

---

**Trigésimo aniversario de la  
Cuarta Conferencia Mundial sobre la Mujer y la aprobación de la  
Declaración y Plataforma de Acción de Beijing (Beijing, 1995) en  
América Latina y el Caribe**

**NATIONAL REPORT  
TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS  
2024**

# **TURKS AND CAICOS BEIJING REPORT 2020-2025**



## 1. Introduction- Context

Globally significant strides have been made towards achieving gender equality. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world<sup>1</sup>. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the United Nations in 1979, representing the first explicit commitment to ending gender inequality globally. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action developed at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, represents the most comprehensive blueprint for action towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

The current development paradigm, The Sustainable Development Goals, has also positioned gender equality at the centre of development. Under Agenda 2030, SDG 5: Gender Equality provides measurable indicators for achieving progress for women and men, and gender equality and women's empowerment is also integrated across all 17 SDGs. Positioning gender equality as both a standalone goal and a pivotal tool for achieving all development objects reiterates that a gender lens is required across all facets of a country's development.

The Turks and Caicos Islands Department of Gender Affairs currently falls under the purview of the Ministry of Home Affairs Transportation and the Tele Communication Commission. It was first established in 1999 as the Women's Desk, under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and in January 2001, it was renamed the Department of Gender Affairs to reflect its expanded mandate. The Department is the focal point for the Government in promoting gender equality and equity in Turks and Caicos. The office is also charged with promoting the integration of a gender perspective into mainstream activities of government at the policy, programme, and project levels.

The activities of the Department are coordinated within the framework of international conventions relating to the human rights of women, such as the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Convention was

---

<sup>1</sup>Constitution of Aruba, AB 1987 no. GT 1 and Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2002.

extended to the Territory on behalf of the United Kingdom Government in April 1986. It is part of the United Nations Human Rights system which is intended to improve the status of women.

Over the years, the Turks and Caicos Islands have made substantial gains in advancing gender equality and women empowerment, as evidenced by the steady gains in women holding more senior leadership and decision-making roles within government. Yet, critical gaps remain that emphasize the need for a more robust response to addressing gender inequality, not just as a standalone issue, but one that intersects with all aspects of society and national development.

### **Women's Empowerment**

Presently, the work of the Turks and Caicos Islands Department of Gender Affairs covers advocacy as it relates to legislation, political, and economic empowerment of women and men, policy development, gender training and intervention strategies, that reduce and eliminate gender-based violence. This includes discrimination against men, women, and children. For this reason, a sensitive approach to the problem of domestic and gender-based violence. requires a commitment to specific local and international guiding principles. These principles need to be established and followed as they will serve as the foundation for the support service provided to survivors of domestic and gender-based violence while serving as a basis for the work being undertaken by the Department of Gender Affairs. They will also contribute to the establishment of and operating guidelines for the Safe House which is scheduled to begin operations soon.

To ensure a more inclusive and sustainable future for the Turks and Caicos Islands, the Department of Gender Affairs, with the technical support of the UN Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean (MCO), has worked to develop a national Gender Equality Policy. The Gender Equality Policy is also inclusive of a monitoring and evaluation framework and a costed work plan.

### **Demographic Landscape**

The Turks and Caicos Islands is a low-lying tropical archipelago formed by coral reefs, in the Caribbean which is comprised of eight main islands and many small islands and cays. Located Southeast of The Bahamas, the Turks and Caicos Islands is a British Overseas Territory (BTO).

The eight main islands are Grand Turk (the capital), Salt Cay, Providenciales, West Caicos, North Caicos, Middle Caicos, East Caicos, South Caicos, and Ambergris Cay<sup>2</sup>.

According to The Turks and Caicos Department of Statistics, the estimated population size of the Turks and Caicos in 2020 was approximately 44,542, with a total of 507 births: Female Births: 236 and Male Births: 271<sup>3</sup>. The population of Turks and Caicos Islands is comprised of ‘Belongers’ or ‘Turks and Caicos Islanders’ who are primarily of Afro-descent, as well as a sizable expatriate community including nationals of England, America, France, Canada, Haiti, The Dominican Republic and Scandinavian descent<sup>4</sup>. In 2021, the annual population growth rate for Turks and Caicos Islands was 1.3%<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> Turks & Caicos Tourism (2022). [History and Overview of the Turks and Caicos Islands](#)

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Department, Turks and Caicos Islands (2022). [Population](#)

<sup>4</sup> Turks & Caicos Tourism (2022). [People of the Islands](#)

<sup>5</sup> The World Bank (2022). [Country Data: Turks and Caicos Islands](#)

# SECTION ONE



# HIGHLIGHTS

## **The core elements of the country-level review process**

The Department of Gender Affairs (DGA), within the Ministry of Home Affairs and Telecommunication Commission, has overall responsibility for the coordination and preparation of the report, with technical support and guidance from UN Women, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) and the Ministry of Home Affairs. To complete the report, the Department distributed high-level correspondence through the Permanent Secretaries to all Departments and statutory bodies to receive the information needed to compile the report. This was followed up with a conversation to discuss the steps to be taken in the preparation of the National Report and the information required for the report. Additionally, stakeholders were provided with past reports for guidance.

## **Progress, challenges, and setbacks in implementing the BPfA, based on statistical data, as well as the factors that influenced the success or failure of progress across critical areas.**

The Country has made constant progress in implementing the BPfA through policy and programs across the Territory. Some of the most significant achievements are the legislative review, the introduction of green and gender budgeting across government, an increase in the number of women reporting domestic violence, and the number of sexual offences being prosecuted successfully. The Country has also increased the support provided to women and girls on the poverty line or in need of care and protection.

Some of the challenges experienced in the implementation of the BPfA include reduced financial resources due to COVID-19; limited national research on gender and development issues and the absence of extensive sex-disaggregated data to support planning and development to meet the needs of vulnerable Groups. Despite these, the Government continues to mitigate the impact challenges by introducing and improving programmes to meet the needs of both the vulnerable groups of society and the population at large. Other Challenges include Less available funding from International Development Partners (IDPs) for budgetary support. Negative social norms and gender stereotypes remain difficult to change. Lack of understanding about the importance of

gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. Slow uptake of Gender Mainstreaming programmes in the public sector and the fragmented approach to addressing GBV.

**How the Government has considered and addressed the specific needs of women and girls from marginalized groups in line with the principle of leaving no one behind.**

The Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) has a very blended culture meaning several women and girls whose first language is not English. Most material produced is translated into French Creole and Spanish to address their specific needs. Sessions are also conducted in these languages to facilitate the same. This is also extended to women and girls within the family islands.

Undocumented women and girls are often marginalized as they are unable to access any service in the Turks and Caicos Islands. Those however affected by gender-based violence in the TCI are assisted by the Department of Gender Affairs irrespective of their status. This is important as most undocumented women face some form of gender-based violence and if they do not comply with their abuser, they are threatened with deportation.

**Two or three examples of good practices and lessons learned that may be relevant for other countries, preferably with a focus on measures with transformative potential, considering the interlinkages and synergies between the BPfA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**

The Turks and Caicos have provided needed assistance to women and girls through increased collaboration for health promotion and advocacy. The Government realized that there was an increase in the number of women developing Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as heart disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disease, and diabetes, which are the leading causes of death locally and worldwide. To address the issue, the government through the Ministry of Health has embarked on country-wide campaigns to address these issues with all key stakeholders across the government and private sector. The Ministry of Health recognizes that collaboration is critical in any strategy that focuses on reducing NCDs. It is so important, that it is one of the key elements of the WHO. This has caused more women to be reached and a better spread of resources.



The development of SOPs is critical to addressing Domestic Violence in the Turks and Caicos Islands. During the COVID pandemic, not all stakeholders understood their role in treating persons who were in a very vulnerable situation and also being affected by domestic violence. The Department of Gender Affairs developed the Domestic Violence Protocol which clearly states each stakeholder's specific roles and those that are shared to assist victims, survivors, and perpetrators of Domestic violence.

**Areas where the country would need support in terms of finance, capacity-building, policy advice, data gathering and analysis, technology, and partnerships, among others.**

The Gender Architect continues seeking financial assistance to implement various programs and training. This is also hampered by the need for manpower to reach all persons in need of our services. Out of the eight inhabited islands, the Department is only physically present in two. Therefore, victims and survivors in the other islands would have to either travel to Providenciales or Grand Turk or the Gender Officer would be required to visit that island to provide the necessary service. This is often costly and sometimes not possible for safety reasons.

# SECTION 2



PRIORITIES

ACHIEVEMENTS

TURKS AND  
CAICOS

CHALLENGES

SETBACKS

➤ **Over the past five years, what have been the most important achievements, challenges, and setbacks in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women?**

There have been positive strides in the Turks and Caicos Islands towards gender equity and equality, but there are still significant challenges to overcome. The progress made through new legislation, heightened awareness, improved services, and increased representation of women in government is commendable. However, the persistence of gender inequality in governance, along with issues like violence against women and girls, legal barriers, and gender-based violence, underscores the ongoing need for concerted efforts to promote gender equality and ensure women's full participation in national development. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including legal reforms, effective enforcement mechanisms, comprehensive support services, and continued advocacy for gender equality.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **I. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

A. The Department of Gender Affairs has emerging policy frameworks to continue its mandate to mainstream gender in the Turks and Caicos Islands fabric. The following policy to be gazette in 2024 are;

- **Domestic Violence Protocol:** This piece of legislation is a coordinated response that guides stakeholders from the social, health, judicial, and police sectors to respond effectively to signs of domestic violence. It shows each sector's special protocol to follow and how they assist each other in efficiency to safeguard women and men.
- **National Gender Equality Policy:** a roadmap that sets out the vision and actions to tackle the persistent gendered inequalities women, girls, and men face across their lives, supporting them to contribute to the country's economy and balance caring responsibilities in a life free of gender-based violence.
- **Safe House Policy:** This policy will accompany the operations of the safe house in the second quarter of 2024. This piece of legislation presents common standards of practice for providing services to survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) in the safe house in Turks and Caicos.

- B. *Sexual Offences Ordinance 2020*:** an ordinance to make provisions concerning sexual offences, their prevention, and the protection of women and children from harm from other sexual acts, and for connected purposes.
- C. *Public Sector Employees Pension Fund Ordinance 2022*:** The purpose of the Fund is to establish a defined contribution pension plan to ensure that eligible public sector employees receive a pension or other benefit on retirement, death, pre-retirement disability, or cessation of employment. This gives women in the public sector and Girls entering a safer future.
- D. *Mental Health Regulations 2019*:** These regulations provide the requirements for the operation of residential care establishments, places of safety, and rehabilitation centers for persons affected by mental health issues. This provides special care and protection for women and girls at all stages of their treatment plan to respect their dignity.
- E. *Status of Children Ordinance 2019*:** an ordinance to provide for the equal status of children in the Turks and Caicos. It clearly outlines a woman's rights to her child and her ability to provide them with the needed status in the Territory.
- F. *Children (care and protection) (amendment) ordinance 2020*:** *The Ordinance of 2017 was amended in Section 11 by repealing subsection (2) and giving formation of the Board to govern the Safety of Children in the Territory. This seeks to provide an overarching approach to child safeguarding and guardianship.*
- G. *Vulnerable Witnesses Ordinance 2020*:** This ordinance makes provision concerning special measures directions on the case of vulnerable and intimidated witnesses; the use of a live link in criminal and civil proceedings; the admissibility and status of evidence by video recording; the protection of witnesses from cross-examination by accused in person; the protection of complainants in proceedings for sexual offenses; and for connected purposes. It also considers women and children with particular vulnerabilities who become witnesses.

**H. Public and environmental health (covid-19) (control measures) regulations 2021:**

These Regulations were made to prevent, control, and suppress the spread of COVID-19. Women and Children were extremely vulnerable during this period as women acted as the main caregivers for other members of the household.

**I. National insurance ordinance national insurance (benefit)(Amendment) (no.2) regulations 2021:**

In these Regulations, the principal Regulator, the National Insurance Board, substituted “Entitlement to retirement pension”. This included women who were once not eligible for a pension.

**J. Anti-gang ordinance 2022:** this ordinance makes provision for the maintenance of public safety and order through discouraging membership of criminal gangs and the suppression of criminal gang activity; for connected purposes. These include dealing with serious crimes such as sexual assault and rape which mainly affect women and girls in the Turks and Caicos.

**II. POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE**

In Turks and Caicos there are no legal constraints to women entering the political arena. However, there may be perceived constraints as they relate to cultural norms placed on women in society. Women in Turks and Caicos continue to make significant strides in the area of power and decision-making. Women held and still hold high-level decision-making positions, the recent appointment of the first female Governor in 2023 clearly reflects women at the highest decision-making level of the TCI. Other appointments indicative of this include the Deputy Governor, Chief Magistrate, Attorney General, two-thirds of Permanent Secretaries in Government Ministries, and the Directors in most of the Departments. This is complemented by women taking up leading roles as doctors, lawyers, educators, managers, and entrepreneurs in the private sector such as the CEO of Inter Health Canada, the head of the Flow TCI company, and the Electricity Company, to name a few.

The General Elections of 2021 saw the exit of the first female Premier and the election of three women being elevated to ministerial portfolios. These women hold ministries that are critical to

the advancement of the country's economy and educational development such as Education, Youth, Sports and Library Services, Tourism Agriculture Fisheries Heritage and the Environment. Although this number represents a twenty-six percent representation of women in politics compared to the BPFPA requirement of 33%, this is still a substantial foundation in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

### **III. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

During the reporting period, the government has assisted numerous women and children affected by gender-based violence. The department has assisted women and children in obtaining shelter, crisis counseling, crisis information, and psychosocial support. Over the reporting period, the department provided technical guidance to over one hundred women who received Protection Orders against an abuser. The Order offers protection from further abuse or the threat of abuse and comes with a power of arrest attached in most cases. The Department also assisted three women per month and their children with emergency shelters on average.

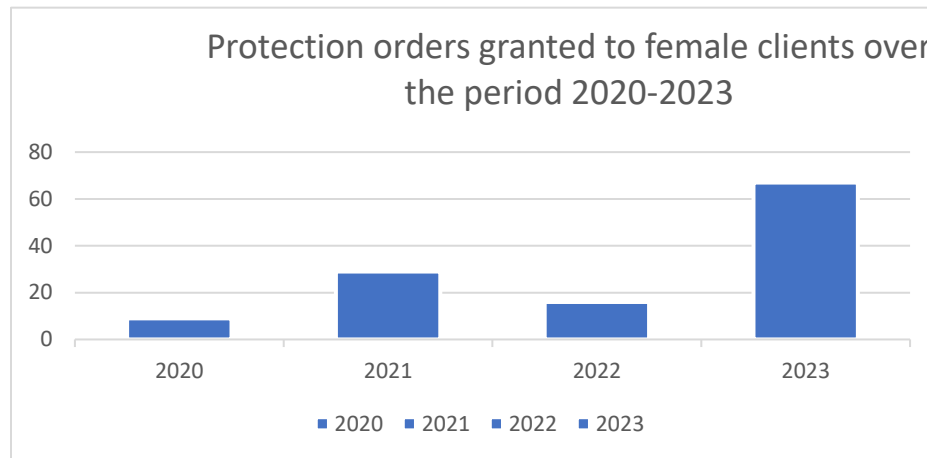
The TCI government provides crisis counseling services aimed at addressing dangerous or potentially dangerous situations. This short-term treatment is designed to bring stability during a crisis and has successfully helped over a hundred clients over a three-year period (from 2021 to May 2024) to safely move on from abusive situations and navigate the justice system.

Various TCI agencies offer psychosocial support for both male and female perpetrators of abuse. The Department of Rehabilitation and Community Services provides a behavioral change program aimed at protecting the public, reducing re-offending, and raising awareness of the impact of their behavior on victims or survivors. This comprehensive program addresses anger management and alternative methods of communication for partners.

The Department of Behavioral Health Services offers counseling and wellness therapy to address the mental well-being of clients and perpetrators. This support assists women and their families in healing and sometimes repairing broken relationships. Additionally, the

Department of Social Development provides counseling and home visit assessments to ensure the complete safety and wellness of women and children.

*The Pie chart below shows the distribution of clients from 2020 to 2023 who applied for a protection order.*



#### **IV. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

The government, demonstrating a steadfast commitment to gender equality, has been actively pursuing strategic budget reforms in the Turks and Caicos Islands since 2014. Building on their successful implementation of a medium-term expenditure framework and program performance budgeting in 2021, the TCI government embarked on a mission to ‘mainstream’ gender-responsive budgeting. The government has introduced Gender Budgeting throughout all ministries and departments, marking a significant step forward for gender equality in the Turks and Caicos. This initiative aligns with Beijing's Platform for Action, which calls for countries to consider gender perspectives and women's needs in budgetary policies and programs. The implementation of this initiative was rolled out across the government in 2023.

The Turks and Caicos Islands, through the Budget Department, has conducted a consultative process and training to assist managers in understanding their budgets. This process involved (specific details of the process), and the training covered (specific topics).

The TCI, in a collaborative effort, holds training and sensitization sessions on an ongoing basis to address various gender inequalities and issues. These sessions, held throughout the TCI, are a testament to the collective commitment towards gender equality. The TCI also forged partnerships with International Development Partners to provide training and institutional development for the protection and safeguarding of women and girls.

## **V. WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

The Government introduced green budgeting following multiple capacity development sessions on climate change and climate financing held by CARTAC leading up to 2019. At that time, it was of paramount importance for the Turks and Caicos to get involved with reforms relating to climate change, given our dependence on tourism and the frequency of natural disasters, particularly our vulnerability to tropical cyclones.

At about the same time, TCIG authorities also realized the importance and need for more gender-oriented considerations in the budget planning and preparation process to mainstream specific priorities and concerns into the budget policy analysis and decision-making.

