In 2019, the UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States approached FAO to conceptualise a gender-sensitive resilience capacity index based on FAO's econometrics, approaches, and experiences.

In the Arab States region, UN Women began its resilience monitoring efforts in 2019 and the first [Gender-Sensitive Resilience Capacity Index Report for Iraq](#) was published in June 2020. During 2020, UN Women extended its resilience monitoring framework to cover regional resilience-focused programmes (*Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access, and Protection (LEAP)* – Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Regional Component and Gender-responsive Management and Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Arab States Region: From Emergency Response to Recovery and Resilience) in Egypt, [Iraq](#), Lebanon, [Palestine](#), and [Yemen](#). This is the last of six reports that UN Women intended to publish and is a result of data collection efforts under the regional 2020-2021 LEAP and COVID-19 response programmes.

With thanks to the Government of Japan, who generously funded the regional LEAP and COVID-19 programmes as well as the resilience monitoring efforts, UN Women was able to roll-out the gender-sensitive resilience capacity index in 5 countries, namely Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen, through its implementing partners.

This report will present findings on resilience from the lens of 1,276 host community and internally displaced (IDP) women across the five countries. The aim of this report is to generate a better understanding and provide in-depth analysis around resilience and factors critical for strengthening resilience. This will allow UN Women to expand its evidence based on resilience and help better design programmes, ensuring that they are mainly based on needs and vulnerabilities of the population of concern. Despite differences in context, similar themes emerged from these surveys; these speak to women's life impacted by crisis and displacement being characterized by economic insecurity despite a desire to work, limited access to basic services, challenges in accessing basic services, and exposure to gender-based violence (GBV).

¹ "Humanitarian and development actors need to work collaboratively across silos and mandates to implement plans with a clear and measurable collective outcome that reduces the vulnerability of internally displaced persons over the long term" (UN Doc. A/70/709, 2016: 23 f.).

² <http://www.fao.org/resilience/background/tools/rima/en/>



The methodology used in the second phase of the gender-sensitive resilience capacity index (GS-RCI) measurement at the country level took into account methodological recommendations for the refinement of the index presented the [independent evaluation](#) of UN Women's 'Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women and Girls and Host Communities' ("Madad") programme. The conceptual framework, which allows for understanding how women deal with shocks, stressors and adverse situations and address their immediate needs and long term, has also been strengthened. In this iteration of implementing the resilience monitoring efforts, the indicators under each of the pillars and the data collection tools have been revised. This enabled UN Women and FAO to better refine the conceptual framework, which is the backbone of the GS-RCI.

[What is Gender-Sensitive Resilience Capacity Index \(GS-RCI\)?](#)

The GS-RCI is a quantitative approach to measuring resilience of women, based on FAO's econometrics, approaches and experiences. Through a constructed index, stakeholders are allowed to better understand how women deal or cope with shocks and stressors.

The GS-RCI is constructed using a multidimensional approach. Specifically, four critical pillars are used (women's access to basic services, adaptive capacity, access to assets, and social cohesion and interconnectedness) against a specific outcome (in this case indicators proxying livelihood and women empowerment). The weighting of each pillar is response-dependent (in other words, it depends on how important women consider these determinants to be). In addition, each pillar is a composite index on its own and is developed based on a set of direct and proxy indicators. Each component contributes to the GS-RCI and is identified by value, though there are no predetermined thresholds. An increase in the GS-RCI value over time implies improved resilience. Since the calculation of the GS-RCI is based on the pillars and the weightings allocated to each of the pillars, the GS-RCI's structure and results are dynamic in nature.

[How is GS-RCI measured?](#)

Changes in beneficiaries' resilience overtime, measured through the GS-RCI and as a result of project interventions, requires substantial investment in collecting and analysing data at different points in time. For longer-term projects³, three surveys are undertaken; one survey at the start of the project, which allows us to set a baseline, and followed by two surveys (a midline survey carried out three to six months after the start and an endline taking place six to nine months after the end of the programme). As the implementation duration of the LEAP and COVID-19 programmes was nine months, UN Women and its partners carried out two surveys (a baseline and an endline).

It is worth noting that resilience monitoring is based on participatory approaches and regular engagement with the project beneficiaries throughout project and programmes implementation. The process is heavily dependent on the feedback of project beneficiaries (placing principles of Accountability to Affected Persons at the core of UN Women's resilience monitoring).

