

## REEMA SHBAITA

*Researcher | Social Inclusion & Gender Mainstreaming Expert*

*Specialist in Women's Political Empowerment & Gender-Responsive Governance*

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## PROFESSIONAL SUMMAR

Accomplished gender and social inclusion specialist with over 20 years of multidisciplinary experience spanning strategic planning, policy development, feminist research, and institutional capacity building. Expert in embedding equity, justice, and feminist principles across governance, public policy, and social systems, with a strong focus on local governance and women's political empowerment.

Highly skilled in designing and implementing sectoral and cross-sectoral strategic plans, aligning national and local policies with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and inclusive development frameworks. Proven leadership in developing gender-responsive policies, amalgamation and decentralization strategies, disability inclusion plans, and participatory governance mechanisms.

Recognized for creating robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks that integrate gender-sensitive and inclusive indicators, ensuring accountability, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making. Experienced in managing large-scale international cooperation projects, collaborating with donors, and multi-stakeholder platforms to advance inclusive governance and rights-based development.

A committed practitioner of transformative learning and capacity building, adept at designing and delivering specialized training programs, mentorship initiatives, and leadership development pathways for women in governance and civil society. Combines rigorous qualitative and feminist research methodologies with practical policy expertise, amplifying marginalized voices and translating complex social realities into actionable policy and institutional reforms.

Renowned for analytical depth, political sensitivity, and a steadfast commitment to justice, dignity, and inclusive governance for all.

## EDUCATION

- M.A. Development & Conflict Resolution, Arab American University (2018–2021)
- M.A. Gender Studies, Birzeit University (2009–2012)
- B.A. Business Administration, Birzeit University (1995–1999)

## CORE COMPETENCIES

- Strategic Gender Mainstreaming
- Sectoral and Cross-Sectoral Strategic Planning
- Policy Development & Reform
- Feminist Research & Oral History
- Women's Political Empowerment
- Institutional Capacity Building
- Conflict Resolution & Mediation
- Participatory Planning & Governance
- Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB)
- Stakeholder Engagement & Facilitation
- Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)
- Mentoring & Coaching
- Training & Capacity Development

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### Independent Consultant & Researcher (2023–Present)

#### Key Projects:

- **Policy Consultant | Tahaluf Consulting and Capacity Development Company | June 2025**  
Engaged as a Policy Consultant to develop a comprehensive policy paper focused on women's economic empowerment in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector. This specialized consultancy involved conducting research, analysis, and strategic policy recommendations to advance gender equality and economic participation of women in the technology industry. The project required expertise in policy development, gender mainstreaming, and understanding of ICT sector dynamics to deliver actionable recommendations for stakeholders.
- **Project Evaluator and Gender Consultant (2025):**  
Conducted **project evaluations and follow-up monitoring for several organizations in 2025, including World Vision**. Provided gender-focused assessments, developed evaluation reports, and offered strategic recommendations to enhance program effectiveness and ensure alignment with gender equality and inclusion objectives.
- **Gender Consultant – RDWS & SAHD (2024):**  
Conducted gender assessments in the private sector and proposed organizational reforms and inclusive policies.
- **Lead Researcher – MAS Institute (2024):**  
Analyzed the economic impact of the Gaza war on Palestinian women and developed policy recommendations.

- **Lead Gender Expert – Lutheran World Federation (2024):**  
Led inclusion programs in vocational centers; developed institutional capacity-building tools.
- **Researcher – PAIC Coalition (2024):**  
Analyzed rural women’s participation in climate action; contributed to policy recommendations.
- **Conflict Analyst – PGFTU (2024):**  
Delivered a conflict study across trade unions with recommendations for internal cohesion and structure reform.