## **VI. WOMEN AND POVERTY**

The Department of Gender Affairs recognizes that over 60% of its clients affected by domestic violence are not able to take care of themselves or their families. This often causes them to stay with the abuser or delay reporting. Women affected by poverty are afforded opportunities to explore several avenues for aid. Social Development and Welfare offers Social Enhancement Aid (S.E.A.), Home Help, mentally challenged aid, Meals, and Rent-subsidized (provided for persons who earn less than 600 a month. The Department of Gender Affairs offers a school uniform program, haircuts and braids for back-to-school students, and food cards which have supported over fifty (50) families annually. The T.C.I. The Red Cross provides food and clothing.

## **VII. THE GIRL CHILD**

The TCIG reopened a newly refurbished Safe House in Grand Turk, in February 2022. The purpose and scope of the Safe House are to provide care and protection to children who



have been removed from their family homes. As of May 2023, the cabinet renamed the safe House to The Mahala, Wynns, Empowerment Oasis. Currently, the facility has a staff complement of twelve (12) caretakers which is inclusive of the safe house manager and assistant manager. The seven (7) girls are acclimated into society in that they attend school, receive monthly counselling sessions, have contact with family members, and are involved in extra-curricular activities.

## **ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES**

**In the bid to address the BPFAs, several challenges have presented themselves. These include but are not limited to:**

### **I. Illegal Migration**

Once an individual does not own a status card, they are not eligible to benefit from government aid or work legally in the TCI. This means women and children without status are more likely to remain in poverty and experience gender-based violence. Illegal migration is still a significant problem for the Turks and Caicos Islands because it exposes women to being exploited as cheap labour. It is hoped that legislation review in this area will deter many from engaging in offences that further violate the human rights of women.

### **II. Inadequate gender statistics**

This is an ongoing challenge in the Turks and Caicos Islands, even though data is being collected daily. The Department of Gender Affairs is currently partnering with ECLAC to provide training and technical support for the Key stakeholders throughout the TCI. This should result in the development of Gender tools and a Gender data repository.

### **III. Ambivalence (continued) towards gender**

The concept is often misunderstood and seen as representing women and as being in opposition to men's issues. A robust re-socialization campaign is ongoing to increase awareness of gender equity, equality, and gender-based violence. The Magistrate Court is the body responsible for adjudicating domestic violence cases.

#### **IV. Negative stereotypical**

In Turks and Caicos, initiatives aimed at changing harmful social norms and gender stereotypes are led by the Department of Gender Affairs, in collaboration with key stakeholders of Government, Academia, the private sector, and Civil Society groups. Initiatives include public awareness education and outreach targeting children, young people, Domestic Violence victims, and survivors. Several sensitization training programs have been conducted. Over the past five years, strategies have been emphasized to eliminate gender inequalities. The Department targets gender norms that impact how women and men relate to each other. These also impact the progress that can be made towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment at the national level.

#### **V. Legal barriers and poorly enforced legislation**

Due to the current immigration laws, many women are forced to stay in extremely abusive relationships. There is a need for a review of the immigration legislation to address the ability of women who marry and receive status. There is also no formal gender equality policy in place as yet although a draft policy has been developed and will be tabled for cabinet by December 2024.

#### **VI. Limited human resources**

This negatively impacts the capacity of the Department of Gender Affairs to achieve its mandate of ensuring the integration of gender in all national development plans and policies to achieve gender equity and equality. The Territory has six (6) major inhabited Family Islands and due to limited staff, it is often difficult to reach and serve all the islands the way they need.

- **Over the past five years, what have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies and/or programs?**

### **1. Quality education, training, and life-long learning for women and girls**

The Turks and Caicos Community College (TCCC) has introduced its vocational programs for lifelong learning. One of the main objectives of this programme is to increase the percentage of women who enrol in male-dominated technical programmes by 50%. (SP2, SP3, SP4) through a targeted marketing approach and additional short courses.

The TCCC is also the institution implementing the Country's National TVET Policy which will outline a logical set of broad policy alignments and their objectives. This policy framework includes references to the national context and reviews the country's challenges and responses as TVET leads. The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) policy, therefore, guides revitalizing the TVET sector to effectively provide skilled and employable graduates needed to drive the targets of Vision 2040. Specific emphasis is being placed on improving access to TVET by targeting female enrollees in the key areas of General Construction, Motor Vehicle Technology, Information Communication Technology, and the Blue Economy to increase their tools for productivity enhancement and economic growth.

The Turks and Caicos Islands Community College is committed to expediting the development of infrastructure and human resource capacity, benchmarked against international standards, ensuring good strengthening quality and assurance of training and providing incentives for industry linkage and participation in TVET. Additionally, efforts will be made to promote an understanding of the policy among the wide range of TVET stakeholders including ministries, training institutions, employer and employee associations, development partners, civil society organizations, and Turks and Caicos Islands' youth. Furthermore, the implementation of this policy will serve as a guide toward the formulation and implementation of strategies for skills development and will facilitate better coordination among those involved in skills development in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The main strategic objective of this policy is to enhance the diversity and articulation of programmes for a more responsive and inclusive TVET. The dispensation of TVET programming must be relevant to national priorities, industry needs, and labour market demands. It is of paramount importance to have collaboration with the private sector and industry to shape and initiate new programmes, while also providing on-the-job training opportunities.

The industry should also participate wherever necessary to ensure the provision of timely and relevant training programmes. It is necessary to ensure that TVET programmes are well coordinated to respond to societal and labour market needs. The established CVQ framework will facilitate the recognition and certification in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

In addition, the review of the general education programme to enable the integration of critical areas such as entrepreneurship, employability, and higher-order training skills will be necessary.

The following key approaches will be employed:

1. Development and Implementation of a framework for the provision of TVET that is inclusive and more responsive to change in the workforce.
2. Develop and Implement policies, programs, and partnerships that provide opportunities for apprenticeship and employment within the industry.
3. Develop and promote opportunities for career development.

The implementation of these strategies will result in:

- Establish an NVQ/CVQ framework that facilitates the recognition of certification that will have currency and portability inside and outside of the Turks and Caicos Islands.
- forged partnerships with the private sector;
- development of internship and apprenticeship programmes;
- development and implementation of curricula for employability, life skills, career choices and entrepreneurship at all levels, and integrating approved occupation and other standards into employment programmes and work-based learning;
- establishment of a system that responds to the current changing needs.

The following initiatives will be undertaken throughout the life of the strategy:

- i. Develop gender-focused TVET programmes;
- ii. Partner with industry to provide apprentice and employment opportunities for trainees;
- iii. Support the development of innovation and entrepreneurship in the TVET-related areas.

The Ministry of Education in conjunction with other Ministries and stakeholders has been a strong proponent of second chance or alternative education and training for girls and women. In light of this, institutions have been formed to render such services to girls and women who express an interest. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education is committed to strengthening Second Chance education programmes across the length and breadth of the TCI as it is the will of the Government to have each person given a fair chance in life to contribute to society in a meaningful way.

Women's achievement in education in both quantitative and qualitative dimensions should not be understated, at all levels of the education system women have achieved parity in attendance and certification. These attainment levels are reflected in the increased levels of female participation in the labour force. Women in the Turks and Caicos Islands outnumbered men in most graduating classes from college to university. But for all of these gains, gender equality could only exist when indirect forms of discrimination are eliminated, but, also when indirect forms of discrimination are addressed.

## **2. Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity, and food security**

### **Department of Agriculture**

Training is a major activity within the Department of Agriculture. Through training sessions, the department teaches and receives meaningful feedback. It is important that the DOA creates a medium and be the main tool to transfer agriculture information to our farmers and other stakeholders. The trainings conducted are open to the general public.

The Extension Division/DOA conducted Twenty-Three (23) trainings. Some of the topics covered were:

- Pesticide use and management
- Composting
- Hydroponic crop production
- Soil fertility

- Corn production
- Sweet Potato production

The Department of Agriculture's (DOA) training sessions are done on all islands- Providenciales, North Caicos, South Caicos, Salt Cay, and Grand Turk. Regarding participation, the DOA's training sessions always strike a near balance between gender (male and female) therefore, 45% female and 55% male. Gender involvement is an area that the DOA focuses on where the Department encourages women to be active in agriculture. Consequently, the number of women who participate in training reflects the interest women have in agriculture within the Turks and Caicos Islands.

#### Registered Farmers

The DOA maintains a database with all registered farmers. There are currently twenty-one (21) registered male farmers and thirteen registered (13) female farmers. Only registered farmers can benefit from certain initiatives that the DOA offers such as Duty-free concessions and, Agro-Grants. The DOA is always encouraging persons interested in farming and those who are farming but not yet registered, to register.

### **3. Eliminating violence against women and girls**

The government has several mechanisms to eliminate VAWG throughout the reporting period. These measures include but are not limited to:

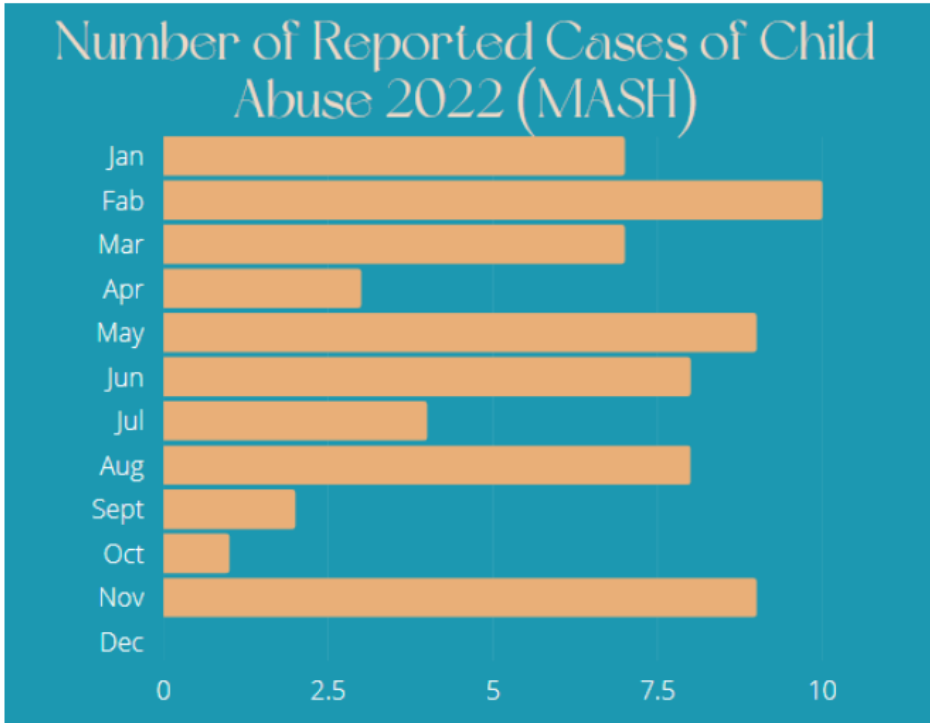
#### **Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**

The Royal Turks and Caicos Islands Police Forge together with the Departments of Social Development and Gender Affairs and Health and Education embarked upon a new era with the opening of the Ethel Ingham Center in Providenciales making it a Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) with specialized trained safeguarding police officers, social workers and officers from Gender Affairs, with Health and Education working remotely due to limited resources to work

under one roof in joint efforts to investigate crimes committed against children and vulnerable adults.

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub receives cases of child abuse and neglect by way of referrals utilizing a referral form. The diagrams below indicate the child abuse matters that came into the MASH for 2022. The highest form of abuse received in 2022 by MASH was physical abuse followed by (adult to child) and Child in Need with 13 matters received in 2022 through the MASH. The number of children who came to the attention of MASH for various forms of child abuse was 68.





In keeping with its commitment to victims of all forms of abuse, the Royal Turks and Caicos Islands Police Force has renamed its Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Unit to the “Safeguarding and Public Protection Unit”. This Unit focuses on the protection of children and vulnerable adults. This was made possible as a result of funding from the UK National Crime Agency, UNICEF, and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Ethel Ingham Center (EIC) is also considered a one-stop shop as it is equipped with a state-of-the-art video recording interview suite along with a monitoring room and a forensic Medical Examination room.

This facility makes it possible for victims, especially children to have a suitable place where they can give their account by way of video or audio. Victims also no longer have to be taken to a public hospital for a forensic medical examination. This can now be done at the Ethel Ingham Center where there is more privacy and increased confidentiality.



## **Safe Accommodation**

The Department provides secure shelter for girls, children, and women. These shelters are not just safe spaces, but also secure environments for women and girls in need of care and protection on a medium and long-term basis. They are both short-term allowing for twelve to fourteen weeks of accommodation in safety.

The Mahalia Wynns Empowerment Oasis (MWEO), formerly The Juvenile Center, is a unique facility located in Grand Turk and operated by the government through the Department of Social Development and Welfare. The Home, which was refurbished in February 2022, provides a safe and nurturing environment for children who have been removed from their family homes for safety and are legally placed in the Department's care. The Safe House is not just a shelter, but a place designed to make the living experience worthwhile and enjoyable, with each section of the House set up with a warm, homely feeling.

The Safe House currently has six (6) girls and a staff complement of twelve (12) persons including the House Manager, Assistant House Manager, Caregivers, Wardens and Security officers, Cleaner, and Driver. The girls are not just housed, but also acclimated into society in that they attend school, receive monthly counselling sessions, have contact with family members, and are involved in extra-curricular activities, including attending church and youth fellowship. There are five (5) girls currently at the Safe House. Each child has a Care Plan that sets out their comprehensive goals and objectives while they are at the Safe House.

The Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Social Development and Welfare plays a crucial role in safeguarding children in need of care and protection throughout the Turks and Caicos Islands. Many children come into the care of the State as a result of abuse, neglect, abandonment, and being beyond parental control, to name a few. The Department's primary role is to ensure that these children are not just placed into safe environments, but into safe and loving home environments where they can thrive and develop to their fullest potential. In situations where a safe family home environment is not available through foster care, the Department steps in to provide the necessary resources.

TCI has also established a Safe House for adult women and Children affected by Domestic Violence. This safe house is located on the largest populated island of Providenciales. This house will be completed in June 2024 and will accommodate up to 10 women.

Residents will benefit from residential counselling, crisis information, and material and financial aid. During the reporting period, the Department of Gender Affairs provides temporary accommodation for women and their children in hotels and private spaces. This temporary accommodation is designed to provide a safe and secure environment for the women and children while they await placement in the Safe House or other suitable long-term accommodation. Clients are provided with safe accommodation, meals, crisis counseling and emotional support, and representation for protection orders before the court. During 2023, two women were accommodated, and 8 requested shelters.

#### **4. Access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights**

According to the MIC survey of 2020 appropriate contraceptive use is important to the health of women and children by 1) preventing pregnancies that are too early or too late; 2) extending the period between births; and 3) limiting the total number of children. Table TM.3.1 presents the current use of contraception for women who are currently married or in union while Table TM.3.2 presents the same information for women who are not currently married or in union and are sexually active.

In Table TM.3.1, use of specific methods of contraception are first presented; specific methods are then grouped into modern and traditional methods and presented as such. For sexually active women who are not currently married or in union, Table TM.3.2 shows that 50.3 percent reported using a modern contraceptive method, with less than one percent using a traditional method. Table TM.3.2 has not been presented in this report due to the small number of unweighted cases.