[Methodology](#)

As part of the programmatic monitoring, UN Women's implementing partners recruited 51 social workers across the five countries. The data collection was conducted using an extensive quantitative survey that was undertaken at the start of the programme (between November 2019 and March 2021) and at the end of the programme (April to July 2021). The dates varied as the programmes were implemented with

³ Projects with a duration of over one year.



different timelines. Data collection was closely supported by UN Women's Programme Specialists and UN Women's Regional Monitoring and Reporting Specialist.

Gender-Sensitive Resilience Capacity Index Pillars

The conceptual framework for measuring the GS-RCI is built on the strategic approach adopted by FAO, which addresses the underlying causes that contribute to vulnerability, and seeks to understand and address long-term trends that affect people's exposure to risks and increase/decrease capacity to absorb or resist shocks. The core resilience components, namely pillars, are:

- Access to Basic Services (ABS)
- Assets (AST)
- Adaptive Capacity (AC)
- Social Cohesion and Interconnectedness (SCI)

1. Access to Basic Services (ABS) refers to beneficiaries' ability to access services such as education, employment, health services, adequate shelter, political participation and decision-making, access to documentation (relevant to refugees), and how critical is the access.

2. Assets (AST) and income generation comprise both productive and non-productive assets. Based on the assumption that higher income can lead to higher savings and ownership of assets, this has been used as a starting point in dealing with shocks and stressors. The ability of women to generate income will enable them to become more independent. Furthermore, the ability of women to spend on non-essential goods or to sell productive assets can be considered a proxy for wealth.

3. Adaptive capacity (AC) mainly considers the ability of women to adapt to changing environments. This pillar is primarily determined by complex inter-relationships and gendered dynamics related to decision making and the ability to influence decision making. There are other factors such as demographic structures affecting adaptive capacities such as the dependency ratio (e.g. how many adults are in a given household, the individual that is the household head, etc) and the level of education of individuals within the household.

4. Social Cohesion and Interconnectedness (SCI) There is growing evidence that social infrastructure is one of the resilience drivers, mainly if social dimensions are considered. Social structures and relationships within the communities can reflect some of the underlying socio-economic disparities and affect some individuals/groups' resilience as opposed to others. The social infrastructure can also indicate individuals' ability to access (cash or in-kind), ask for support when shocks and stressors happen, and the higher the social network, the easier the access to informal assistance. Also, developing resilience capacities relies on protective factors within the households and the community. The feeling of safety and security within one's community lay the foundation that is at the core for strengthening Resilience and provides opportunities that promote well-being and Resilience. Access to transfers in many contexts make up a large part of poor households' annual income, and remittances generate additional income for individuals and households. Similarly, sharing of resources with neighbours/groups can be a proxy indicator of social cohesion and support networks that enable community-based social safety net measures to be put in place.