## **TRAINING & FACILITATION**

- Resolution 1325 & Women's Rights Training – PARC (Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees) - Women's Organizations (2025)
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- Training on UN Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace & Security), decent work standards, and CEDAW implementation for women's associations
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- Feminist Politics Training – Refugee Camps - RE-FORM (2025)
- Gender & Local Governance Training – Municipal Councils - RE-FORM (2025)
- Barriers to Political Participation – NDI (2024)
- Youth Conflict & Unity – RE-FORM Foundation (2024)
- Gender Mainstreaming in Education – Lutheran Federation (2024)
- Sectoral Gender Integration – Oxfam (2024)
- Facilitated over 20 localized trainings on participatory governance, inclusive budgeting, gender-sensitive planning, and conflict resolution.

## **Ministry of Local Government – Palestine**

### **Director General, Gender Unit (2019–2023)**

#### **Strategic Leadership & Policy Development**

- Led the integration of gender perspectives into the Ministry’s strategic framework, ensuring gender equity and inclusivity were embedded across all plans and initiatives.
- Contributed significantly to the formulation and execution of the Local Government Sector Strategic Plan, aligning local governance objectives with national development goals and sustainable development frameworks.
- Developed gender-responsive policies and procedures to mainstream gender considerations into institutional processes and decision-making.
- Established comprehensive gender mainstreaming guidelines adopted across various Ministry units and local government institutions.

- Created robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess policy implementation and measure impact, integrating gender-sensitive indicators and evidence-based methodologies.
- Developed gender-sensitive budgeting approaches, ensuring fiscal policies and resource allocation addressed women's and marginalized groups' needs.
- Designed and led the preparation of both sectoral and cross-sectoral strategic plans for local governance, coordinating with multiple ministries and stakeholders to ensure policy coherence and integrated development planning.
- Played a critical role in harmonizing local governance planning with national strategies, including cross-sectoral plans such as the National Gender Strategy, disability inclusion strategies, and urban development policies.
- Contributed to drafting operational plans translating strategic objectives into actionable programs with defined targets and performance indicators.

## **National Committee Roles**

- **Member of the National Committee for Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB):**
  - Provided technical expertise in gender-responsive budget analysis and integration.
  - Conducted capacity-building and training programs for various ministries and public institutions to promote GRB principles and practices.
  - Developed implementation guidelines to institutionalize gender-responsive budgeting across government entities.
  - Participated in reviewing ministerial budgets to ensure allocations supported gender equity and inclusivity.
- **Member of the National CEDAW Committee:**
  - Contributed extensively to the preparation of national reports submitted under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
  - Monitored and evaluated the implementation of CEDAW recommendations, ensuring compliance with international obligations.
  - Developed periodic progress reports highlighting achievements and challenges in promoting women's rights within local governance structures.
  - Coordinated cross-ministerial and cross-sectoral initiatives to align national policies with CEDAW commitments and address gaps in women's rights protection.

## **Capacity Building & Training Programs**

- Designed and implemented comprehensive training initiatives targeting capacity development within the Ministry and local government institutions.
- Developed specialized training programs for female municipal staff to enhance technical, administrative, and leadership competencies.
- Created mentorship and coaching programs for women in local councils, fostering peer learning and leadership development.
- Established leadership development programs aimed at building the next generation of women leaders in local governance.
- Designed orientation programs tailored for new female council members to facilitate integration and effective participation in governance processes.
- Developed institutional training policies and guidelines to ensure consistent, high-quality capacity-building efforts across the sector.

### **Project Management & International Cooperation**

- Managed GIZ-funded projects supporting gender mainstreaming, local governance reform, and capacity building.
  - Oversaw project design, planning, and implementation in alignment with donor requirements and national development priorities.
  - Coordinated with international development partners and donors to secure technical and financial support.
  - Managed resource allocation, project timelines, and stakeholder engagement to ensure successful project delivery.
  - Monitored project outcomes and impact through rigorous M&E mechanisms, providing data-driven insights for continuous improvement.
- Participated in managing UN-HABITAT projects, notably the **HAYAT Program**, in collaboration with the Ministry's Policy and Planning Unit:
  - Implemented specialized initiatives to enhance women's access to public spaces and urban facilities.
  - Conducted training sessions on gender mainstreaming in structural and urban planning processes.
  - Developed technical guidelines for gender-responsive urban planning to influence local and national development projects.
  - Coordinated multi-stakeholder activities and partnerships to promote the creation of inclusive, safe, and accessible public spaces.