**Table TM.3.1: Use of contraception (currently married/in union)**

Percentage of women age 15-49 years currently married or in union who are using (or whose partner is using) a contraceptive method, Turks and Caicos Islands MICS, 2019-2020

	Percentage of women currently married or in union who are using (or whose partner is using):															Number of women currently married or in union	
	Modern method										Traditional method						
	No method	Female sterilization	Male sterilization	IUD	Injectables	Implants	Pill	Male condom	Female condom	Diaphragm/ Foam/ Jelly	Periodic abstinence	Withdrawal	Other	Any modern method	Any traditional method		Any method <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>65.6</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>33.5</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>34.4</b>	<b>516</b>
<b>Region</b>																	
Grand Turk	56.4	6.1	0.0	3.6	3.8	2.1	13.2	8.7	1.4	0.0	0.2	1.8	2.9	38.7	4.9	43.6	47
NCMCS CSC	69.1	1.3	0.0	0.6	5.8	1.7	16.2	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	29.5	1.4	30.9	19
Providenciales	66.4	4.4	0.8	1.3	4.8	0.4	9.1	11.2	0.3	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.5	33.1	0.5	33.6	450
<b>Age<sup>A</sup></b>																	
15-19	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	16
20-24	(74.2)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(4.5)	(12.0)	(1.5)	(5.6)	(1.2)	(1.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(25.8)	(0.0)	(25.8)	63
25-29	44.6	9.9	0.0	1.1	1.7	0.2	24.9	17.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	55.4	0.0	55.4	54
30-34	60.6	0.4	3.7	2.2	10.3	0.2	12.9	8.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	38.5	0.9	39.4	94
35-39	57.6	3.1	0.0	0.7	2.3	0.8	14.5	16.9	1.1	0.6	0.0	0.3	2.1	40.0	2.4	42.4	118
40-44	76.1	11.4	0.0	1.3	0.6	0.9	1.8	4.2	0.2	2.7	0.0	0.5	0.2	23.1	0.8	23.9	98
45-49	73.8	3.3	0.0	0.4	3.2	0.0	2.9	16.1	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2	25.9	0.3	26.2	74
<b>Education</b>																	
Lower secondary or less	(76.4)	(1.9)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(10.4)	(11.2)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(23.6)	(0.0)	(23.6)	26
Upper secondary	62.1	5.7	0.0	1.5	6.4	0.1	9.7	12.4	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.2	0.9	36.8	1.2	37.9	253
Higher	68.2	3.4	1.5	1.7	3.5	1.2	9.7	8.8	0.9	0.4	0.0	0.1	0.6	31.1	0.7	31.8	238
<b>Number of living children</b>																	
0	69.0	0.0	1.9	2.3	4.3	0.0	16.1	5.6	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	30.8	0.2	31.0	142
1	73.3	0.1	0.5	1.0	4.5	0.6	6.1	13.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	26.3	0.4	26.7	152
2	60.8	1.3	0.0	1.3	5.7	1.5	10.2	15.1	1.0	0.8	0.0	0.4	1.9	36.8	2.3	39.2	128
3	56.9	14.7	0.0	0.2	3.8	0.0	8.1	9.5	0.0	5.6	0.3	0.0	1.1	41.8	1.3	43.1	44
4+	52.5	29.6	0.0	2.4	5.4	0.2	3.0	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	47.2	0.3	47.5	49

**Table TM.3.1: Use of contraception (currently married/in union)**

Percentage of women age 15-49 years currently married or in union who are using (or whose partner is using) a contraceptive method, Turks and Caicos Islands MICS, 2019-2020

	Percentage of women currently married or in union who are using (or whose partner is using):															Number of women currently married or in union	
	Modern method										Traditional method						
	No method	Female sterilization	Male sterilization	IUD	Injectables	Implants	Pill	Male condom	Female condom	Diaphragm/ Foam/ Jelly	Periodic abstinence	Withdrawal	Other	Any modern method	Any traditional method		Any method <sup>1</sup>
<b>Ethnicity of household head</b>																	
Black/Negro/African	68.3	4.2	0.6	1.5	4.2	0.5	8.2	10.8	0.4	0.7	0.0	0.1	0.6	31.0	0.7	31.7	456
Other	45.8	5.8	1.2	1.9	9.2	1.6	21.6	10.1	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.5	1.8	52.0	2.3	54.2	61
<b>Wealth index quintile</b>																	
Poorest	53.2	12.3	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.1	15.0	17.7	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.5	46.2	0.6	46.8	101
Second	60.5	3.0	0.0	0.0	12.8	1.0	12.0	6.8	1.2	2.3	0.0	0.5	0.0	39.0	0.5	39.5	108
Middle	73.5	1.7	2.5	0.9	6.2	0.0	4.0	9.0	0.6	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.8	25.7	0.8	26.5	111
Fourth	76.7	3.3	0.0	0.8	3.0	0.0	4.9	10.8	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	23.1	0.2	23.3	103
Richest	63.3	2.1	0.8	5.8	0.1	2.0	13.7	9.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.3	2.2	34.2	2.5	36.7	93

<sup>1</sup> MICS indicator TM.3 - Contraceptive prevalence rate

<sup>A</sup>The sub-categories of "15-17" and "18-19" in the background characteristic of "Age" have been suppressed from the table due to small number of unweighted cases.

( ) Figures that are based on 25-49 unweighted cases

(\*) Figures that are based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases

## **GENDER-RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION (E.G. UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE, CASH TRANSFERS, PENSIONS)**

### **Changing discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes**

The Government recognizes that transforming gender norms and power relations is one of the most effective ways of tackling VAWG. They have therefore developed to tackle a wide range of VAWG suggests that interventions that address gender norms, behaviours, and inequalities, and challenge dominant notions of masculinity linked to controlling and aggressive behaviors are more effective at reducing VAWG

### **Anti-Domestic Violence Campaign**

The Department of Gender Affairs embarks on annual Domestic Violence Awareness Campaigns during the reporting period. This is done throughout the year but peaks during October. Raising awareness about domestic violence is key to supporting victims. These awareness campaigns, which have led to a (specific percentage decrease) in domestic violence cases, provide information about resources, such as shelters, counseling, financial aid, essential services, and legal aid. This is considered to be life-saving for victims and survivors who may not know where to turn for help.

In 2023 the Department went all out for Domestic Violence Awareness Month as several events were planned around raising awareness of domestic violence and its impact on individuals, families, and communities in the Turks and Caicos Islands. It was essential to continue the work to end this epidemic and connect with others working to create change at the governmental, private, and individual levels in the Territory. Activities planned included Community Interventions, School Education Programs, Facebook Live, and an Anti-Domestic awareness walk. The Department had twenty-six events for the month, Schools Interventions Programs, Community Intervention, Social Media Outreach, and Anti-Domestic Violence Walk.

Schools Intervention Programs- The Department visited five schools and impacted one hundred and seventy students (170). There were ninety-four (94) girls and seventy-six (76) boys. Students were sensitized about domestic violence at their level for primary school students and Teenage dating violence at the secondary school level. Students were extremely interactive at all

sessions. The Department did encounter some difficulty with students who only speak Creole and have noted this as an opportunity to explore ways in which efforts can be made to make these interventions more accessible.

Community Interventions – There were ten (10) community intervention sessions to include, church service, Gender Pop-ups, (3) community walk-throughs (3) sensitization sessions (2), and **Scavenger Hunt**.

The Department's Social Media Outreach was a testament to the power of collaboration. In partnership with Radio Turks and Caicos (RTC), the Department hosted Five Minutes with Gender every Tuesday in October. These sessions featured key stakeholders from Social Development and Welfare, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution, and the Police SPPU, who shared their services to assist those affected by domestic violence. This collaborative effort underscored the shared responsibility in addressing this issue.

The Department's Facebook Live session was a resounding success, reaching approximately seven hundred (700) individuals virtually, with even more sharing the space to watch. This session, provided a platform for a survivor of Domestic Violence to share their stories, shedding light on the psychological consequences of abuse. The overwhelmingly positive response to this session was a testament to the effectiveness of the Department's awareness campaign.

Anti-Domestic Violence Walk- This activity saw the Department partnering with several government and private sector entities, including Safeguarding and Public Protection Unit (SPPU), the Judiciary, Victim and Witness Support Unit, Behavioral Health Services Department and the members of the general public. This collaborative effort was instrumental in organizing a successful walk, with all stakeholders and members of the public walking with plaque cards bearing anti-violence slogans.

### **Gender Sensitization Multimedia Campaign**

The Department of Gender Affairs completed two editions of the Gender Affairs “New Eyes” Magazine. The Magazines cover stories and articles which highlight the gender dynamics and landscape throughout the Turks and Caicos. Some of the topics highlighted include but are not

limited to Domestic Violence Month, Breast Cancer, and Cultural and Heritage just to name a few.

The campaign features short clips and educational resources on The Gender Agender. Also included in the campaign is a more significant presence on the family island (North, Middle, and South Caicos and Salt Cay) to ensure that the services and programs offered are accessible.

### **Gender Education Week**

The Department hosted its first Gender Education Week in September 2023. The presentations focused on the family Islands (Grand Turk, South Middle/ North Caicos). The topic centered around specific services offered by the Department and the various career opportunities and studies that are gender related.

The primary purpose was to educate students on the importance of gender, as it is a cross-cutting issue vital to social and economic growth and sustainable development. It was also to change harmful Social norms and stereotypes in education.

- **Over the past five years, what specific actions have you taken to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls?**

### **Women and girls living in remote and rural areas**

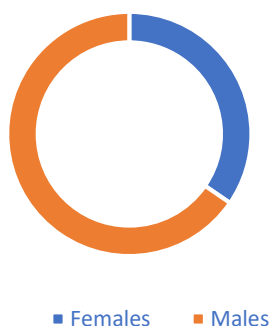
While the TCI may not have a traditional rural community, several family islands demonstrate remarkable resilience in the face of similar challenges. The islands of South Caicos, North Caicos, Middle Caicos, and Salt Cay, for instance, often operate without the luxury of hospitals, yet manage to provide essential healthcare services.

Despite the absence of hospitals on all islands, the government has established clinics that play a crucial role in addressing certain health issues. These clinics serve as a first line of defense, providing initial care before patients are airlifted or sailed to the hospitals in Grand Turk or Providenciales. Additionally, dental and specialist services, including pediatrics, are periodically brought to the islands, ensuring that healthcare needs are met.

### **Women and girls with disabilities**

The Department of Special Education Needs Services is committed to providing comprehensive support and resources to students with special needs and their families across the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI). To fulfill its mandate various special education programs and initiatives are implemented to enhance the educational experience and overall well-being of the special need's community. There are currently 75 females of 217 children registered with the Special Needs Registry. Eight (8) females out of 25 children are enrolled in overseas financial assistance programs.

### Portion of Females and Males Registered in Special Needs



The Department provides the following programmes to this marginalized group:

#### **Overseas Financial Assistance Program**

*Objective:* To provide financial support to students with severe disabilities residing abroad.

Details:

- Beneficiaries: 25 students
- Assistance Provided: \$1,000 per month per student

*Purpose:* To cover essential costs and ensure these students receive the care and education they need while residing overseas.

*Impact:* The financial assistance program significantly alleviates the economic burden on families, allowing them to focus on the well-being and development of their children.

#### **Monthly Parent Support Group Meetings**

*Objective:* To educate and support parents of special needs children across all islands in various aspects of care and management.

Details:

- Frequency: Monthly meetings
- Target Audience: Parents of special needs children on all islands
- Topics Covered:
  - Behavioral Management
  - Nutritional Guidance
  - Other relevant topics to improve parenting skills and knowledge

Impact: These support group meetings provide a platform for parents to share experiences, gain valuable insights, and learn effective strategies that will better support their children's development.

### **Implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)**

Objective: To ensure all children in special education classrooms in public schools across TCI have tailored education plans.

**Training:** All special education teachers, whose role is crucial in the development and implementation of IEPs, will be trained.

Goal: Each child in special education classrooms will have an IEP to address their unique educational needs.

**Impact:** IEPs, by setting personalized goals, tracking progress, and ensuring appropriate support, pave the way for each child to thrive academically and socially, instilling hope and optimism in their lives.

### **Kindergarten Screening with Ages and Stages Questionnaire**

Objective: To screen incoming kindergarten students for developmental delays or concerns and connect them to necessary services.

**Training:** Kindergarten teachers are trained to use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire.

**Purpose:** The Ages and Stages Questionnaire is used by kindergarten teachers to conduct early identification and intervention for students with potential developmental delays. This involves a systematic process of observation, assessment, and referral to appropriate services.

**Impact:** The early and thorough screening process helps identify children needing special education services, providing a sense of confidence in the system's ability to address their developmental needs in a timely and practical manner.

### **Assessment Teams**

Objective: To provide comprehensive assessments for children requiring special education services.



2024 Assessments:

Audiology Assessments: 195 children assessed

Occupational, Behavioral, and Speech Assessments: 55 children assessed

Impact: These assessments help in accurately identifying the needs of each child, allowing for the best treatment and invention strategy.

**Women and girls living with HIV/AIDS**

The Turks and Caicos Islands Health and Wellness Foundation (TCHWF) formerly the TCI HIV/AIDS Foundation aims to promote access to quality health services, information, and education in the Turks and Caicos Islands. This means the need to “integrate HIV services and non-HIV services by increasing access to holistic and comprehensive health services needed for PLHIV and persons not living with HIV.” The TCHWF provides linkage to:

- a. The cultivation of youth empowerment and the development of life skills
- b. Health, hygiene, education, and wellness strategies tailored to the needs of young women
- c. Care and support services for survivors of domestic violence
- d. Mental health, psychosocial services, and recovery support services for persons with substance use disorders.
- e. Equitable access to HIV care and support services, addressing disparities.

The Table below reveals assistance provided by the Turks and Caicos Islands Wellness Foundation for the period 2021 to 2023.

Year	Projects for marginalized women and young gi	Annual Expense Incurred	No. of persons assisted
2021	Transportation	\$ 2,400.00	27
	Medical Support	\$ 7,190.00	7
	Nutritional	\$ 3,000.00	5
2022	Transportation	\$ 2,400.00	20
	Medical Support	\$ 6,200.00	8
	Nutritional	\$ 3,000.00	5
2023	Transportation	\$ 2,400.00	18
	Medical Support	\$ 8,400.00	6
	Nutritional	\$ 3,000.00	5

To achieve these linkages, the Foundation has held discussions with various NGOs and government organizations to provide the necessary services and support to persons with varying needs and has provided transportation services to and from their homes to medical facilities and the Edward Garland Youth Centre to engage in development and skills-building workshops to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls living in remote areas.

To prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls living with HIV, TCHWF provides medical, nutritional, and psychosocial support when required. Women who are not working are provided with financial support to assist them over a period. The Girl Child who is infected or affected by HIV is provided with support through the Edward Garland Youth Center. TCHWF provides necessary education, advocacy, and a haven for people with diverse sexual orientations or sexual characteristics. The Foundation advocates for access and utilization of condoms and lubricants.

The Table below shows the services for persons living with HIV for persons with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, or sex characteristics.

Year	People with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, or sex characteristics.	Annual Expense Incurred	No. of persons assisted
2021	Psychosocial Support		2
	Medical Support	\$ 1,080.00	2
	Nutritional	\$ 1,200.00	2
2022	Psychosocial Support		1
	Medical Support	\$ 540.00	1
	Nutritional	\$ 600.00	1
2023	Psychosocial Support		2
	Medical Support	\$ 585.00	1
	Nutritional	\$ 600.00	1

**Migrant women and girls**

The Turks and Caicos receive an overwhelming number of migrant women annually most of whom are fleeing from Haiti due to hardship and abuse. Those seeking a better life abroad include unaccompanied and separated children, victims of trafficking, and survivors of gender-based violence.

Although most of the immigrants are usually males, in 2022, the TCI had an unprecedented number of immigrants, approximately three hundred (300). Once these women are identified, they are given a physical examination and then taken to the government detention centre, where they are provided with meals, hygiene products, and shelter. They are then processed for repatriation back to Haiti. Some women are allowed to file for asylum. Children are provided with the same courtesies; however, once they are identified, the Social Development Department is notified, and they see to child safety.

The Background module of the Turks and Caicos Islands MICS, 2019-2020 asked respondents to the Individual Questionnaire for Women and Men how long they have been continuously living in the current residence and, if they were not living there since birth, the name of the region they lived in before moving to their current place of residence. Tables SR.7.1W and 7.1.M present the percentage of women and men who have changed residences according to the time since the last move. They also compare the place of residence of each individual at the time of the survey with that of the last place of residence. It reveals that the women from another country are the poorest women in the TCI.

<b>Table SR.7.1W: Migratory status of women</b>															
Percent distribution of women age 15-49 years by migratory status and years since last migration, and percent distribution of women who migrated, by type and place of last residence, Turks and Caicos Islands MICS, 2019-2020															
	Years since most recent migration					Total	Number of women	Grand Turk	Most recent migration was from:					Total	Number of women who ever migrated
	Never migrated	Less than one year	1-4 years	5-9 years	10 years or more				NCMCSCSC	Providenciales	Outside TCI	Missing			
<b>Total</b>	26.6	2.6	14.8	15.0	41.1	100.0	824	3.6	4.8	4.2	87.0	0.4	100.0	605	
<b>Region</b>															
Grand Turk	29.9	5.7	25.0	10.5	28.9	100.0	73	2.1	4.1	13.3	80.5	0.0	100.0	51	
NCMCSCSC	21.0	3.7	18.4	7.8	49.1	100.0	30	1.2	13.4	16.8	67.3	1.3	100.0	24	
Providenciales	26.4	2.3	13.6	15.7	42.0	100.0	721	3.8	4.5	2.8	88.5	0.5	100.0	530	
<b>Age</b>															
15-19	65.2	5.7	13.7	8.1	7.3	100.0	54	(2.0)	(8.5)	(18.7)	(70.8)	(0.0)	100.0	19	
15-17	(76.8)	(0.0)	(5.1)	(8.1)	(10.1)	100.0	28	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	100.0	7	
18-19	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	100.0	26	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	100.0	12	
20-24	44.5	5.7	23.1	11.7	15.1	100.0	110	(13.4)	(2.2)	(11.0)	(69.4)	(3.9)	100.0	61	
25-29	28.2	7.2	12.9	13.6	38.0	100.0	94	0.8	5.1	5.9	88.2	0.0	100.0	68	
30-34	23.6	2.0	23.8	14.4	36.2	100.0	148	4.6	0.2	3.7	91.4	0.0	100.0	113	
35-39	13.2	0.2	11.3	23.4	51.9	100.0	181	1.3	9.0	1.7	87.8	0.2	100.0	157	
40-44	26.7	0.7	9.5	15.4	47.7	100.0	122	3.1	0.9	2.3	93.8	0.0	100.0	89	
45-49	14.3	1.0	8.2	9.4	67.1	100.0	114	2.5	7.7	2.3	87.5	0.0	100.0	97	
<b>Education</b>															
Lower secondary or less	5.3	1.1	4.9	21.6	67.1	100.0	35	(1.6)	(16.6)	(0.0)	(81.8)	(0.0)	100.0	33	
Upper secondary	20.6	3.1	16.3	17.3	42.7	100.0	400	2.7	4.0	5.0	88.2	0.1	100.0	317	
Higher	34.6	2.2	14.1	12.0	37.2	100.0	389	4.9	4.3	3.8	86.1	0.9	100.0	255	
<b>Marital status<sup>A</sup></b>															
Ever married/in union/in a visiting relationship	22.2	1.4	15.3	16.6	44.5	100.0	649	3.1	4.0	2.5	89.9	0.5	100.0	505	
Never married/in union/in a visiting relationship	42.5	7.0	12.8	9.0	28.6	100.0	174	5.7	8.9	13.1	72.3	0.0	100.0	100	
Missing	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	100.0	2	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	100.0	1	
<b>Ethnicity of household head</b>															
Black/Negro/African	30.4	2.3	15.5	13.8	37.9	100.0	706	4.3	5.9	5.2	84.0	0.5	100.0	492	
Other	3.5	4.5	10.3	21.7	60.0	100.0	118	0.3	0.0	0.0	99.7	0.0	100.0	114	

**Table SR.7.1W: Migratory status of women**

Percent distribution of women age 15-49 years by migratory status and years since last migration, and percent distribution of women who migrated, by type and place of last residence, Turks and Caicos Islands MICS, 2019-2020

	Years since most recent migration					Total	Number of women	Most recent migration was from:					Total	Number of women who ever migrated
	Never migrated	Less than one year	1-4 years	5-9 years	10 years or more			Grand Turk	NCMCS CSC	Providenciales	Outside TCI	Missing		
<b>Wealth index quintile</b>														
Poorest	6.2	5.1	21.8	28.3	38.6	100.0	162	2.1	4.0	0.1	93.7	0.0	100.0	152
Second	24.2	3.1	17.1	11.2	44.3	100.0	171	1.5	2.5	4.8	91.0	0.2	100.0	129
Middle	39.2	1.2	12.9	13.3	33.4	100.0	163	5.3	4.9	4.5	82.8	2.4	100.0	99
Fourth	24.4	2.2	13.2	11.8	48.5	100.0	179	3.4	6.9	3.9	85.8	0.0	100.0	135
Richest	40.0	1.5	8.4	10.4	39.7	100.0	150	7.3	6.4	10.2	76.2	0.0	100.0	90

<sup>a</sup>The category of "Don't know/Missing" in the background characteristic of "Marital status" has been suppressed from the table due to small number of unweighted cases.