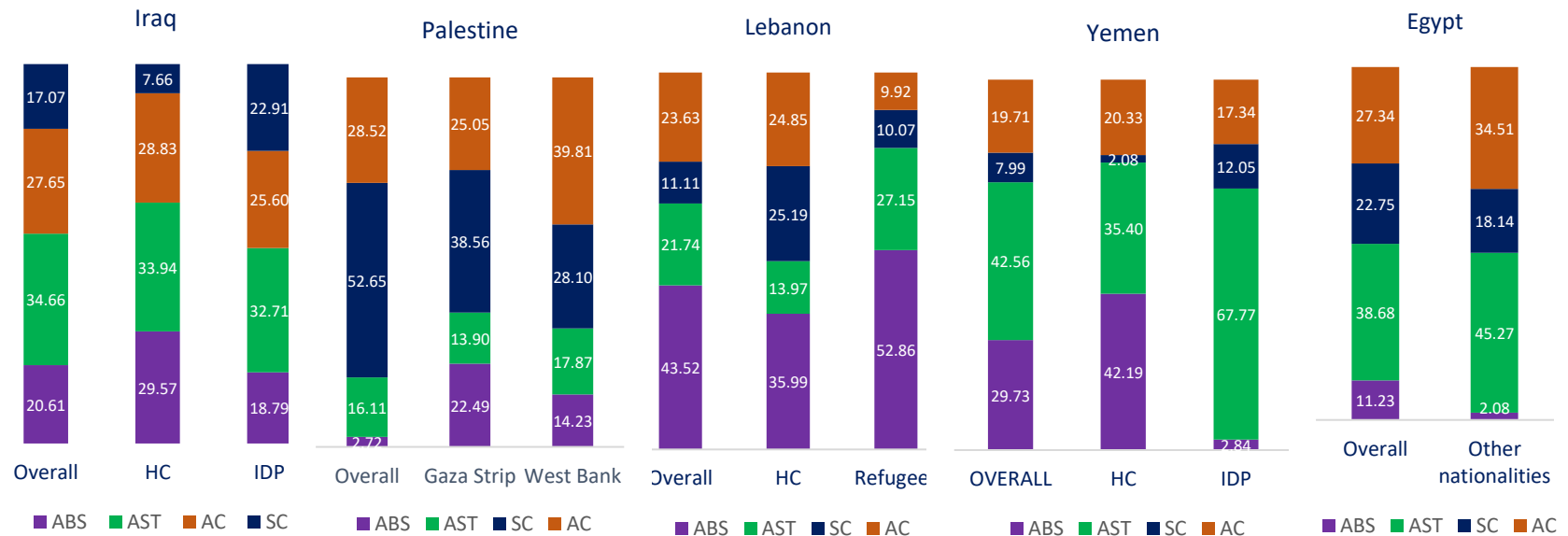
The resilience monitoring is data driven, or in other words is response-dependant. Therefore, the analysis and structure of the GS-RCI structure is dynamic and differs for each of the project targeted groups.



The GS-RCI is further analyzed from a regional perspective in the following sections: by structure and by pillar, as well as demographic profiles (including community of origin, marital status, by household head status, presence and number of children). This brief examines the GS-RCI's measurement component only.

This is a summary of a regional resilience analysis of women and girls impacted by protracted crises and displacement.

Findings - GS-RCI structure by country



In all five countries, in the GS-RCI structure confirmed that resilience to crises and displacement is not the same for all women and factors determining their resilience are also different. The above graphs show a comparison between the weight of resilience pillars for the GS-RCIs of each country. While evidence suggests that **assets** and **adaptive capacity** are critical components of household resilience across almost all counties, the roles of the other pillars (**access to basic services** and **social cohesion and interconnectedness**) are also key in determining resilience capacity exhibit a large degree of variation between countries and within the different communities of origin within each group.

In Iraq, Yand Egypt, women's resilience was found to be highly influenced by **assets** and **adaptive capacity**. Of the four pillars, the assets pillar continues to play a key role in strengthening resilience. It is mainly influenced by the ability to generate income and the ownership of productive assets. Adaptive capacity is highly correlated to factors promoting resilience such as education, acquired skills, and intra-household support of



beneficiaries' employment. Within these pillars, the variables relating to dependency ratio, income generation of respondents, diversification of household income, and familial support to employment are the most important to these two pillars.

The graphs presented above indicate that the political, socio-economic and security contexts in Lebanon, Yemen and Palestine have influenced the results. For example, in Lebanon and Yemen, data revealed that **access to basic services** has been identified by both host community and Syrian refugee women as a critical determinant to strengthening their resilience in the short run. Data analysis for these two countries also highlighted that access to protection, employment and education services are important to strengthen their resilience on the short run. While in Palestine, **social cohesion and interconnectedness** has more relevance to women in the Gaza Strip than the West Bank. In the Gaza Strip, women reported having stronger social networks and a higher dependency on support provided by aid agencies, they have also identified their feeling of safety and security as well as peaceful or tolerant inter-community relationships as two important factors to strengthening their resilience.

The regional analysis also revealed disparities in the GS-RCI between different demographic profiles. Heterogeneity was found at multiple levels: community of origin, marital status, presence and number of children within the household.