### **Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)**

- Established comprehensive M&E frameworks for the Ministry, integrating gender-sensitive and sector-specific indicators.
- Designed systems to track progress on strategic plans, sectoral initiatives, and cross-sectoral programs, ensuring timely reporting to the Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Planning.
- Conducted policy and program evaluations, preparing detailed assessment reports with actionable recommendations for policy refinement and program adjustments.

- Integrated social accountability and participatory evaluation mechanisms to engage citizens and stakeholders in assessing policy outcomes and service delivery.
- Developed M&E tools and guidelines tailored for local governance contexts, ensuring consistent and high-quality data collection and analysis.

### **Policy Analysis & Implementation**

- Led the analysis and formulation of evidence-based policy proposals on key local governance and public administration issues.
- Coordinated policy implementation across national, regional, and local levels, ensuring alignment and synergy among diverse government stakeholders.
- Evaluated policy impacts and developed comprehensive reports to inform strategic decisions and continuous policy refinement.
- Authored policy briefs, position papers, and technical reports covering decentralization, municipal reform, gender mainstreaming, social accountability, and disability inclusion in governance.

### **Key Achievements**

- Successfully integrated gender and social inclusion considerations into national and sectoral strategic plans.
- Led the development and institutionalization of gender-responsive budgeting practices across government entities.
- Developed national monitoring and evaluation frameworks aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national performance management systems.
- Implemented innovative approaches to public participation, accountability, and inclusive governance in the local government sector.
- Represented the Ministry in high-level international collaborations, contributing to knowledge exchange and adoption of global best practices in governance reform.

### **General Director, Strategic Planning & Policy Unit (2017–2019)**

- Led development of decentralization policies, major municipalities frameworks, Led the development and implementation of numerous significant policy initiatives, including but not limited to:
- Research studies and policy development on decentralization frameworks for local governance.
- Design and roll-out of municipal classification systems to improve administrative and financial efficiency.
- Policy formulation for Greater/Major Municipalities (البلديات الكبرى) to manage urban growth and service delivery.
- Development of amalgamation and merger policies for municipalities (سياسات الدمج), streamlining local governance structures for enhanced sustainability and resource allocation.

- Creation of public participation and community engagement policies to strengthen democratic governance and citizen inclusion in decision-making.
- Integration of disability inclusion strategies into local governance policies, ensuring accessible and equitable services.
- Formulation of policies governing public spaces and facilities, including parks, recreational areas, and public infrastructure, from a gender-responsive and inclusive perspective.
- Development of social accountability mechanisms and frameworks to promote transparency, citizen oversight, and trust in governance processes.
- *Note: The above policies represent selected examples from a broader portfolio of policy work conducted during this period.*
- Designed and led the preparation of both **sectoral and cross-sectoral strategic plans** for local governance, ensuring their alignment with national development goals, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and cross-cutting policy agendas such as gender equality, disability inclusion, and good governance.
- Developed the Ministry's operational plans, translating strategic objectives into actionable programs with clear targets, timelines, and measurable performance indicators.
- Coordinated and harmonized planning processes with various ministries, institutions, and national bodies, including cross-sectoral plans like the Ministry of Women's Affairs strategies, national political participation frameworks, disability inclusion strategies, and urban development policies.
- Played a pivotal role in integrating gender-responsive and inclusive approaches across all strategic and operational initiatives.
- Contributed to the formulation of amalgamation policies to support administrative reform, improve local government sustainability, and ensure optimal resource allocation.
- Advanced disability inclusion strategies, ensuring that planning and policy processes addressed diverse needs across all community segments.
- Represented the Ministry in international collaborations, technical working groups, and multi-stakeholder partnerships, promoting knowledge exchange and the adoption of global best practices in local governance reform.