( ) Figures that are based on 25-49 unweighted cases

(\*) Figures that are based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases

- **Over the past five years, how has the confluence of different crises affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what measures have you taken to prevent their negative impact on progress for women and girls?**

### **Covid-19 and other pandemics**

Relative to its population size, COVID-19 has had a profound impact on the Turks and Caicos Islands. Since the first confirmed case was reported the 23 March 2020, in total there have been 6,448 confirmed cases in Turks and Caicos as of 23 November 2022, with most of the reported cases in Providenciales (Covid-19 Cases: 5212; Deaths: 24) and Grand Turk (Covid-19 Cases: 929; Deaths: 11), and the Covid-19 vaccination coverage for Turks and Caicos Islands stands at 87.8%.

Given the significant reliance on the tourism sector, the economic livelihoods of many were adversely impacted by the onset of COVID-19. Food security, significant rises in the cost of living, as well as increasing unpaid care work (especially for women), were experienced by many. In August 2020, TCI was the country whose Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was most impacted by COVID-19, losing more than 9.2% due to the halt in Tourism. In 2021, border closures between 23 March- 22 July 2020 due to COVID-19 cost. The Turks and Caicos Islands have approximately USD 22 million and estimated GDP losses of 37.8%. Overall, there is a lack of sex-disaggregated data available to ascertain the full scale of the impact of COVID-19 on men versus women.

Like the rest of the world, the Turks and Caicos Islands were deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This global health crisis, which also posed significant social and economic threats, created highly challenging situations. In 2020, the Turks and Caicos Islands ranked 31<sup>st</sup> in the Region of the Americas regarding the number of deaths from COVID-19 and 42<sup>nd</sup> in 2021. The unfolding situation led to school closures, job losses in the heavily tourism-reliant economies, heightened food insecurity, importation, and overburdening of already challenged government systems. However, it is important to note that these challenges were not faced alone. The islands, in a collective effort, managed to navigate through these difficult times.

The Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated the fragility of the global economy to unforeseen disruption. The pandemic caused significant losses of revenue from the tourism industry which is one of the country's largest employers of women. This therefore caused lasting economic, social, and environmental impacts to women's ability to provide for themselves and their families. The tourism industry has been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 due to global travel restrictions. In the TCI, women lost income due to the closure of hotels and restaurants during the COVID-19 pandemic because they fill jobs that are easily laid off in the absence of customers.

There are also more women working in the domestic workers' industry, which was heavily affected by the pandemic. This meant they had to stay home and not be paid. This led to an increase in unpaid labour for women across the TCI. During the pandemic, women with school-age children and the elderly or disabled in the household was not associated with the probability of remaining employed. As pandemic-related job losses persisted, caregiving remained a more relevant factor in women's unemployment than men.

Job losses among females not only widen economic gender gaps but can exacerbate other household imbalances by reducing women's empowerment, lessening their household bargaining power, and exacerbating intimate partner violence.

The Pandemic also saw an increase in the cases of Domestic abuse, which mainly affected women. Most of this was not reported, as the woman had nowhere else to go.

To protect the people of the TCI, the government partnered with The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) out of the UK to support a recovery from COVID-19 that is economically, socially, and environmentally robust through the development of skills that create sustainable livelihood opportunities and highlight long-term sustainable investment options.

The Government partnered with UNICEF to provide for children affected by the effects of the pandemic.

They provide the following for child protection:

- Provide group-based education relating to psychological and social needs to frontline workers with children and their families (teachers, health workers, social workers, hotline workers, community workers)

- Support policymakers/CSOs with best-practice Child Protection Guidance
- **Over the next five years, what are the priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies, and/or programmes?**

### **Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security**

The realm of agriculture in the TCI aims to assist persons out of poverty. The Government has spearheaded several notable initiatives aimed at enhancing the sector's productivity and resilience. Among the highlights is the successful launch of the Agro-Grant Incentive Program, Duty-free Concessions and "Business in a Box" initiatives.

#### **Agro-Grant Incentive Program**

The Department of Agriculture administers an Agro-Grant incentive program for registered farmers. The DOA and Invest Turks and Caicos (Invest TCI) manage and monitor the grant program. The grant allows a farmer to access up to \$20,000 in cash grant. The grant can be used for farm improvement, starting a farm, and hurricane damage compensation. The DOA, jointly with Invest TCI, processed and approved fourteen (14) Agro-Grant applications in the year 2023. The grants were used for various agriculture purposes such as hydroponics start-up, layer production, solar systems, land preparation, Wells drilling, irrigation installation, and more.

#### **Duty-free Concessions**

Registered farmers benefited from duty-free concessions on items to be used for agriculture purposes.

#### **Business in a Box Program**

During year 2023, the DOA launched a program called "Business in a Box". The program targeted Layer and hydroponic crop production. The program secured Ten (10) layer unit kits and Ten (10) hydroponic kits to give selected individuals at the end of the program. Trainings were held in Providenciales and Grand Turk as a pilot phase in both layer (Egg) production and hydroponic crop production. A business development session was also done on both islands to equip

participants with the necessary business knowledge to create their own business from what they have learnt. A selection criterion was developed which was used to select individuals after the training session were completed. The idea is for participants to acquire the knowledge through our trainings to properly grow layer chickens for eggs or grow crops hydroponically on a small scale with the possibility of turning it into a small business. The program also equipped the participants with a business mindset to expand into a larger commercialized agriculture business. Phase two (2) will commence in 2024. This assisted women and girls as they did not have to complete much manual labour to have fresh foods.

### **Eliminating violence against women and girls**

The Department of Gender Affairs will launch a Public Education Campaign, in keeping with the implementation of the Gender Equality Policy Action Plan 2024-2029. The campaign is being implemented in partnership with Regional and local bodies. It is expected to address the following focal areas using the main strategies in the Table below:

<b>Focus</b>	<b>Main Strategies</b>
<b>National Awareness and Capacity Building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and Awareness</li> <li>• Capacity Strengthening</li> </ul>
<b>Strengthening national laws, policies and institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing the legal and policy framework</li> <li>• Strengthening the collection, analysis and use of gender statistics and data</li> <li>• Enhancing the Gender architecture and other institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Responding to Gender-Based Violence, Sexual Harassment and Trafficking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing the essential services and the referral pathway of victims and survivors of GBV</li> <li>• Supporting persons within the cycle of violence</li> </ul>
<b>Decent Work and Economic Empowerment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased support to women and girls in emerging sectors</li> <li>• Enhance social protection mechanisms for the most vulnerable groups</li> </ul>
<b>Climate Change and Disaster Risk Resilience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt gender-responsive decision-making and governance systems.</li> <li>• Enable targeted action to build the resilience of women and girls</li> </ul>



This will be done through an International development partnership, and multisectoral approach across government, the private sector, and civil society groups.

The Domestic Violence Protocol- The Document will be implemented with the assistance of key stakeholders across the Health, Social, Justice, and Police sectors. This will include training of stakeholders and the development of SOPs to assist each department with their various responsibilities.

- Access to affordable quality health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights
- Political participation and representation
- Gender-responsive social protection (e.g. universal health coverage, cash transfers, pensions)
- Promoting gender equality as part of environmental sustainability, climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies

### **Gender-responsive budgeting**

The Government will continue with robust introduction and implementation of the Gender-responsive and Green budget across the government. This will continue to be rolled out through the Ministry of Finance, budget department. to ensure that the collection and allocation of public resources are carried out in ways that are effective and contribute to advancing GEWE.

TCI has been working on budget reforms with the support of the IMF through the Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Centre (CARTAC) for several years. In 2022, building on a platform of performance informed multi-year program budgeting, TCI started piloting green and gender budgeting. Central to TCI's approach has been the simultaneous focus on implementing gender budgeting.

The synergies include having a single budget circular, forms, and performance framework encompassing both elements. Budget programs have been enhanced by recognizing and understanding the linkages between gender and climate change (including the gender gaps that are exacerbated by climate change) to deliver more equitable and effective results. A common approach to tagging climate and gender in the budget process has been conceptualized.

In pursuing this integrated approach, TCI has benefited from a strong enabling environment for climate and gender PFM. This includes an existing performance framework integrated into the

budget and a rolling forward estimates approach to multi-year budgeting. Most importantly, the Cabinet is committed to reforms in this area.

This is not to ignore the challenges of mainstreaming climate and gender. Budget entities do not immediately recognize the potential impacts of their programs on gender gaps. There is an ongoing need for awareness building and training. Similarly, there remains a lack of sex-disaggregated data to support in-depth analysis, particularly of gender impacts. This approach is being implemented by coordinating and fostering the relationship between ministries of finance and the specialized ministries departments and agencies responsible for gender.

### **Gender-responsive disaster risk prevention, reduction, and resilience building**

TCI has adopted a Disaster Risk Management Framework that aligns with the Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) structure, which is being promoted as part of the conceptual framework for Disaster Risk Management at the regional level. TCI is also a member of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), which coordinates Disaster Risk Management (DRM) efforts among its 19 Participating States (PSs) in the Caribbean region. Since 2001, CDEMA has promoted Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) to mitigate risk and loss from natural or technological hazards, focusing on prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. CDEMA requires each member state, including TCI, to develop a multi-year CDM Country Work Programme (CWP) which aligns national priorities with regional and international goals related to climate change, sustainable development, and disaster risk reduction.

Hazard Mapping and Assessment for flood and wind hazards have been conducted, including a Hazard and Vulnerability Analysis (HVA) in 2006 which resulted in the production of storm surge inundation maps and the identified critical infrastructure. Since 2009, Risk Reduction efforts have been mainly driven by the Regional Risk Reduction Initiative (R31) Project, funded by the European Commission through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). R31 seeks to enhance the islands' resilience by establishing regional infrastructure programmes, policies, and protocols to strengthen their capacity to predict and prepare for natural hazards.

Therefore, the government will address the gaps and strengthen the Disaster Management Legislative Framework (Ordinance, 2018). The existing legislative framework for disaster risk

reduction and management (DRR/DRM) in TCI was established in 2016 and revised in 2018. This Ordinance requires amendments to align with international agreements such as the Sendai Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals. Key gaps include the need for the strengthening/inclusion of climate-smart legislation provisions as it can be viewed as being skewed on hurricanes; inadequate provisions for addressing gender considerations; the need for greater clarity on some DRM roles and responsibilities; and the need for clear guidelines for international disaster assistance.

# SECTION 3



## Beijing+25



### **PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN**

This section covers progress across the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action. To facilitate the analysis, the 12 critical areas of concern have been clustered into six overarching dimensions that highlight the alignment of the BPfA with the 2030 Agenda. This approach is aimed at facilitating reflections about the implementation of both frameworks in a mutually reinforcing manner to accelerate progress for all women and girls.

#### **Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work**

##### **Critical areas of concern:**

- A. Women and poverty
- F. Women and the economy
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child



- **Over the past five years, what actions has your country taken to advance gender equality in the world of work (including informal and non-standard employment as well as entrepreneurship)?**

**Promotions and Advocacy: spread awareness of gender stereotypes within the workforce by targeting younger audiences and collaborating with industry professionals.**

Since February 2022 TCICC/TVET has participated in career education programmes across the country to raise awareness of gender stereotypes in unconventional career paths. TCICC/TVET has collaborated with companies within the Beauty Sector to visit young children and teens at public schools to advise them on non-traditional career choices and the skills required to enter the field. Each cohort consisted of a near even balance of girls and boys. A key aim of the presentation was to address common misconceptions of gender biases within the field. While boys first engaged with hesitation, by the end of the session, interest began to change positively. This was due to illustrations of careers within the makeup artistry such as: film and special effects where boys related to depictions of Spiderman, Hulk and other favourite characters.

Students were then given an assignment to create their own pieces and present their work to each other. As a result, the boys had shown an increased openness to the vast options they can choose from helping to eradicate gender stereotypes within the beauty industry. In addition to this, students were informed on how TVET positions them to have access to wider career opportunities. To remain effective, it is important that the TVET regularly engages with industry to promote awareness and fight common misconceptions of gender starting from primary and secondary education. With consistency, this action will advance gender equality in the world of work.

**Table 1: Overview of TVET’s Participation in Spreading Awareness Events across the Young Population**

Location	Industry Focus	Event Attended	Total Boys	Total Girls	Average Age Range (yrs)
<b>Thelma Lightbourne Primary School</b>	Makeup Artist, Nail Technician	Social Enrichment Afterschool Programme (SEAP)	10	9	8-10+
<b>Enid Capron Primary School</b>	Makeup Artist, Nail Technician	Career Exposition	15-20+	15-20+	8-10+

<b>The Palms Resort</b>	Makeup Artist, Nail Technician	High School Career Symposium	50+	50+	13-18+
-------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------	-----	-----	--------

The Construction industry within the country for example despite being historically male-dominated, must diversify and become more inclusive to flourish. The Community College understands that this response to change entails tackling gender stereotypes and biases, ensuring equal access to training and career advancement opportunities, and implementing family-friendly policies and flexible work arrangements. By promoting diversity and fostering an inclusive environment, the construction industry can attract a broader range of talent and expertise, driving innovation and growth in the future.

**Strengthened/enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation**

The Public Service Ordinance speaks to fair recruitment based on one's qualifications and not sex. Section 36 of the Ordinance states “Recruitment, appointments, and promotions in the public service are to be made based on merit, performance, impartiality and the highest standards of integrity and where appropriate, consideration may be given to seniority and experience.”

(2) For subsection (1), a decision relating to engagement or promotion is based on merit where an assessment for that purpose—

- i. is made of the relative suitability of the candidates for the duties, using a competitive selection process;
- ii. is based on the relationship between the candidates’ work-related qualities and the work-related qualities genuinely required for the duties;
- iii. focuses on the relative capacity of the candidates to achieve outcomes related to the duties; and
- iv. is the primary consideration in making the decision.”

The ordinance goes against sex discrimination as it does not allow positive discrimination in favor of one sex. Therefore, across government, an employer is not to insist on only recruiting or promoting women to a particular job because women have previously been discriminated against

when applying for that role. Rather all post is based on one's qualifications and interviews conducted.

### **Taken measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace**

Some acts of violence which cause physical injury amount to a criminal offence (for example assault, wounding) and may be prosecuted under the Offences against the Person Ordinance and the common law.

The Turks and Caicos Islands do not have legislation that specifically deals with sexual harassment. However, the common law can be used to provide remedies to persons who are victims of sexual harassment in the workplace by reliance on the law of torts (duty of care) and the law of contract (breach of implied trust/constructive dismissal).

According to the 2019 MICS survey sexual harassment affects women at a higher level than men. Discrimination can impede individuals from accessing opportunities and services in a fair and equal manner. It also impedes the work environment for women. Sexual harassment is addressed in the Staff Ordinance, but the Government recognized that based on the MICS report a specific legislation needs to be developed. See the findings for women and men below.