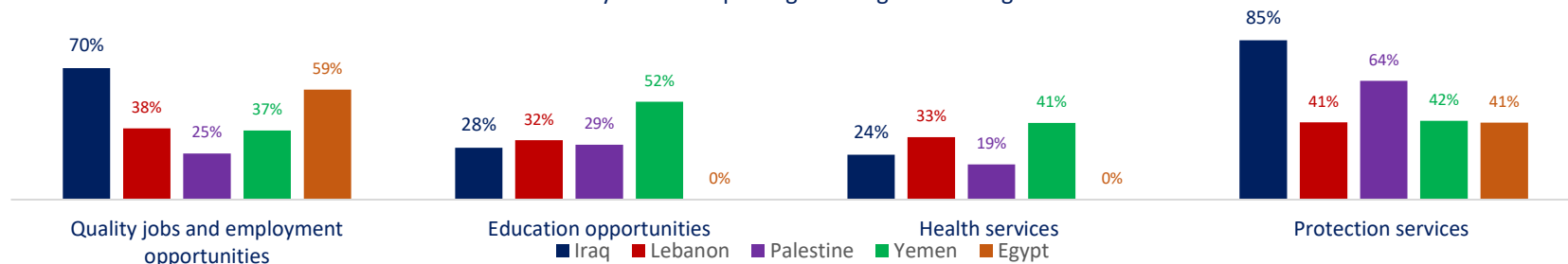
The following section analyses the disparities in the resilience pillars and resilience results across demographic profiles namely: marital status, by household head status, presence and number of children and type of assistance.



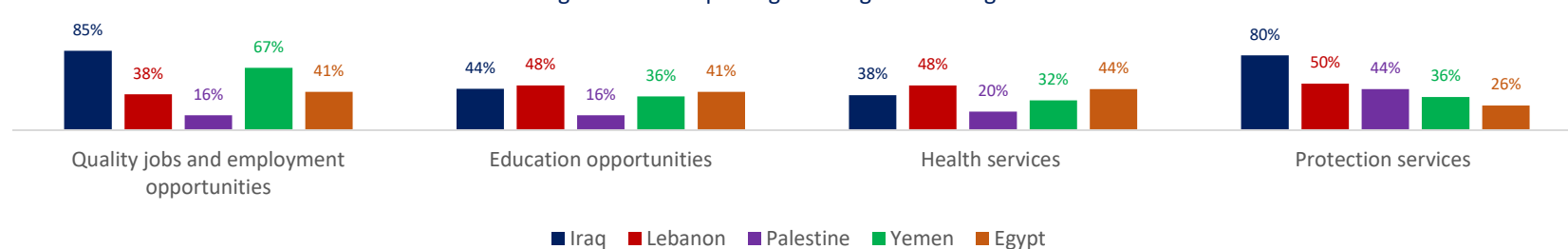
Access to basic services pillar

Given the breadth and depth of the needs across the five countries, women from all communities generally reported having challenges accessing basic services, as shown in the graphs below. It is widely acknowledged that refugees and IDPs are often at greater risks than other affected populations. In almost all countries, data confirmed that refugee and IDP women reported facing more challenges and tend to have less access to adequate education, healthcare, livelihoods, and protection services. On an aggregate level, when women were asked about the challenges they face in their communities, across all countries two common challenges emerged: (i) access to job and quality employment opportunities and (ii) access to protection services. In terms of access to job and quality employment opportunities, childcare responsibilities, cultural, societal, and religious pressures as well as fear of harassment were some of the most reported challenges to engaging in employment amongst many others. For women who did not report employment opportunities as a challenge and had access to employment at the time of the baseline survey, 91.7% of them reported that they were engaged in informal employment (temporary, seasonal and self-employment). The second most common challenge is access to protection services. Low resilience amongst host community, and refugee and IDP women was linked to limited access to protection assistance, which women across all countries have identified as an important determinant of resilience. While the survey did not directly ask about women's experiences with GBV, this indicator presented a proxy aimed to capture experience of violence against them (or victimization).