### **HR Department Manager (2000–2017)**

- Participated in developing the Ministry's organizational structure and job classification system.
- Led training needs assessments, policy reviews, and staff development initiatives.
- Oversaw training documentation and contributed to internal HR reform strategies.

### **RESEARCH & ACADEMIC PROJECTS**

- **Research Assistant – University College London (UCL) (2022–2025):**  
Contributed to the *Transforming Financial Inclusion* project, focusing on inclusive prosperity and gendered financial patterns in Ramallah.

Co-authored reflections on spatial and economic dynamics affecting Palestinian women under occupation.

- **Lead Researcher – Arab American University & Arab Council for the Social Sciences (2020–2023):**

Led the *Gendered Oral History* project titled “Women in the Seventies,” documenting life stories of Palestinian women during that decade.

Conducted feminist interviews capturing memory, agency, and transformation across refugee camps, rural villages, and cities.

Developed narrative-based research for the *Oral History Archives of Palestine*, under the supervision of Dr. Huda Al-Sadda (Lebanon).

Produced gender-focused analyses of resistance, public space, and domestic roles during key historical shifts.

- **Research Assistant – Durham University (2013–2015):**

Participated in the *Families and Cities* project on urban displacement.

Conducted qualitative interviews, organized family history data, and managed project financials.

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND RESAREASHES

- **“The Gender of Debt and Space: Notes from Ramallah-Al Bireh”**, *Duke University Press*, 2020

Co-authored study on how financial systems and gender intersect in the context of Ramallah’s urban development.

- **“Ghosts of Jerusalem”**, *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 2020

Narrative research piece reflecting on displacement, memory, and gender in Jerusalem’s contested landscape.

- **“Spacing Debt”**, *Duke University Press*, 2020

Contribution to a multidisciplinary work exploring gendered credit access and spatial inequalities in Palestine.

- **“The Reality of Palestinian Women Researchers: Comparisons and Contexts”**, *Tamkeen Study Day*, 2023

Co-authored with Darin Sayyad, this research examined systemic academic barriers faced by Palestinian female researchers.

- **“Gender and Conflict Resolution: Feminist Mediation in Palestine”**, *Al-Wasata Magazine*, Issue No. 6

Analyzed grassroots mediation practices through a gender lens and highlighted the role of women-led initiatives in resolving local disputes.

- **“Shrinking Spaces for Women during the Gaza War”**, *University College London (UCL)*, 2024

Explored the impact of war on women’s public presence and economic participation in Gaza, published within the *Transforming Financial Inclusion* project.

- **“Palestinian Women and the National Narrative: Women with a Homeland in Their Minds”**, *Journal of Gendered Resistance, Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS)*, 2023 A reflective analysis on the evolving role of women in shaping the Palestinian national identity through lived experiences and historical memory.
- "Islamic Finance and its Relation to Religion", *University College London (UCL)*, 2025
- "Decolonizing Knowledge Production in Local Research Post-Gaza War 2023", *University College London (UCL)*, 2025

## **POLICY PAPERS & GUIDES**

- Gendered Labor Market Participation in Palestine (2018)
- Development Challenges in Area C(2018)
- Strategic Guide for Women in Political Life (2023)
- Disability Inclusion in Local Governance (2023)
- Water and Electricity Debt Management in Local Authorities (2019)
- Mediation and Gender in Local Governance (2022)

## **CERTIFICATIONS & PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**

- **Citizen Researcher Certification**, University College London (UCL)
- **Research Ethics and Anthropological Research**, Arab Council for the Social Sciences
- **Strategic Planning and Policy Analysis**, Danish Federation of Municipalities
- **Diploma in Strategic Thinking and Public Policies**
- **Knowledge Empowerment Program** (274 hours)
- **Administrative and Leadership Skills Training** (135 hours)
- **Advanced Monitoring and Evaluation Techniques**

## **LANGUAGES**

- Arabic – Native
- English – Professional Working Proficiency