**Table EQ.3.1W: Discrimination and harassment (women)**

Percentage of women age 15-49 years who in the past 12 months have felt discriminated against or harassed and those who have not felt discriminated against or harassed, Turks and Caicos Islands MICS, 2019-2020

	Percentage of women who in the last 12 months have felt discriminated against or harassed on the basis of:								Percentage of women who have not felt discriminated against or harassed in the last 12 months	Number of women
	Ethnic or immigration origin	Gender	Sexual orientation	Age	Religion or belief	Disability	Other reason	Any reason <sup>1</sup>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>79.2</b>	<b>824</b>
<b>Region</b>										
Grand Turk	16.2	2.7	0.2	1.6	3.1	0.9	3.0	20.3	79.7	73
NCMCS CSC	10.4	2.3	2.0	2.2	6.0	0.8	1.3	21.2	78.8	30
Providenciales	12.8	4.2	1.3	2.2	2.3	1.4	3.9	20.9	79.1	721
<b>Age</b>										
15-19	29.7	8.6	3.1	2.3	10.2	0.0	15.3	51.9	48.1	54
15-17	(34.9)	(11.1)	(5.9)	(0.0)	(1.4)	(0.0)	(17.2)	(64.7)	(35.3)	28
18-19	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	26
20-24	3.9	5.0	0.7	4.2	4.1	0.5	2.8	16.1	83.9	110
25-29	19.1	3.7	2.1	5.2	0.0	1.1	0.3	24.3	75.7	94
30-34	14.7	5.6	1.7	1.9	3.6	0.1	3.5	21.0	79.0	148
35-39	11.0	1.6	1.8	1.7	1.8	4.3	3.5	19.7	80.3	181
40-44	9.5	3.6	0.0	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.6	13.5	86.5	122
45-49	13.3	3.2	0.0	0.3	1.8	0.6	5.8	17.2	82.8	114
<b>Education</b>										
Lower secondary or less	11.6	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	6.8	12.4	87.6	35
Upper secondary	15.5	4.4	1.5	2.0	2.3	2.1	3.8	23.3	76.7	400
Higher	10.5	3.6	1.1	2.5	2.9	0.6	3.3	19.0	81.0	389
<b>Ethnicity of household head</b>										
Black/Negro/African	11.3	4.0	1.4	2.4	2.9	1.3	4.0	20.1	79.9	706
Other	23.2	3.8	0.3	0.5	0.3	1.2	2.1	25.5	74.5	118
<b>Wealth index quintile</b>										
Poorest	12.4	1.4	1.0	0.6	0.7	3.4	0.1	17.3	82.7	162
Second	14.2	5.4	2.6	6.1	3.6	1.7	5.8	27.8	72.2	171
Middle	12.5	2.3	0.5	2.1	2.4	0.8	5.7	18.8	81.2	163
Fourth	10.5	4.5	1.8	1.4	4.4	0.3	2.5	17.0	83.0	179
Richest	15.5	6.4	0.1	0.4	1.1	0.4	4.5	23.5	76.5	150

<sup>1</sup> MICS indicator EQ.7 - Discrimination; SDG Indicators 10.3.1 & 16.b.1

( ) Figures are based on 25-49 unweighted cases

(\*) Figures are based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases

AI



**Table EQ.3.1M: Discrimination and harassment (men)**

Percentage of men age 15–49 years who in the past 12 months have felt discriminated against or harassed and those who have not felt discriminated against or harassed, Turks and Caicos Islands MICS, 2019–2020

	Percentage of men who in the last 12 months have felt discriminated against or harassed on the basis of:								Percentage of men who have not felt discriminated against or harassed in the last 12 months	Number of men
	Ethnic or immigration origin	Gender	Sexual orientation	Age	Religion or belief	Disability	Other reason	Any reason <sup>1</sup>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>93.5</b>	<b>364</b>
<b>Region</b>										
Grand Turk	15.4	1.9	0.0	5.1	6.6	1.3	5.8	27.3	72.7	30
NCMCS CSC	2.2	1.6	2.3	2.2	0.0	1.8	1.0	8.0	92.0	16
Providenciales	2.2	0.0	0.1	1.0	0.3	0.1	0.7	4.4	95.6	317
<b>Age</b>										
15-19	(2.7)	(0.0)	(0.4)	(0.0)	(3.3)	(0.3)	(4.8)	(8.7)	(91.3)	40
15-17	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	17
18-19	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	23
20-24	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(5.1)	(2.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(5.1)	(94.9)	27
25-29	(0.2)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(1.2)	(2.0)	(3.4)	(96.6)	33
30-34	6.3	0.4	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	6.9	93.1	68
35-39	4.2	0.0	0.0	6.3	2.1	0.0	0.1	12.3	87.7	50
40-44	2.3	0.6	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.8	4.3	95.7	90
45-49	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	1.1	4.8	95.2	56
<b>Education</b>										
Lower secondary or less	(0.6)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(5.2)	(5.7)	(94.3)	28
Upper secondary	1.9	0.1	0.2	1.7	0.1	0.4	0.1	4.0	96.0	202
Higher	6.0	0.4	0.3	1.2	2.2	0.3	1.8	10.3	89.7	134
<b>Ethnicity of household head</b>										
Black/Negro/African	3.0	0.3	0.2	1.5	0.6	0.3	1.2	6.2	93.8	327
Other	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	8.8	91.2	37
<b>Wealth index quintile</b>										
Poorest	3.2	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.2	4.1	95.9	77
Second	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	1.4	98.6	82
Middle	5.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	7.3	92.7	75
Fourth	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.9	3.9	0.0	1.1	8.6	91.4	61
Richest	2.6	0.6	0.6	5.6	0.0	1.2	2.5	12.2	87.8	69
<sup>1</sup> MICS indicator EQ.7 - Discrimination; SDG Indicators 10.3.1 & 16.b.1										
( ) Figures that are based on 25–49 unweighted cases										
(*) Figures that are based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases										

Although the findings were not specific to the workplace, most of the respondent's experiences were based on experience outside of the home and in a public setting. Women in all areas reported a higher level of harassment than men.

## **Strengthened land rights and tenure security**

Land in the TCI is registered under the Registered Land Ordinance, legislation that provides for a Torrens Registered Land system. This system empowers residents by allowing them to rely on the Register (maintained at Her Majesty's Land Registry in Grand Turk) for details of most interests affecting the property. It eliminates the need to investigate the prior title, providing a sense of security. The entries on the Register demonstrate, among other things, the identity of the owner of the property and any defects that encumber a property. The system is similar to the one in England & Wales, save that no residual unregistered land exists. There is no restriction on holding land in the TCI, for women or men.

There are numerous residents in the TCI many of whom are women living on land that they have no right to and so are called squatters. These parcels of land usually have poor structural quality and lack the most basic amenities and services such as water, electricity, roads, stormwater drains, and sanitation among other things. This is a health risk to women and children as they are normally at a greater risk of developing infections. The lack of proper sanitation facilities can also impact women's safety, which can leave them vulnerable to sexual harassment, and assault.

The government is actively addressing these issues through the establishment of the Informal Settlement Unit. The Turks and Caicos Islands Informal Settlements Unit (ISU) is a government organization dedicated to finding solutions for the mounting challenges within and surrounding informal settlements across the TCI. Their primary objective is to regularize the status of individuals, potentially granting many women and men the opportunity to own land.

- **In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, promote work-life and family balance and strengthen the rights of paid care workers?**

The unemployment rate in 2020 was 11% for the total population. Disaggregated by sex, the rate was 14.96% for women and 9.13% for men. The literacy rate was 100% for men and 99.9% for women. The Turks and Caicos Islands presented a gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$ 20,700 and low poverty levels for 2020. In addition, 21.6% of the population was below the national

poverty line in 2020 The percentage of the population with an income of less than US\$ 1.90 per day was above the regional average of 3%.<sup>6</sup>

### **Unpaid care work**

The Vision 2040 document outlines that Social protection measures are also integrated into Turks and Caicos social policies in areas such as education, health, and housing, and two key areas for social protection include programmes related to 'the direct transfer of resources to individuals and that largely target persons who do not have the physical capacity or social support systems to provide for themselves'. Within Turks and Caicos, the Turks and Caicos Islands National Insurance Board is the 'sole provider of social insurance benefits to persons who are gainfully employed within the Turks and Caicos Islands between the ages of 16 and 65', and enrollment is mandatory, both for the National Insurance Board and the National Health Insurance Plan (NHIP) for all persons employed or residing in Turks and Caicos Islands (small co-payments are required for services).

The National Insurance Board provides vital assistance and benefits to many women including: 'maternity benefits, widow's pensions, retirement pensions, sickness benefits, employment injury benefits, old age pensions, invalidity pensions and funeral grant and the provision for payment of benefits to women who are not legally married but who are living in common-law relationships. For undocumented persons residing in Turks and Caicos Island, accessing such services without gainful employment and residency permits presents a significant challenge. Reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals Social Indicators for Turks and Caicos Islands showed that 1.2.1 % of mothers with newborns receiving maternity cash benefits was 57.5%. Data on the status of unpaid care work in Turks and Caicos Island is unavailable.

### **Expanded childcare services or made existing services more affordable**

The Social Enrichment Academic Afterschool Programme (SEAP) is run by the government through the Department of Education. The initiative is crafted to offer public school students a structured and enjoyable post-school experience, this program encourages continued learning and

---

<sup>6</sup> (<https://hia.paho.org/en/countries-22/turks-caicos-profile>)

exploration for children of various ages. It aims to provide busy parents seeking the best for their children beyond the regular school day. Students participate in several activities centred around sports, music, and arts: culture, agriculture, and much more.

The Ministry also assists parents in having their children in the nursery. Women have had to stay at home or take their children to work as they were unable to afford child care. This assists them to care for their children. These programmes are being funded with a budget of \$4 million annually.

### **National Daycare Program**

This Program will only be available to Belonger families in the Turks and Caicos with children – 3 years old – who have an annual income below \$25,000 or the minimum wage.

Unemployed parents who can show evidence of being registered with the Labour Department will also qualify. Foster care cases and wards of the state and the children of teachers will also benefit.

The government maintained that legislative amendments would ensure that the Centres were up to par and care was standardized nationwide. In addition, a course to qualify daycare operators and caregivers is being offered by the TCI Community College, also to standardize care.

The Ministry of Education launched two groundbreaking initiatives to enhance the educational landscape.

### **The Social Enrichment Academic Afterschool Program**

Open to all teachers and students of public schools across the islands, this Social Enrichment Academic Afterschool Program (SEAP) was initiated utilizing retired teachers to operate it, with an extra \$500 on paychecks as their incentive. This exciting program facilitated by a dedicated team of experienced ex-teachers provides students with a safe, productive and nurturing environment. Which engages them daily in a plethora of activities, services and clubs to develop their creative skills, soft skills and also to facilitate learning.

The program runs from Mondays to Thursdays weekly, and all facilitators are required to undertake a mandatory child safeguarding program before they can begin teaching. The program was introduced in September 2023.

### **The Early Start Daycare Assistance Program; Nurturing Early Learners**

This Program is designed to offer a strong foundation for young learners by providing access to high-quality daycare services ensuring their cognitive, social and emotional development. This is done through a network of accredited daycare providers. It is aimed at relieving the financial burden on parents enabling them to work and pursue personal growth while ensuring their children receive the best care and education.

### **Expanded support for older persons, persons with disabilities, and others needing intense forms of care**

Services for the Elderly are provided through government, the Private sector and civil society organizations.

A TCI-registered charity has started operations in North and Middle Caicos. The ‘Dignity Foundation TCI recently started operations to support and care for vulnerable Senior Citizens in North and Middle Caicos, enabling them to enjoy their remaining days in the comfort of their own home and surroundings.

It will encompass support and care for those persons diagnosed with a terminal illness who have opted not to pursue active curative medical interventions and who are considered close to ‘end-of-life’ and wish to spend their remaining days in their own home and environment.

Studies have shown that most people prefer to spend their remaining days in their familiar environment rather than in the hospital or even sometimes, as is occasionally the case, in unfamiliar countries away from friends and family.

Dignity Foundation TCI provides a regular home visitation service, and the opportunity for social gatherings and encourages communication for the elderly socially isolated to mix and socialize with their peer groups and families, advise on their well-being, and encourage increasing mobility

around the home and its environs enabling persons to continue living at home for as long as feasibly possible.

The elderly are also offered private financial advice and assistance. The HLB chartered accountants in the TCI also provide security for the elderly. elder care services, you get the help of a caring, honest, and knowledgeable professional. Someone on your team, looking out for your loved one's best interest.

Your loved ones get assistance with their daily finances and business duties and you are kept informed of every step we make. That way, you always know that your family member's needs are being met.

Whether your loved one is no longer entirely independent or simply needs extra help to enjoy their lives, you get help in any of the following areas:

- Reviewing and paying household bills, budgeting, and record keeping.
- Assistance with check writing and checkbook balancing.
- Making sure money is received, receipted, and deposited.
- Offering second opinions regarding household issues and unexpected situations.
- Handling day-to-day financial transactions such as home repairs, routine maintenance, and emergency medical expenses.
- Planning retirement account distributions and safeguarding against improper disbursements.
- Organizing and reviewing personal, financial, and legal documents to determine what needs to be addressed.
- Preparing an inventory of personal assets and investments.
- Identifying and planning their retirement income, needs, and goals.

In 2020 the TCI opened its first private home for the elderly. Homely Haven by Turks and Caicos Home Aid Care, is a private Geriatric nursing home here to service the TCI community. The home currently can house six clients but can go up to eight.

The Government also assists through the Social Development Department with the Home Help program. This service is designed to provide supplemental and domestic services to vulnerable persons who may not have immediate relatives to provide adequate care and protection, lack financial resources to access care, and are deemed unfit to work, as determined by a medical practitioner. This program targets abandoned and unsupported elders, who have no family support and whose monthly income is less than \$US 600.

### **Conducted campaigns or awareness-raising activities to encourage the participation of men and boys in unpaid care and domestic work**

The Department of Gender Affairs hosted a Men's Health Cookout on Governors Beach, highlighting that men's participation in domestic work is not only beneficial for their health but also a significant contribution to their families. This event was a powerful platform to empower men, demonstrating that their involvement in cooking can be a life-saving and fulfilling activity, instilling a sense of empowerment and motivation.

The Department promoted the event to men in a way that ensured that cooking could be a masculine activity and not a threat to the male identity. The activity is also presented as if it has always been a masculine activity, which is performed with a unique set of skills and knowledge, often referred to as 'manly know-how'. This 'manly know-how' includes techniques for grilling, smoking, and seasoning, which are traditionally associated with men's cooking and are rewarded with the confidence, the respect of peers, and the admiration of women.

Performed with creativity and on special occasions or under special circumstances, men's domestic cooking is put forward as an optional hobby and part of men's leisure time. On the other hand, everyday cooking, often portrayed as uninspired, tasteless, and dull, is represented foremost as women's responsibility

The Department over the past 2022-2023 has hosted the Daddy and Daughter Hair Love Competition.

This competition promoted positive father-child relationships that nurture the physical, emotional, and social development of children with their fathers. It also challenged common gender

stereotypes in the TCI as it encouraged men and women to share care responsibilities for their children. Additionally, significant evidence outlines that creating healthy bonding will create a secure attachment where children can learn that they are loved and supported.

The Department of Gender Affairs aims to increase awareness surrounding the responsibilities of a father and highlight the positive impact fatherly involvement has on children's growth and development. The event was promoted on various social media platforms.

The Department presents awards annually for the top-performing male/female students in non-traditional subject areas across all high schools in the Turks and Caicos Islands. This leads to the award of up to 5 awards annually. This encourages male students to break the stereotype of only pursuing traditional roles.

### **Virtual Men's Discussion - Understanding Gender Roles and Strengthening the Family Unit**

During the pandemic, a virtual men's discussion under the theme 'Understanding Gender Roles and Strengthening the Family Unit' provided a platform for men to redefine their roles within the family. This discussion, attended by experts, fathers, and community leaders, delved into the evolving concept of gender roles, particularly in the context of increased time spent at home during lockdowns. The event emphasized the importance of active participation in domestic responsibilities and nurturing relationships within the family, making men feel included and heard.

Highlights included personal testimonies from men who had successfully implemented changes in their daily lives, resulting in stronger family bonds and improved household dynamics. The event also facilitated the creation of a supportive community where men could

share experiences and challenges, promoting a culture of mutual support and continuous learning. This initiative not only addressed critical issues related to gender roles but also played a crucial role in strengthening family units during the challenging times of the pandemic.



- **In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce the gender digital divide?**

### **Mainstreamed gender perspectives in national digital policies**

The Turks and Caicos are guided by the Turks and Caicos Islands Telecommunication & Broadcasting Policy which addresses issues that are important to the development of broadcasting services for the islands. It regulates to ensure the following aspects to mainstream a gender perspective in its overarching policy:

- provide a broad range of services, specifically for the programming needs of children, women, youth, the disabled and the socially disadvantaged;
- be varied and comprehensive, providing a balance of information, enlightenment, and entertainment for men, women, and children of Turks and Caicos Islands Communication Policy for all ages and interests;
- include a significant amount of educational programming both curriculum-based and informal, on a wide range of social, political, and economic topics such as health, culture, gender issues, and youth development; and

The entity assigned to assist with this is the Telecommunication Commission. The achievement of these goals will be entrusted to a combination of public and private broadcasters in the Turks and Caicos Islands, with the implementation and regulation of the policy assigned to the Telecommunication Commission of the Turks and Caicos Islands. The Commission is charged with conducting the necessary public consultations on these issues, as they continue to regulate the various media under their jurisdiction.

### **Introduced or strengthened programmes to increase the digital literacy and skills of women and girls**

The Turks and Caicos Community College has expanded its STEM education over the period with its Faculty of Computers, Engineering, and Mathematics (CEM). They offer the following Bachelor of Science degrees: Information Technology and Management Information Systems (Grand Turk Campus).

Type of Degrees	Bachelor's Degrees	Associate Degrees	Certificate Courses
Areas offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information Technology (Grand Turk Campus)</li> <li>Management Information Systems (Grand Turk Campus)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Computer Studies (Both Campuses)</li> <li>Computer-Electronics Engineering Tech (Grand Turk Campus)</li> <li>Electrical Engineering Technology (Grand Turk Campus)</li> <li>Information Technology (Grand Turk Campus)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Computer Applications (Both Campuses)</li> <li>Electrical Engineering (Both Campuses)</li> </ul>

The Turks and Caicos Islands 2019-2020 MICS collected information on exposure to mass media and the use of computers and the Internet. Tables SR.9.3W present the use of ICT by women aged 15-49 years based on the information about whether they have ever used computers, mobile phones or the internet and during the last three months while tables SR.9.4W present the ICT skills of women and men age 15-49 years based on the information about whether they carried out computer-related activities in the last three months.