Host community women reporting challenges accessing basic services



IDP & refugee women reporting challenges accessing basic services

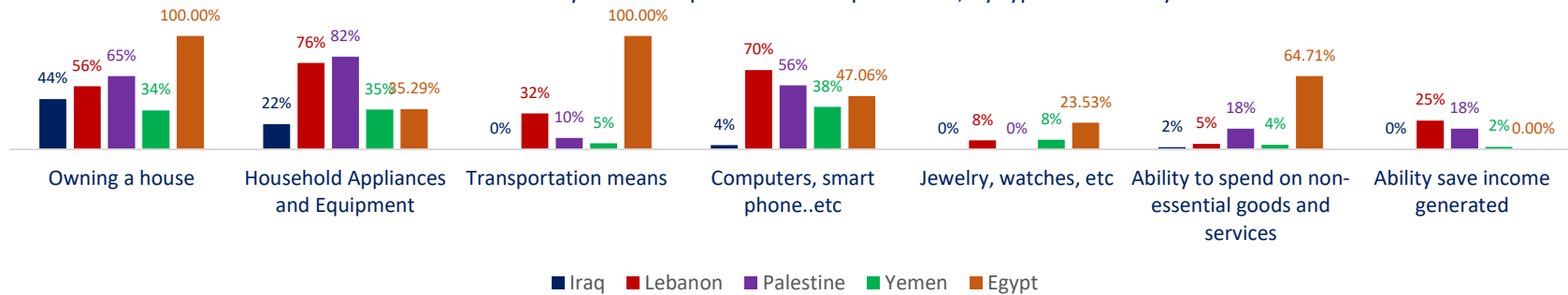




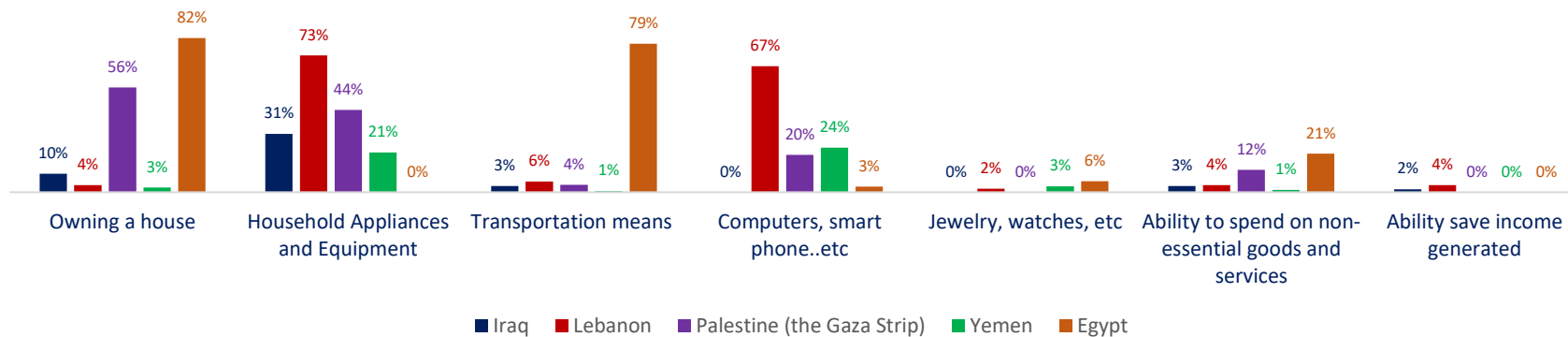
Assets pillar:

The most resilient women, across all communities, were those that own productive and non-productive assets as well as those that were able to spend and save income generated. Overall, host community women reported higher ownership of assets than IDP, refugee or other women as presented in the graphs below. One of the major determinants of the GS-RCI is the availability of physical productive assets and access to income generation opportunities, which allows women to spend and save income generated, particularly during times of adversity. When women were asked about their decision-making abilities within the households in relation to sale of household assets, 67 per cent of women reported they had no abilities to decide for themselves or influence decisions at all.

Host community women reportin ownership of assets, by type and country



Refugee and IDP women reporting ownership of assets, by type and country

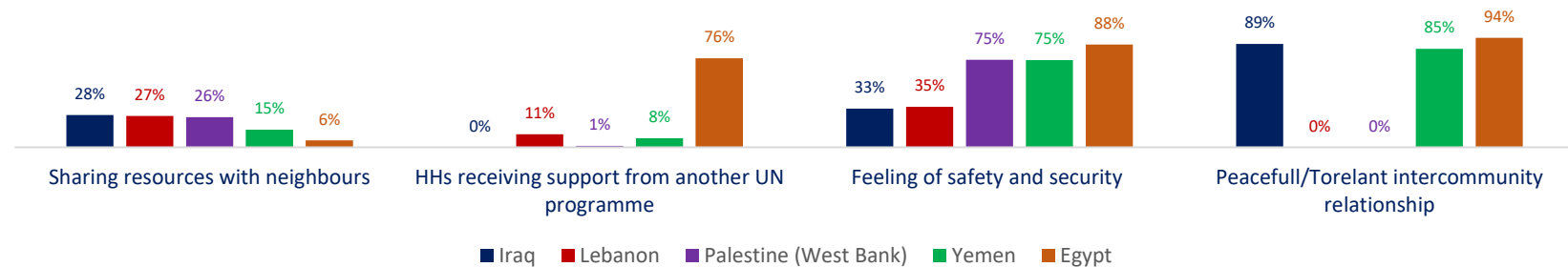




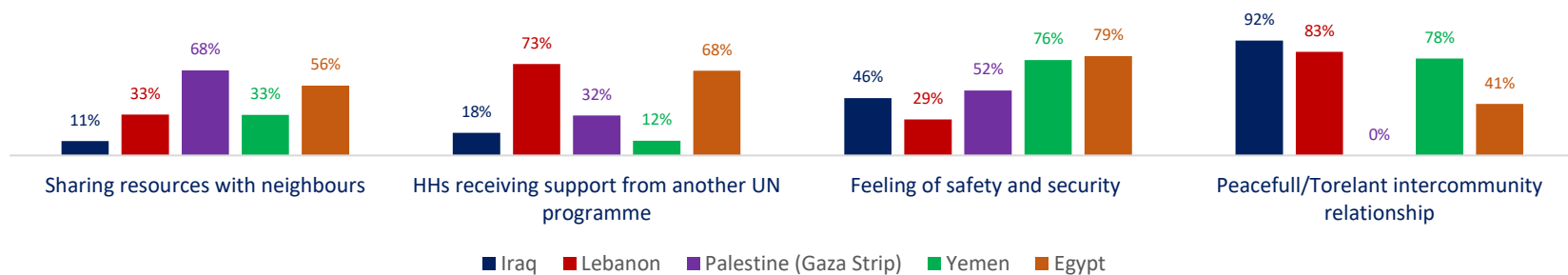
Social cohesion and interconnectedness pillar:

Across all countries, disparities in the composition of the **social cohesion and interconnectedness** pillar featured prominently, with high rates of agreement that feelings of safety and security and peaceful tolerant communities were critical determinants of resilience. Respondents in Iraq scored the highest overall rates in terms of social cohesion indicators within their communities. However, this was not the case for Palestine where none of the respondents in either the West Bank or Gaza Strip reported intercommunity tolerance thus placing this component at the center of this pillar. This indicates the need to include the promotion of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence interventions in resilience-focused projects and programmes to attain better results in the shorter term. With regards to the relatively low levels of sharing resources with neighbors reported by host community women in the five countries, it was noted that all women across the five countries who reported **not** sharing resources with neighbors, did not have enough food in the last seven days. Also from the below results, a higher reliance by IDPs and refugees on UN support was also noted across the countries. This provides evidence that the support provided through UN programmes has an indirect impact on women's overall resilience and suggests that targeting through several organisations may actually help gain stronger results.