**Table SR.9.1W: Exposure to mass media (women)**

Percentage of women age 15-49 years who are exposed to specific mass media on a weekly basis, Turks and Caicos Islands MICS, 2019-2020

	Percentage of women who:			All three media at least once a week <sup>1</sup>	Any media at least once a week	Number of women
	Read a newspaper at least once a week	Listen to the radio at least once a week	Watch television at least once a week			
<b>Total</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>53.2</b>	<b>79.6</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>90.3</b>	<b>824</b>
<b>Region</b>						
Grand Turk	28.2	62.9	76.1	18.7	89.9	73
NCMCS CSC	21.3	53.7	86.7	11.7	89.6	30
Providenciales	28.8	52.2	79.7	13.4	90.3	721
<b>Age</b>						
15-19	6.9	55.9	77.0	1.4	85.9	54
15-17	(4.2)	(69.1)	(90.5)	(1.9)	(99.0)	28
18-19	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	26
20-24	32.7	37.6	82.6	9.2	88.4	110
25-29	24.4	50.7	74.6	16.4	78.7	94
30-34	29.3	56.3	73.9	15.1	88.1	148
35-39	23.6	49.1	83.5	10.6	94.0	181
40-44	34.6	72.1	83.5	20.3	97.6	122
45-49	38.2	51.7	79.2	18.6	92.8	114
<b>Education</b>						
Lower secondary or less	2.2	63.2	51.2	2.2	80.8	35
Upper secondary	22.1	53.1	78.4	10.7	88.1	400
Higher	37.4	52.5	83.5	18.1	93.3	389
<b>Ethnicity of household head</b>						
Black/Negro/African	27.4	54.9	78.5	13.0	90.4	706
Other	34.8	43.4	86.3	19.1	89.7	118
<b>Wealth index quintile</b>						
Poorest	13.8	55.5	62.7	6.7	81.4	162
Second	20.3	52.2	81.6	10.4	89.1	171
Middle	37.0	46.1	87.7	11.9	94.4	163
Fourth	32.8	52.4	74.5	17.2	89.3	179
Richest	39.2	60.8	92.9	23.5	97.8	150

<sup>1</sup> MICS indicator SR.3 - Exposure to mass media

( ) Figures that are based on 25-49 unweighted cases

(\*) Figures that are based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases

**Table SR.9.1W: Exposure to mass media (women)**

Percentage of women age 15-49 years who are exposed to specific mass media on a weekly basis, Turks and Caicos Islands MICS, 2019-2020

	Percentage of women who:			All three media at least once a week <sup>1</sup>	Any media at least once a week	Number of women
	Read a newspaper at least once a week	Listen to the radio at least once a week	Watch television at least once a week			
<b>Total</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>53.2</b>	<b>79.6</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>90.3</b>	<b>824</b>
<b>Region</b>						
Grand Turk	28.2	62.9	76.1	18.7	89.9	73
NCMCS CSC	21.3	53.7	86.7	11.7	89.6	30
Providenciales	28.8	52.2	79.7	13.4	90.3	721
<b>Age</b>						
15-19	6.9	55.9	77.0	1.4	85.9	54
15-17	(4.2)	(69.1)	(90.5)	(1.9)	(99.0)	28
18-19	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	26
20-24	32.7	37.6	82.6	9.2	88.4	110
25-29	24.4	50.7	74.6	16.4	78.7	94
30-34	29.3	56.3	73.9	15.1	88.1	148
35-39	23.6	49.1	83.5	10.6	94.0	181
40-44	34.6	72.1	83.5	20.3	97.6	122
45-49	38.2	51.7	79.2	18.6	92.8	114
<b>Education</b>						
Lower secondary or less	2.2	63.2	51.2	2.2	80.8	35
Upper secondary	22.1	53.1	78.4	10.7	88.1	400
Higher	37.4	52.5	83.5	18.1	93.3	389
<b>Ethnicity of household head</b>						
Black/Negro/African	27.4	54.9	78.5	13.0	90.4	706
Other	34.8	43.4	86.3	19.1	89.7	118
<b>Wealth index quintile</b>						
Poorest	13.8	55.5	62.7	6.7	81.4	162
Second	20.3	52.2	81.6	10.4	89.1	171
Middle	37.0	46.1	87.7	11.9	94.4	163
Fourth	32.8	52.4	74.5	17.2	89.3	179
Richest	39.2	60.8	92.9	23.5	97.8	150

<sup>1</sup> MICS indicator SR.3 - Exposure to mass media

( ) Figures that are based on 25-49 unweighted cases

(\*) Figures that are based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases

<b>Table SR.9.4W: ICT skills (women)</b>											
Percentage of women age 15-49 years who in the last 3 months have carried out computer related activities, Turks and Caicos Islands MICS, 2019-2020											
	Percentage of women who in the last 3 months:										Number of women
	Copied or moved a file or folder	Used a copy and paste tool to duplicate or move information within a document	Sent e-mail with attached file, such as a document, picture or video	Used a basic arithmetic formula in a spreadsheet	Connected and installed a new device, such as a modem, camera or printer	Found, downloaded, installed and configured software	Created an electronic presentation with presentation software, including text, images, sound, video or charts	Transferred a file between a computer and other device	Wrote a computer program in any programming language	Performed at least one of the nine listed computer related activities <sup>1,2</sup>	
<b>Total</b>	43.8	46.4	48.8	37.3	31.4	31.3	22.7	31.6	3.5	51.5	824
<b>Region</b>											
Grand Turk	55.1	59.9	60.7	44.1	25.1	25.5	29.7	53.9	3.8	67.4	73
NCMCSCSC	41.2	39.6	51.4	30.8	28.1	24.5	22.5	28.8	10.1	54.4	30
Providenciales	42.7	45.3	47.5	36.9	32.2	32.2	22.0	29.4	3.2	49.8	721
<b>Age</b>											
15-24 <sup>1</sup>	62.3	66.6	67.7	51.8	42.0	41.3	37.7	40.0	2.4	71.7	165
15-19	63.0	66.4	70.1	53.3	35.0	41.9	47.4	41.2	4.1	76.0	54
15-17	(88.8)	(91.6)	(85.6)	(73.0)	(42.7)	(49.1)	(61.2)	(50.6)	(6.6)	(95.9)	28
18-19	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	26
20-24	62.0	66.7	66.6	51.1	45.5	41.0	33.0	39.4	1.6	69.6	110
25-29	51.3	59.1	64.7	40.6	41.3	47.2	19.9	40.8	2.2	70.7	94
30-34	38.9	44.7	45.5	37.9	31.5	28.1	27.7	33.3	9.3	46.8	148
35-39	37.3	37.0	38.6	31.5	21.5	24.3	12.8	23.5	2.0	39.5	181
40-44	37.9	37.6	40.3	31.9	26.2	22.9	18.4	31.4	0.5	44.4	122
45-49	33.5	33.4	38.0	28.0	29.3	28.2	17.1	22.3	4.0	39.2	114
<b>Education</b>											
Lower secondary or less	15.9	16.4	20.7	6.5	10.3	16.8	9.5	20.4	0.9	21.8	35
Upper secondary	25.3	28.1	30.0	21.8	20.5	20.2	13.8	19.4	1.0	34.3	400
Higher	65.2	67.9	70.7	56.0	44.6	44.1	33.0	45.1	6.2	71.8	389
<b>Ethnicity of household head</b>											
Black/Negro/African	44.3	47.3	50.0	37.0	32.4	32.3	23.6	32.1	3.4	52.9	706
Other	40.6	41.3	41.6	39.3	25.6	25.5	17.3	28.1	3.6	43.1	118

## Taken measures to promote gender-responsive stem education

Girls in ICT is celebrated annually in the Turks and Caicos. This has been done over the past 5 years to encourage girls and young women to consider careers in ICT, an industry where they are traditionally underrepresented. The Department reached 4 high schools in 2023 and 8 high schools in 2024.

## Applied gender-responsive and human rights-based standards for data collection, use, sharing, archiving and deletion

The majority of the Country's data is collected through the Statistical Authority. The Data they collect is stored and not name-specific. Personal data is never published. The TCI has 22 gender-specific indicators that they collect through the Statistical Authority.

➤ **In the past five years, how has the macroeconomic and fiscal policy environment affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what macroeconomic policies has your country implemented in support of a more gender-equal economy?**

The impact of COVID-19 on the Turks and Caicos Islands was not just a crisis, but a severe and unprecedented economic catastrophe. The abrupt halt in tourism, coupled with a drastic fall in international oil prices and the enforcement of widespread curfews, dealt a severe blow to the Territory's economy. In response, the Government and Private sector swiftly implemented a range of measures to mitigate the effects.

As part of its commitment to food security and austerity measures, the government launched the innovative 'Business in a Box' initiative. This program, implemented in Grand Turk and other Family Islands, equips local entrepreneurs with the necessary tools and resources to thrive in the agricultural market. Additionally, the government has made significant strides in embracing technology, with the successful testing of an online platform for staff and importers in Providenciales.

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) is not alone in this endeavour. It is partnering with the TCI Government, Turks and Caicos National Trust, Invest Turks and Caicos, TCI Fishing Cooperative, and stakeholders from key sectors within the islands. This collaborative effort is aimed at supporting a recovery from COVID-19 that is economically, socially, and environmentally robust, through the development of skills that create sustainable livelihood opportunities and highlight long-term sustainable investment options.

The project identified new economic activities and opportunities for skills development that support the natural environment and deliver widespread benefits to communities across the TCI. Importantly, these activities were planned to ensure gender equality and to include marginal and vulnerable groups, demonstrating our commitment to leaving no one behind in our recovery efforts. The project's activities included:

- Establishment of a Community Hub led by an on-island Community Hub Coordinator, which will deliver key trainings and equip community members with the skills needed for

economically resilient and sustainable jobs. More information and updates on the Community Hub are available in the section below.

- Development of a Natural Capital Investment Plan which will demonstrate how financial investment can support people, nature, and the economy by signposting opportunities to sustainably generate income from the environment of TCI.
- Exploration of the potential reinstatement of the TCI Conservation Fund.

➤ **In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?**

**Supported women's entrepreneurship, access to markets, and business development activities**

The Department of Trade, Industry, and Fair Competition (DTIFC) is responsible for facilitating the growth and improvement of trade and business in the Turks and Caicos Islands. Our mandate is centred around six (6) pillars:

1. Trade Negotiations
2. Trade Promotion
3. Trade Facilitation
4. Trade-Related Technical Assistance
5. Trade-Policy Legislation
6. Trade Analysis

DTIFC work activities include assisting with the development of a legislative framework to support the local trade and business community; facilitating trade and investment opportunities; partnering with key stakeholders including government departments and agencies; promoting trade-related training and education programmes; raising awareness about international standards as it relates to goods and services; and promoting consumer education initiatives.

These services are all gender-neutral for all clients. They assist women in starting a business, running a business, and exporting or trading locally or internationally. They have information on their website (<https://www.gov.tc/trade>) such as key steps to consider when starting a business, business licensing, and relicensing a business.

The Department also provides local and international markets for women traders and business owners. Locally since 2022 the Department host a Made in TCI" Industry and Fair Competition

Trade Show. Made in TCI" is an annual event that celebrates the accomplishments and contributions of local businesses and entrepreneurs in the Turks and Caicos Islands. The main objective for the 2024 staging of the event is to raise awareness about domestically produced goods and services.

The exposition-style show and competition provide a platform for showcasing innovation, fostering competition, and promoting economic growth by displaying culture, creativity, and craftsmanship of the Turks and Caicos Islands for local and international traders. From exquisite hand-made jewelry to delectable beverages, luxurious leather goods, captivating home décor, mesmerizing arts and crafts, and even unique tobacco products, the "Made in TCI" Trade Show will highlight the best of what the Turks and Caicos Islands have to offer.

For those looking to explore the world of international trade and market access, the competition offers valuable insights into these concepts and their profound impact on exporting goods internationally.

### **The MSME Programme**

The MSME Programme focuses on supporting business sectors that have the potential to make a substantial contribution to the local economy. These may include sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing, technology, arts and music. The main goal of the Programme is to facilitate the growth and development of businesses operating in these sectors. By prioritizing these areas, the Programme aims to help businesses generate higher revenue and profits.

The data provided illustrates the distribution of recipients within the programme based on gender and relationship status. Among the recipients, 64 individuals identify as male, representing 40% of the total. Similarly, 62 individuals identify as female, accounting for 39% of the total.

Couples comprise 25 recipients and comprise 16% of the overall approvals. This suggests that a significant portion of the programme's recipients are in business together or are participating as a team.

Partnerships, represented by 9 recipients account for 6% of the total. This category likely includes participants who are engaged in collaborative efforts or have established formal partnerships to leverage resources and expertise.



The data indicates that the programme attracts both males and females, with a relatively balanced representation. The participation of couples and partnerships suggests a collaborative approach and highlights the programme's ability to support collective endeavours and foster cooperation within the MSME community.

Overall, the diversity in gender and the inclusion of couples and partnerships indicate the programme's impact in reaching and supporting a wide range of individuals and collaborative initiatives. This diversity enriches the programme by bringing together diverse perspectives, expertise, and resources, fostering a dynamic and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

**Introduced or strengthened social protection programmes for women and girls (e.g. cash transfers for women with children, public works/employment guarantee schemes for women of working age, pensions for older women)**

The welfare programming has significantly increased to assist Turks and Caicos Islanders, which equally has benefited women and young girls. The Department of Social Development and Welfare has increased its Social Enhancement Aid benefits in 2022 from \$120 monthly to \$1000 monthly for an adult and \$500 per child for up to three children. This has significantly helped struggling families and single-parent households. A Special Needs Assistance programme was also introduced which provides an extra \$500 monthly for children with special needs.

This money has helped many families to be able to seek specialized assistance, whether on the island or abroad, from children with special needs. The Department, additionally, has begun to formalize a warm meals programme and welfare grant programme, which has assisted many vulnerable women who were/are in need of temporary assistance. Equally important is the increased for our foster care children that many young girls have benefited from. This assistance also increased in 2022 from \$80 weekly to \$300. This was significant help to foster families in supporting them to safeguard our children.

Furthermore, also is the home help programme, which was increased in 2021, to provide support to many vulnerable citizens, especially elderly women over 65 or those who may have a disability, be incapacitated, or suffer from a chronic mental health challenge or medical conditions. The

programme offers \$150 per week part-time and \$250 per week full-time. We additionally provide emergency housing assistance for vulnerable persons either by securing hotel accommodation or in the form of rental assistance or a grant to assist in relocating to a more suitable home.

### **Introduced/strengthened low-cost legal services for women living in poverty**

The TCI Bar Council has noted that the TCI Bar Association hosts a Legal Advice Clinic for the public on the fourth Saturday of each month between 2 pm and 4 pm and provides a free initial consultation session with volunteer Turks and Caicos attorneys.

Attorneys provide consultations on legal issues such as landlord/tenant, government benefits, employment disputes, criminal defense - Magistrates Court, road traffic matters, consumer protection, civil claims under \$10,000 in value, probate, family/domestic matters, uninsured personal injury/fatal accidents, claims and immigration issues. Several women have civil matters and domestic matters in need of legal advice. In 2023 four (4) clients were referred to the bar association for the free clinic.

The effort is spearheaded by the Pro Bono Committee of the TCI Bar. The Committee comprises Turks and Caicos attorneys who have pledged their commitment to this scheme for free preliminary legal assistance to the public. The Legal Advice Clinics started in 2022 and is now a regular to extend access to legal assistance as part of the Bar Association's commitment to serving the community.

This clinic is open to anyone in the community who is seeking legal advice but cannot afford to pay for it. This includes women affected by gender-based violence, seeking a divorce, or those facing any legal challenges.

This is an incredible opportunity for individuals to receive legal advice from experienced attorneys at no cost. The Pro Bono Committee is committed to helping those in the TCI community who need it the most, and this clinic is a continued step in the right direction.

➤ **In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve access to social protection for women and girls?**

**Introduced or strengthened cash transfers for families with children that prioritize women as recipients (e.g. child benefits, family allowances, conditional or unconditional cash transfers)**

The National Insurance Board continues to assist women with a wide range of benefits these include maternity benefits, widow's pensions, retirement pensions, sickness benefits, employment injury benefits, old age pensions, invalidity pensions, unemployment, and funeral grants. A very important aspect of social security legislation, in keeping with social and cultural norms, is the provision for payment of benefits to women who are not legally married but who are living in common-law relationships.

National Insurance schemes have therefore enabled all women to improve their financial status. Since the last reporting period, significant increases have been made to the benefits that women receive through the National Insurance scheme; increasing the Maternity Grant per child from \$600 to six hundred and eighty (\$680.00) dollars.

**Introduced or strengthened social protection for women of working age (e.g. unemployment benefits, public works programmes, social assistance)**

Over the past five years, the Turks and Caicos Islands have implemented a range of measures to enhance social protection for women and girls. These include bolstered welfare grants and benefits for families with children, which have traditionally been directed towards women, recognizing their role as primary caregivers. The government's introduction of more comprehensive child benefits and welfare grants has significantly improved the financial support available to families with children, particularly empowering women in their caregiving roles.

The government's commitment to gender equality is evident in the introduction or strengthening of social protection for women of working age. The National Insurance Board (NIB) is committed to becoming the largest provider of pensions in the Turks and Caicos Islands providing social security and other services to the people of the TCI. The NIB has introduced measures such as unemployment benefits, and social assistance to working single parents have been strengthened.

These programs are a testament to the government's dedication to ensuring economic security and social protection for women in the workforce, instilling confidence in the audience about the government's efforts.

The government has demonstrated its commitment to addressing the unique needs and vulnerabilities of older women by expanding welfare benefits and reintroducing pensions. These measures, part of a broader suite of social protection initiatives, are designed to enhance overall social protection for the older population, with a particular emphasis on women. By ensuring their financial security and well-being, these initiatives are contributing to a more inclusive and equitable society.

➤ **In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?**

**Promoted women's access to health services through the expansion of universal health coverage or public health services**

Primary Health Care is provided by eight government-operated primary health care clinics across the TCI. Secondary care is offered by two hospitals, one on the island of Grand Turk and one on the island of Providenciales.