Social cohesion and interconnectedness, Host community



Social Cohesion and interconnectedness, refugees and IDPs

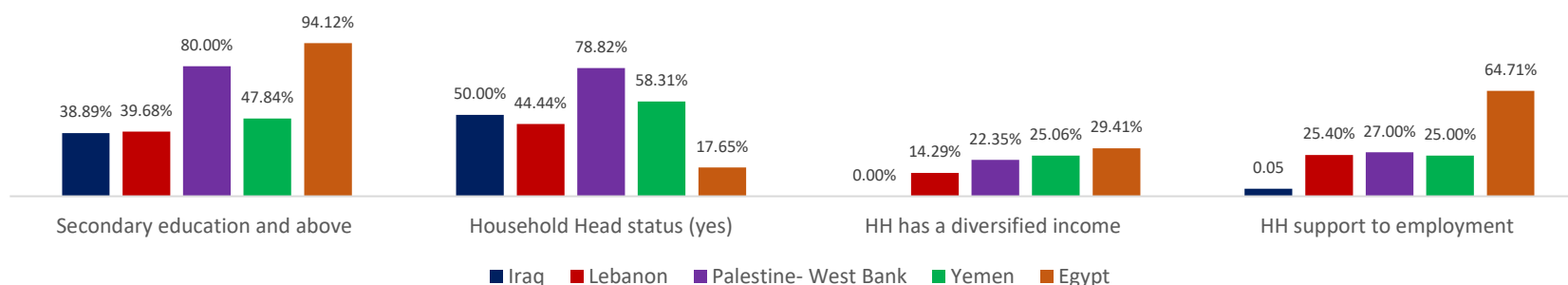




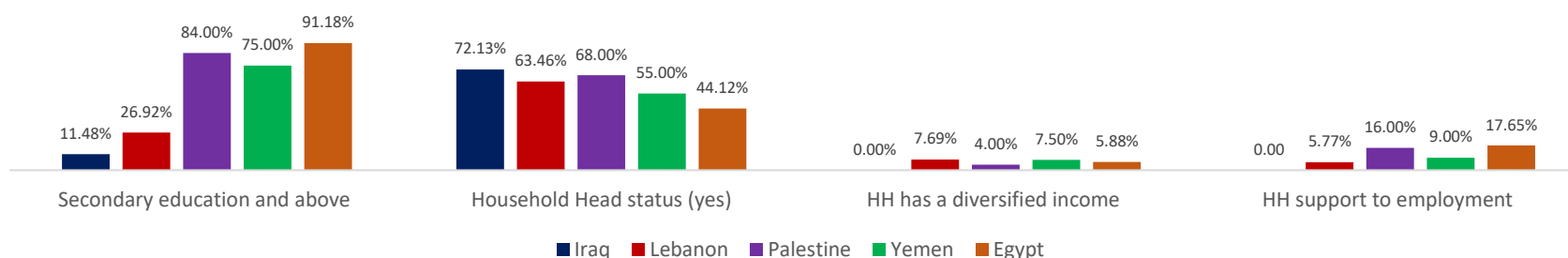
Adaptive Capacity pillar:

Overall, similar patterns were noted across variables within the **adaptive capacity** pillar for both host community and IDP/refugee women. The importance of familial support and household diversified income in determining resilience capacity for women in the region can be further understood by the share of adaptive capacity pillar variables that make up the pillar itself (that is, these variables account for the majority of the pillar). Furthermore, the average dependency ratio was higher for IDP and refugee women than host community women (except in Palestine). The most resilient women, across all communities, are those that have diversified sources of income, and have a lower dependency ratio. The latter, plays a growing role in promoting adaptive capacities and resilience more broadly.

Adaptive Capacity pillar, by host community

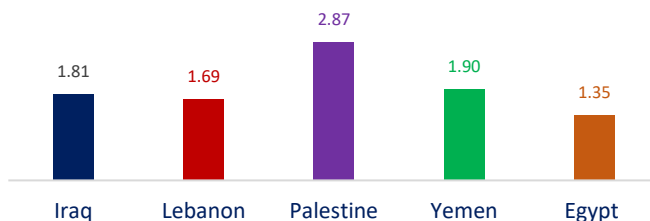


Adaptive Capacity pillar, by refugees and IDPs

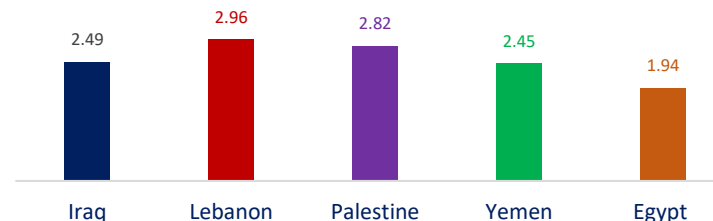




Dependency ratio, Host community

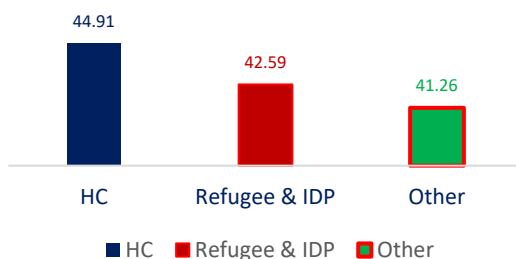


Dependency ratio, IDP and refugee women



GS-RCI Value Across Demographic Profiles:

GS-RCI value by community of origin



Resilience by Community of Origin:

Data collected confirmed that refugee and IDP women are less resilient than host community women. There is a group entitled 'Other', which consists of mainly migrant workers (including Ethiopian, Eritreans, Yemeni, and Sudanese nationals etc). The main reasons for host community, IDP and refugee women having different GS-RCI scores are also heterogenic. Across all countries, IDP and refugee women reported more challenges accessing basic services than host community women along with less ownership of productive and non-productive assets, lower abilities to spend and save income generated, particularly during times of adversity, less supportive households for employment as well as less diversification of household income. These are some of the key reasons accounting for lower resilience of IDPs, refugees and other

women than host community women.

GS-RCI value, by age group



Resilience by Age Group:

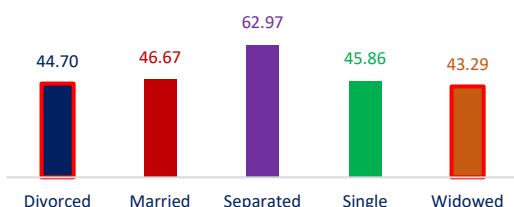
When GS-RCI results were compared across age groups across the countries, women aged between 40 and 49 years were found to be the least resilient women. This age group reported more challenges accessing basic services, more specifically protection, education, employment and health services, than other age groups. Furthermore, women aged between 40 and 49 reported less ownership of assets, lower engagement in income generation opportunities,

reported lower participation in groups for socialisation and de-stressing⁴ and lower diversification of income.

⁴ The social relationships with the community can indicate an individual's ability to access (cash or in-kind) as well as request for support when shocks and stressors occur. The higher the social network, the easier the access to informal assistance.



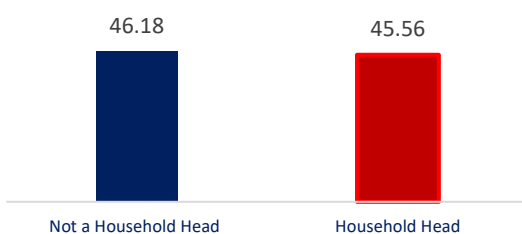
GS-RCI value by marital status



Resilience by Marital Status:

When GS-RCI results were compared across marital status in the region, divorced and widowed women were found to be the least resilient. Data analysis also revealed that widowed and divorced women reported having more significant challenges accessing basic services and less ownership of assets. Widowed and divorced women had the worst living conditions, in terms of housing and shelter, and were the least reliant on remittances. They had little to no assets with the majority reporting not owning a sewing machine, mobile phone, jewelry, means of transportation, or other such as assets.

GS-RCI value by household head



Resilience by Household Head Status:

Female-headed households across the region were found to be less resilient than women who were not heading households. Overall, female-headed households reported higher challenges in accessing basic services and having a higher dependency ratio. Female-headed households also reported lower participation in groups for socialization and de-stressing⁵, lower sharing of resources with neighbors, lower reliance on remittances and lower diversified household income.

GS-RCI value by presence of children



Resilience by Presence of Children:

When GS-RCI results were compared depending on the presence and number of children, women who had four to six children were found to be the least resilient. A higher number of children was correlated with a higher dependency ratio. The dependency ratio was reported to be higher for women that have 1 to 3 children and 4 to 6 children than for women who do not have children⁶. Women who have children reported having less ownership of assets (sewing machines, mobile phone, means of transportation, etc), fewer social networks or less engagement in social groups in their communities, and fewer household members with a source of income through employment/self-employment at the time of the baseline survey.

⁵ The social relationships with the community can indicate an individual's ability to access (cash or in-kind), request for support when shocks and stressors occur. The higher the social network, the easier the access to informal assistance.

⁶ Age dependency ratio is the ratio of dependents--people younger than 15 or older than 64--to the working-age population--those ages 15-64. Data are shown as the proportion of dependents per 100 working-age population. <https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/gender-statistics/series/SP.POP.DPND>



These surveys provide a clear picture of the challenges and compounded impact that women in protracted crises and displacement face. As crises continue, it is critical that the responses consider addressing these challenges in programmes so women can be empowered to meet both their shorter-term and longer-term needs.