There is no telemedicine linking the hospitals and clinics. The Ministry of Health is responsible for the health needs of the population. The two hospitals are Cockburn Town Medical Centre in Grand Turk which has a 10-bed inpatient capacity, and the Cheshire Hall Medical Centre in Providenciales has a capacity of 20 beds.

In addition, the three major private resorts (Beaches and Club Med in Providenciales and Parrot Cay) operate their clinics. These clinics offer their services to workers and guests. Any outbreaks of diseases are reported to the primary care and surveillance unit at the Ministry of Health.

In addition, the access to medical care is complemented by six private medical clinics, which are primarily located in Providenciales with 2 associated satellite sites in Grand Turk. These medical facilities provide ambulatory care services with varying capacities for diagnostic, laboratory,

operating room, and acute care services. Most of the pharmacies are private of which one is in Grand Turk and six in Providenciales. There are no pharmacies in the other islands. Medications for the clinics on these islands are purchased by the Ministry of Health and distributed to the various islands.

Secondary and tertiary levels of care are available on the island for some health conditions at both hospitals. Highly specialized care is not available on the island and persons are referred to facilities abroad mainly to the neighbouring Caribbean islands, USA & UK. The cost to support tertiary care on the island is covered through the National Health Insurance Plan (NHIP) through the Treatment Abroad Programme, private insurance or out-of-pocket by the client.

### **Expanded specific health services for women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health services, maternal health and services**

#### **Reproductive Health**

All women have access to Primary Health Care services, pregnant women enrolled at the Primary Health Care clinics are seen first by the midwife/PHN who performs an initial clinical assessment, which includes requisition of prenatal laboratory studies and an obstetric ultrasound scan. The client is then referred to the Obstetric clinic at TCI Hospitals for a first medical assessment by an Obstetrician, this allows a review of the client's risk profile and the development of a pre-natal care plan for each patient.

#### **Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative**

To complement women's reproductive health hospitals in TCI are pursuing the WHO and UNICEF Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) certification. They are committed to providing maternity and newborn services that align with the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding. Our approach includes but is not limited to full implementation of the package of policies and procedures that support the provision of maternity and newborn services that support breastfeeding. Our strategies are focusing on supporting increased compliance with exclusive breast-feeding and ensuring sustainability over the life of our programs. The TCI has embarked upon this initiative with technical assistance from PAHO and CARPHA. The focus of this initiative is a part of global effort to implement practices that protect, promote and support breastfeeding. Also, included is mother-

friendliness care of pregnant women and mothers in the context of HIV emergencies, as well as, expansion towards other types of health facilities and the community. Much of this focuses on training and sensitizing healthcare personnel and other personnel working in hospitals on this plan's implementation. As a result, the Ministry of Health in collaboration with TCI Hospital is currently conducting a BFHI self-appraisal using an assessment tool provided by PAHO in preparation for the implementation. Also, the Ministry is developing an Infant and Young Child Feeding Policy to promote and support breastfeeding and improve the nutritional status of our youth.

The Department of Gender Affairs and Social Development not only provides additional support to teenage mothers but also emphasizes the importance of self-sufficiency. We offer counselling and mediation services, formula for babies and young infants through our food bank, and clothing. We strongly advocate for mothers to seek employment and other opportunities, empowering them to take control of their lives.

The conditions of mothers and expectant mothers in TCI are notably favorable. This is evident from the high life expectancy rate, low infant mortality rate, and the very low incidence of communicable diseases. To further enhance these conditions, maternity leave has been aligned with international standards, granting mothers a generous 14 weeks of leave.

**Developed gender-sensitive approaches to the prevention and treatment of chronic and non-communicable diseases (e.g. cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disease, and diabetes)**

The Health Promotion and Advocacy unit held its first annual Women's Health Symposium in 2023 with one of its focused areas on sexual health. There was an emphasis on promoting awareness, education, and access to resources. It provided a platform to disseminate accurate information, address stigma, and promotion of healthy behaviours. Additionally, it facilitated collaboration among stakeholders, advocacy for policy changes, and improved access to healthcare services, ultimately contributing to better sexual health outcomes for individuals and communities.

- **In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls, including in sectors where they are underrepresented?**

### **Partnerships to allow women access to wider opportunities in male-dominated fields**

The TCICC-TVET has prioritized partnerships with leading providers of technical skills which helps to break gender stereotypes. TVET has successfully achieved partnerships with the following entities: The Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA) which is the leading provider of IT certifications in the world and the National Centre for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), the leading provider of construction education for industry and technical education programmes. Both fields of construction and information technology are traditionally male-dominated however, partnership has helped TVET to diversify the curriculum within the Turks and Caicos Islands Community College allowing women access to wider opportunities in education and career paths. This initiative also has the potential for producing women leaders within each field, thus balancing the gender inequalities within leadership roles while also inspiring female students to consider non-traditional careers.

### **Skills development-centered through metric-based assessment to improve women's employability**

TVET develops women's employability by focusing on skills development. Unbiased application processes within TVET ensures that the institution promotes a sense of fairness and trust, encouraging applicants from underrepresented groups to consider non-traditional careers, education, and training. In addition to this, success within each training is determined based on merit, therefore, women are assessed based on their abilities and not influenced by gender biases. Building an equitable environment has led to higher drives of women being enrolled and showing interest in course offerings at TVET. It has also ensured that women are better aligned with industry requirements, able to adapt to technological changes and increase in confidence within the workplace.

### **Female inmates have access to training opportunities aimed at reducing reoffences and encourage a smoother transition into society.**

TVET interventions within the Department of Corrections serve a critical purpose in reintegrating female inmates into society. Since 2022, through vocational training in customer service and commercial food preparation, female inmates have been provided with equal opportunities to transition into society more smoothly by certifying them with in-demand skills. This directly impacts their chances of gaining better employment opportunities to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Access to the programme is met with gender-neutral considerations and is determined based on recommendations by a risk-assessment evaluation. Engaging in these training programmes also encourages inmates to plan for their future and helps to improve mental health and reduce feelings of hopelessness. While the enrolment of women within these programmes is low, this is attributed to the demographics of the prison as opposed to accessibility.

Table 2: Gender Demographics of TVET PLAR Enrolled Candidates 2022-2024

Examination Cycle	Skill Area	Number of Candidates Enrolled	Enrollment Rate by Gender	
			Male	Female
February 2022	Food and Beverage Bartending Level 2	12	42%	58%
February 2022	Electrical Installation Level 1	21	100%	0%
February 2022	Customer Service Level 1	25	24%	76%
February 2022	Commercial Food Preparation Level 1	8	50%	50%
February 2023	Electrical Installation Level 1	5	100%	0%
February 2023	Customer Service Level 1	28	32%	68%
February 2023	Commercial Food Preparation Level 1	8	75%	25%
February 2023 Re-sit	Electrical Installation Level 1	3	100%	0%
February 2023 Re-sit	Customer Service Level 1	1	0%	100%
June 2023	Customer Service Level 1	8	13%	88%
June 2023	Nail Technology Level 2	11	0%	100%



February 2024	Customer Service Level 1	34	6%	94%
February 2024	Customer Service Level 2	10	0%	100%
February 2024	Customer Service Level 1 Re-sit	4	25%	75%
July 2024	Commercial Food Prep Level 1	15	93%	7%
July 2024	Cosmetology Level 2	12	0%	100%
July 2024	Customer Service Level 2	21	43%	57%
July 2024	General Office Administration Level 1	41	22%	78%
July 2024	Nail Technology Level 2	6	0%	100%
TOTAL		296	40%	60%

➤ **What actions has your country taken to ensure that economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic closes gender gaps in poverty, employment, social protection, education, and/or health that the pandemic has exacerbated?**

The Turks and Caicos Islands maintain the gradual trend of population ageing, with an average life expectancy at birth of more than 80 years.

Regarding the health system, the national health insurance program has received technical support from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) aimed at sustainable financing and evaluating a capitation system.<sup>2</sup> The Vision 2030 Health Sector Plan includes a renewal of primary health care to reduce the use of high-cost hospital services and improve access to primary care.<sup>3</sup>

In relation to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of achieving universal immunization coverage is emphasized. Efforts have been made to strengthen epidemiological surveillance and detection strategies at the territory's entry points.

Under-five mortality has been drastically reduced, representing a critical achievement to maintain. There has been an increase in adolescent fertility, highlighting the importance of strengthening sexual and reproductive health programs.

Available data on HIV incidence also support the importance of promoting the use of barrier methods of contraception. PAHO's strategic fund has intervened to facilitate access to antiretrovirals in the Turks and Caicos Islands, and registration and importation systems for other drugs have been designed.

The promotion of mental health has also been highlighted as a priority, given that the situation of distress, anxiety, and suffering generated by the pandemic is compounded by the burden produced by emergencies or natural disasters, such as hurricanes. In the latter area, the territory has organized hospital preparedness activities and contingency plans in the field.

➤ **Over the past five years, which forms of gender-based violence, and in which specific contexts or settings, has your country prioritized for action?**

**Intimate partner violence, including sexual violence and marital rape**

SPPU- There is a significant issue of sexual and domestic violence that affects women and girls within the Turks and Caicos Islands society. We are seeing the issue being manifested in the form of reported incidents of sexual violence such as rapes, sexual assault, and other forms of sexual abuse as well as domestic violence being perpetrated against adult females, and sexual abuse and exploitation of female minors such as in the form of adult males having sex with underage girls, child pornography and other forms of exploitation using mediums such as social media.

For the period of 2019-2024, the reported cases are as follows:

Reporting Abuse	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Domestic Violence</b>	222	100	89	120	90	35
<b>Sexual Abuse Adult-Adult</b>	25	14	38	15	28	15
<b>Sexual Abuse Adult-child</b>	18	19	23	12	38	13

There are social, economic, and immigration status issues that are fueling the proliferation of sexual and other forms of abuse against females. Some of the noticeable challenges are as follows:

**Victim Reluctance:** Victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse often hesitate to report the crimes due to fear, shame, or threats from the perpetrator. For instance, due to the lack of regularized or documented status in the TCI, many women and girls are placed at a disadvantage and, as a result, fall prey to unscrupulous adult males who abuse them using intimidation or threat of deportation to remain silent despite being repeatedly abused and exploited. As such, a large number of these abused women and girls live a life of misery, suffering in silence, and enduring psychological trauma. To overcome this reluctance, the Department has conducted community sensitization sessions to encourage victims to come forward.

**Lack of evidence:** In many cases, there may be limited physical evidence of the abuse, especially if the victim delays reporting the incident due to threats, intimidation, or the fear of further violence being perpetrated against them. As a result, this makes it difficult to build a strong case against the perpetrator.

In the TCI, victims of abuse frequently face these challenges, yet have been encouraged to report incidents of abuse without delay. The TCI has implemented the protection of victims who are in fear of deportation or who are undocumented by working along with the Immigration and Border services by providing undocumented victims to remain in the islands during the investigation period of their case. The department has also worked along with different agencies to ensure that the immediate response team is deployed and resources are in place for situations such as the protection of women and girls.

**Complex Dynamics:** Domestic violence situations often involve complex relationships and dynamics between the victim and the perpetrator, such as financial dependence, emotional manipulation, or cultural factors. Understanding these dynamics and gaining the trust of the victim can be challenging for investigators. Victims may render minimal information simply to gain the assistance they need at the start of the report but may refuse to proceed any further due to these factors. There are times when we face the question “What happens after I make a report?” Due to the lack of resources such as the assistance of gainful employment for financial independence or

temporary safe housing, we fail to provide the answers that a victim is seeking, delaying the reporting process.

**Safety Concerns:** Investigating domestic violence and sexual abuse cases can be dangerous for both investigators and victims, particularly if the perpetrator is violent or has a history of threatening behaviour. Ensuring the safety of all parties involved is a primary concern for law enforcement.

**Limited Resources:** The police department in the Turks and Caicos Islands is facing a lack of resources and manpower to dedicate to domestic violence and sexual abuse cases, especially in areas with high crime rates or competing priorities. Presently, we are faced with challenges due to the lack of manpower and proper training when dealing with cases of Domestic Violence. This can impact the thoroughness and timeliness of investigations. This challenge, can take a toll on investigators, leading to burnout, compassion fatigue, or secondary trauma. Law enforcement agencies need to provide adequate support and resources for investigators dealing with these challenging cases.

**Credibility Issues:** Victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse may face scepticism or disbelief from law enforcement, particularly if the perpetrator is well-respected in the community or holds a position of authority. Ensuring that victims are treated with empathy and taken seriously is crucial for building trust and rapport.

Addressing these challenges requires a multi-disciplinary approach involving law enforcement, Social Services, Healthcare professionals, Gender Affairs, and community organizations to support victims, hold perpetrators accountable, and prevent future incidents of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

For the TCI to make meaningful progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, it requires an all-of-government approach, and all other stakeholders, including civil society and social groups, the media, etc., buying in fully and redoubling efforts to bring incidents of gender-based violence to the fore so that perpetrators can be held accountable, and that deterrent measures can be implemented to allow all women and girls to enjoy parity with the male counterpart.

### **Domestic violence committed by other family or household members**

Discrimination can impede individuals from accessing opportunities and services in a fair and equal manner. Tables EQ.3.1W and EQ.3.1M show the percentage of women and men who felt discriminated against based on a number of grounds

**Table EQ.3.1W: Discrimination and harassment (women)**

Percentage of women age 15-49 years who in the past 12 months have felt discriminated against or harassed and those who have not felt discriminated against or harassed, Turks and Caicos Islands MICS, 2019-2020

	Percentage of women who in the last 12 months have felt discriminated against or harassed on the basis of:								Percentage of women who have not felt discriminated against or harassed in the last 12 months	Number of women
	Ethnic or immigration origin	Gender	Sexual orientation	Age	Religion or belief	Disability	Other reason	Any reason <sup>1</sup>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>79.2</b>	<b>824</b>
<b>Region</b>										
Grand Turk	16.2	2.7	0.2	1.6	3.1	0.9	3.0	20.3	79.7	73
NCMCS CSC	10.4	2.3	2.0	2.2	6.0	0.8	1.3	21.2	78.8	30
Providenciales	12.8	4.2	1.3	2.2	2.3	1.4	3.9	20.9	79.1	721
<b>Age</b>										
15-19	29.7	8.6	3.1	2.3	10.2	0.0	15.3	51.9	48.1	54
15-17	(34.9)	(11.1)	(5.9)	(0.0)	(1.4)	(0.0)	(17.2)	(64.7)	(35.3)	28
18-19	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	26
20-24	3.9	5.0	0.7	4.2	4.1	0.5	2.8	16.1	83.9	110
25-29	19.1	3.7	2.1	5.2	0.0	1.1	0.3	24.3	75.7	94
30-34	14.7	5.6	1.7	1.9	3.6	0.1	3.5	21.0	79.0	148
35-39	11.0	1.6	1.8	1.7	1.8	4.3	3.5	19.7	80.3	181
40-44	9.5	3.6	0.0	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.6	13.5	86.5	122
45-49	13.3	3.2	0.0	0.3	1.8	0.6	5.8	17.2	82.8	114
<b>Education</b>										
Lower secondary or less	11.6	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	6.8	12.4	87.6	35
Upper secondary	15.5	4.4	1.5	2.0	2.3	2.1	3.8	23.3	76.7	400
Higher	10.5	3.6	1.1	2.5	2.9	0.6	3.3	19.0	81.0	389
<b>Ethnicity of household head</b>										
Black/Negro/African	11.3	4.0	1.4	2.4	2.9	1.3	4.0	20.1	79.9	706
Other	23.2	3.8	0.3	0.5	0.3	1.2	2.1	25.5	74.5	118
<b>Wealth index quintile</b>										
Poorest	12.4	1.4	1.0	0.6	0.7	3.4	0.1	17.3	82.7	162
Second	14.2	5.4	2.6	6.1	3.6	1.7	5.8	27.8	72.2	171
Middle	12.5	2.3	0.5	2.1	2.4	0.8	5.7	18.8	81.2	163
Fourth	10.5	4.5	1.8	1.4	4.4	0.3	2.5	17.0	83.0	179
Richest	15.5	6.4	0.1	0.4	1.1	0.4	4.5	23.5	76.5	150
<sup>1</sup> MICS indicator EQ.7 - Discrimination; SDG Indicators 10.3.1 & 16.b.1										
( ) Figures are based on 25-49 unweighted cases										
(*) Figures are based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases										

➤ **In the past five years, what actions has your country prioritized to address gender-based violence?**

**Introduced or strengthened violence against women laws, and their enforcement and implementation**

Safety Mechanism

The Government is in the process of fortifying women's rights to safe accommodations. The design and provision of this new service necessitate a clear policy statement. The Hill of Hope Safe House Policy, a crucial document, is designed to detail the protection and full range of support services for Domestic Violence victims including women and children. It also outlines how provisions to victims, including educative work and learning, along with counselling in both the community and residential care, will be provided to facilitate informed personal choices and decisions.

Safe House Policy

The Policy will be guided by the following provisions: To establish guidelines and procedures that govern the operational functions of a Safe House that seeks to provide emergency accommodation for Victims of Domestic Violence. In addition to provide outreach services to those in the community and existing programs to build resilience and lower the risk of repeat harm. These procedures are in keeping with the Domestic Violence Ordinance 2015 along with other domestic, regional, and international protocols and legislation.

In meeting the objectives, the TCI will;

- a. Create awareness amongst stakeholders in the prevention, reporting and managing of Domestic Violence;
- b. Work towards establishing foundations for multi-agency and multi-systemic responses to address violence in relationships;
- c. Enhance responses to Domestic Violence so as to ensure timely responses to victims' needs thereby creating an effective service delivery;
- d. Ensure safe, secure, and quality services to clients; and
- e. Work towards a safer community with positive family relationships.

**Introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending violence against women and girls**

The Government, in collaboration with the Department of Gender Affairs and UN Women, is introducing the National Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan in 2024. This document, developed in close partnership with UN Women, will provide direct and impactful actions to end violence against women and girls, demonstrating our commitment to international cooperation and the adoption of best practices.

The rolling out of this policy will see one area of focus being the country responding to gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and trafficking. This will allow for research, structured data collection, implementation of standard operating procedures, and outreach campaigns.

**Introduced or strengthened measures to increase women’s access to justice (e.g. establishment of specialist courts, training for the judiciary and police, protection orders, redress, and reparations, including for femicide cases)**

In 2022 the Department of Gender Affairs in collaboration with the Attorney General Chambers conducted a training on the Domestic Violence Ordinance. Following this, in 2023 There was a Domestic Violence Sensitization session was conducted for members of the Police force, judiciary, health and social services.

Domestic violence is a serious social problem and a national health concern with significant negative impacts on individuals and communities. Several stakeholders must work together to protect persons affected by domestic violence in the TCI.

The table below reflects the Department’s cases requesting Protection Orders over a three-year period.

Table showing disaggregated data of clients requesting Protection Orders and the number of cases of DV from 2020 to 2023.

YEAR	CASES	MALE	FEMALE	REFERRAL FROM
2020	9		9	Human Rights Police Social Development



2021	32	3	29	Human Rights Police SPPU Social Development
2022	17	1	16	Human Rights Police SPPU Social Development
2023	39	2	37	Social Development Police Human Rights SPPU MASH

The Department of Gender Affairs is the lead government organization responsible for the development and implementation of policies and procedures that guide the framework for the implementation of essential services as it relates to Domestic Violence. One critical aspect of this was the development of the Domestic Violence Protocol which aims to ensure that that Key stakeholders are sensitized to their roles and shared responsibilities in responding to domestic violence.

As a result of this, several comprehensive training workshops were held throughout the TCI on the domestic violence protocol that assisted each stakeholder to understand their specific role and how that role works in tandem with that of other organizations'. The protocol is intended to guide the work of four (4) major areas of service delivery:

The training conducted was geared towards establishing standards for points of contact, methods of contact, and purpose of contact between agencies to:

- define professional roles and responsibilities;
- strengthen and clarify relationships between relevant agencies;
- improve the credibility and accountability of the agencies involved;
- inform and educate the community about how cases of domestic violence are handled; and
- ensure consistency in the way that cases are handled.

**Introduced or strengthened services for survivors of violence (e.g. shelters, helplines, dedicated health services, legal, justice services, counselling, housing, socioeconomic rehabilitation)**

The country has a robust network of stakeholders in the private and public sectors that provide services for victims and survivors of domestic violence. These services include:

- Mental Health Support
- Safe accommodation
- Support for Protection Orders
- Accompaniment to Court Proceedings

Over the reporting period, women and girls affected by violence and need shelter are accommodated privately, by the government until the immediate threat is passed.

**Counselling Sessions**

The Department of Behavioral Health Services (DBHS) provides clients with counseling sessions once requested. The Department collects the client's data during the interview process and creates a referral. The referral is then submitted to the Department of Behavioral Health Services, and a therapist is assigned to the client. Last year, the Department referred three clients to the Department of Behavioural Health.

In the past five years, the DBHS has regularly participated in empowerment workshops for women and girls, including activities surrounding Women's Day and Girl's Day. In addition, the clinicians within the Department also work with individuals who are at risk of or who have perpetrated violence against women- developing individualized treatment plans to reduce behaviors associated with violence. There is no specific budget or line item for violence prevention, however, activities geared towards violence prevention are taken from funds for drug prevention and meetings/conferences. DBHS has worked with two hundred fourteen (214), females and three hundred and twenty-two (322) males. The Department also saw 14 couples during the reporting period. All clients are assisted to improve their skills in interpersonal communication, conflict management, and shared decision-making.

## **Accommodation**

The Department of Gender Affairs aids with short-term accommodation to clients in need of emergency shelter due to domestic violence. Shelter is provided by renting a space for clients or short-term private accommodation. This assistance benefits clients who have no immediate family to assist them. Over the reporting period, the department assisted twenty-five (25) clients with accommodation for themselves and their families. All clients were females. During a domestic dispute, the male retains ownership of the residence initially until the matter is brought before the court.

## **Court Matters**

The Department of Gender Affairs assist clients when applying for a Protection Order and represents them at their court proceedings. An interview is conducted with the client, and a report is created for the magistrate. This report includes the interview analysis, personal and family background, employment information as well as the departments' assessment and recommendation. On the day of court, the department provides evidence to the judge based on the information given during the interview. Over the reporting period the department as assisted

## **Health Services**

Interhealth Canada runs the two hospitals in the Turks and Caicos Islands. When a victim/survivor of domestic violence is taken to the hospital they are seen by a doctor in private once identified by the Triage nurse. In addition, the hospital ensures that the victim is handled with respect especially in rare situations where delays are unavoidable. This includes keeping them informed about any delays as they wait in a private location.

- **In the past five years, what strategies has your country used to prevent gender-based violence?**

## **Social Development Department**

The Social Development Department provides therapy sessions for clients needing conflict management, interpersonal skills development, and shared decision-making. These matters are usually linked to the care and protection of a child or domestic dispute. Often parents in domestic

disputes are referred from the magistrate court for conflict management and interpersonal skills communication as an order of a protection order or court undertaking.

Once persons are assigned to the Department psychiatric social worker, the aim is to assess the clients individually and collectively to facilitate the exchange of information, ideas, feelings, and intentions between individuals. It serves as a means for clients to connect, understand, and relate to one another.

This session first sets the environment to build confidence and trust, by meeting with clients (couples or former couples), then an assessment is conducted of the situation to assess the gaps. This information is used to develop a treatment plan which outlines the objectives and activities to take place. This plan is then shared with the clients for their input and feedback to foster a client-centred approach to therapy. Sessions could number anywhere between four to ten.

If there are cross-cutting issues such as drug abuse or medical issues that cannot be dealt with clients are referred.

## **EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS TO PROMOTE THEIR ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE AND ACCESS TO RESOURCES, AND PROMOTE EQUITABLE RELATIONS WITHIN HOUSEHOLDS, COMMUNITIES AND SOCIETY**

### **Alleviating poverty through interventions targeted at women or the household National Insurance**

The National Insurance Board continues to assist women with a wide range of benefits these including: maternity benefits, widow's pensions, retirement pensions, sickness benefits, employment injury benefits, old age pensions, invalidity pensions, unemployed and funeral grants. A very important aspect of social security legislation, in keeping with social and cultural norms, is the provision for payment of benefits to women who are not legally married but who are living in common-law relationships.

## **RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS TO CHANGE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS**

The Department of Gender Affairs hosts events throughout the year to raise awareness in the hope of changing the general public negative perception of gender-based violence.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month;

## **The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence**

The ‘Women with Stories’ Virtual Live Discussion was held on the Department of Gender Affairs’ Facebook page, drawing attention to critical issues and providing a platform for survivors to share their experiences. Held in October, in alignment with Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the event reflected a broad interest and commitment to addressing domestic violence from women all across the Turks and Caicos Islands. The discussion was facilitated by the Department’s Gender Officer, who offered valuable insights into the challenges faced by victims in the islands and the resources available to them. The interactive format allowed for real-time questions and engagement, fostering community and support among viewers.

Highlights of the event included powerful testimonies from survivors who bravely shared their journeys, shedding light on the complex dynamics of domestic abuse and the resilience required to overcome it. The participants also emphasized the importance of education, legal reforms, and community support in combating domestic violence. The positive feedback and active participation demonstrated the event’s impact, highlighting the ongoing need for such platforms to amplify voices and drive change in the fight against domestic violence.

## **‘Behind Closed Doors’ Film Launch**

The launch of the short film “Behind Closed Doors,” which addresses the issue of domestic violence, was a success, resonating deeply with the local community. The film, uniquely cast with local actors, brought authenticity and relatability to the screen, allowing viewers to connect personally with the characters and their stories. The film’s raw portrayal of domestic violence and its impact elicited a powerful emotional response, prompting discussions on the importance of awareness and intervention.

## **Walk a mile in her shoe**

In observance for the ‘16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence’ 2021. The Department of Gender Affairs hosted a ‘Walk a Mile In Her Shoes’. This was used to display and highlight the stories of women and men who have experienced abuse and wish to share their stories to empower others. This allowed survivors to feel heard and potentially save another life. It also challenges the behavior of the perpetrator to think about their action which usually affects women

### **Orange the World Day**

This event saw the Department of Gender Affairs calling for unity and action to end all forms of violence against women and girls. The Territory was asked to stand in solidarity to say the abuse must stop now. Everyone has a role to play in ensuring that gender-based violence is no longer tolerated. By fighting for women's rights, the Territory is protecting human rights as a whole. All this took place in 2021-2022.

### **Panel Discussion**

In 2023, the Department organized a live broadcast on Facebook in collaboration with the National Radio Station, Radio Turks and Caicos, to shed light on the critical issue of violence against women and girls and its direct correlation to human rights violations. The broadcast featured insightful contributions from the Office of The Director of Public Prosecution, Social Development, and The Department of Gender Affairs, aiming to engage the public in a meaningful dialogue about this important issue.

### **Child Abuse Awareness Month**

The Department of Social Development and Welfare in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Transportation, and Telecommunications annually leads the charge in the TCI in recognizing the month of April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. During this time, a commitment is made to re-examine strategies to support children and families' well-being in raising awareness for preventing child abuse and neglect. The sessions held aim to raise awareness and consciousness in protecting and securing the welfare of all children in the TCI by seeking to change harmful attitudes and behaviour towards children.

Over the reporting period, several events have been held to spread awareness. These activities include:

- Child Abuse Display
- Social Workers to visit schools and conduct educational sessions
- Child Abuse Messages via Digicel and Flow
- Set up Parent Resource Library
- Blue Sunday throughout the Churches in recognition of Child Abuse Month
- Blue Day for All Business places/ Government Department
- Planting of Blue Pinwheels at various locations throughout Pls/NC/MC

- Feet in the Street-distribution of brochures to spread awareness
- “The Lady In Me” empowerment session for girls
- Art Competition North/Middle Caicos at the Kew Community Center
- Prayer Vigil, Poster, and Jingle competition In Grand Turk and South Caicos
- Art Competition at Ethel Ingram
- Balloon release in recognition of child Abuse Month
- Prayer Vigil and Art Competition

➤ **In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to prevent and respond to technology-facilitated gender-based violence**

**Implemented awareness-raising initiatives targeting the general public and education settings to sensitize young people, caregivers, and educators to ethical and responsible online behavior.**

**School Sensitization Programme**

The Department of Gender Affairs hosting of Girls in ICT 2023 focused on the individual's role in protecting themselves online. The presentation included:

- Girls should abstain from participating in cyberbullying and online harassment. Passwords that are simple to guess are detrimental to their online presence. The students were encouraged to stop posting everything online especially material that can be used against them in the future. Information in cyberspace is always available somewhere, even after being taken down.
- Cybersecurity- Cybersecurity is the protection of internet-connected systems such as hardware, software, and data from cyber threats. The practice is used by individuals and enterprises to protect against unauthorized access to data centers and other computerized systems.

The Department also conducts sessions in Secondary schools on Teenage dating abuse. These sessions dealt with Technological abuse. Often women and girls are the main victims of cybercrimes. They are stalked and it is often because of the content they share online and the information about their lives.

➤ **In the past five years, what measures has your country taken to resource women’s organizations working to prevent and respond to GBV?**

**Soroptimist International**

Soroptimist International is a vibrant, dynamic organization for today’s professional executives. They are committed to a world where women and girls together achieve their individual and collective

potential, realize aspirations and have an equal voice in creating, peaceful communities worldwide. The Soroptimist works closely with the Gender Unit on issues and opportunities that transform the lives of women and girls.

There are three branches of Soroptimist in the Turks and Caicos Islands, all working together in sisterhood. Their commitment to advancing women and girls in the TCI led to several initiatives spearheaded by each club. These include a mentoring initiative focusing on girls within the various school, in addition to making annual donations of personal care items to the local high school, breakfast programs within the primary schools, and creating public awareness on the many social ills of women and girls.

- **In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media, including social media?**

#### **Promoted the participation and leadership of women in the media**

Women play a dominant role in the media landscape of the Turks and Caicos Islands. The country's leading Radio Station Radio Turks and Caicos (RTC) as a female engineer, two female announcers and I female news anchor. These women's roles and assigned duties push them to achieve future growth and promotion. The Station recently promoted a woman to Senior Administrative Officer.

Across the TCI women in media are in positions that empower them to make key decisions in the effective running of the Industry. The leading personality in the industry is a woman, as she is often in demand across the country. More women are being on the forefront than men. Other Media platforms such as Magnetic Media are dominated by Female employees, the Sun TCI Deputy is a female. TCI Weekly freelance workers are mainly women as well. They all can choose how the news in the Territory flows.

- **In the past five years, what actions has your country taken specifically tailored to address violence against marginalized groups of women and girls?**

#### **Women living with HIV/AIDS**

The Health Promotion and Advocacy Unit, through its HIV/AIDS/ STI prevention programme, continues to focus on reducing the impact of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections on families, communities, and individuals, including women. The unit has conducted several community outreach sessions, which have incorporated education on women's sexual health alongside men's



sexual health. Demonstrations on the use of female and male condoms are an integral part of the sexual education programme and help to empower women. The National HIV/AIDS/STI Prevention programme has also implemented several outreach programmes that separately target men and women in the tourism sector, where more than 50% of the working population is employed.

The HIV prevention programme has also led the “One Drop is All It Takes: Get Tested Know Your Status” and the “It’s Your Business, Know Your Status” nationwide campaigns. These campaigns include women in their messages and directly address the importance of HIV testing and preventing stigma and discrimination. The most recent campaign to increase screening and raise awareness is “Check your Numbers, Know your Status” a yearlong country-wide initiative that seeks to integrate sexual transmission infections screening including HIV, into chronic disease screening to enhance early detection and treatment, co-morbidity management, prevention, and optimizing healthcare resources. This approach enables comprehensive care, addresses diverse health needs, and contributes to improved health outcomes and reduced disease burden in individuals and communities.

HIV education for young people, including girls in and out of school, is also an important focus of the HIV prevention programme. This information is also provided to grade six students throughout TCI. Additionally, the HIV National Debate for high schools, which is in its 32nd year, continues to see young girls addressing issues surrounding HIV. The event is broadcast to a wide audience via radio. Additionally, the Health Promotion and Advocacy unit has hosted peer education training on sexual health among youths. It was vital to utilize this platform as it utilizes relatability and trust, leverages peer influence, and creates accessible and comfortable environments for discussions. These tailored approaches ensure that information is relevant

The Gender Affairs Unit works closely with the National HIV/AIDS Prevention Programme which is now housed within the Health Promotion and Advocacy Unit. This collaboration is seen in several outreach programmes within communities. This is an effort to curb the increasingly serious spread of HIV/AIDS and to reduce the impact on families, communities, and individuals, specifically women.

The Health Promotion and Advocacy Unit has implemented several initiatives through outreach programs. The Unit has provided via its “Getting to Zero” campaign nationwide the inclusion of women in messages that directly address stigma and discrimination. The campaign includes posters targeted to adult women and female children in English, Creole and Spanish.

The Unit also provides preventative HIV education for young people via its youth arm Rapport. Rapport and Outreach Officers have reached a wide cross-section of persons via one-on-one or group sessions which address proper condom use; delayed sexual initiation; self-esteem; making informed decisions, stigma and discrimination, drugs and HIV/STI information. In addition, information is provided via its website whose views continue to increase. HIV/STI Educational sessions are also offered to all Primary schools in an age-appropriate manner.

The Health Promotion and Advocacy unit held its first annual Women's Health symposium in 2023 with one of its focused areas on sexual health. There was an emphasis on promoting awareness, education, and access to resources. It provided a platform to disseminate accurate information, address stigma, and promotion of healthy behaviours. Additionally, it facilitated collaboration among stakeholders, advocacy for policy changes, and improved access to healthcare services, ultimately contributing to better sexual health outcomes for individuals and communities.

### **Girls, adolescents, and younger women**

There is a private children’s home also on the island of Providenciales. Provo Children’s Home is a residential care facility in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands. The home was privately established in March 2006 as a long-term orphanage called Nissi House in Thompson Cove.

As of late, the focus has changed to include all children in need of a safe environment. The PCH Build Group was formed when it became known that there was no real home for orphans and children at risk.

### **➤ In the past five years, what actions and measures has your country to promote women’s participation in public life and decision-making?**

Provided opportunities for capacity building and skills development, such as mentorship, training in leadership, decision-making, public speaking, self-assertion, and/or political campaigning for women candidates, elected or appointed politicians, parliamentary caucuses, and/or gender equality advocates

The House of Assembly of the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) regularly engages in bilateral and multilateral activities delivered as part of the CPA UK-led UK Overseas Territories Project (UKOTP) which focuses on good governance and oversight of public finances. Most recently, UKOTP was invited to TCI in September 2021 to deliver a Post-Election Seminar to equip the new cohort of parliamentarians with the skills and knowledge necessary to perform their duties effectively, through a series of activities in which parliamentarians exchanged on a range of topics.

In addition to UKOTP activities, Parliamentarians from TCI have actively participated in CPA UK's multilateral events such as the Public Accounts Committee Inquiry Workshop in October 2021, and the Westminster Seminar in November 2020

CPA UK has also welcomed several visitors to the UK from TCI's House of Assembly, including the Speaker. CPA UK values this positive past collaboration and looks forward to further engagement with the House of Assembly and other stakeholders in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

On Tuesday, March 8, 2022, the Local Branch of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentary Association in conjunction with the Department of Gender Affairs hosted a Luncheon and Fun Day in observance of International Women's Day, under the theme "TCI Leading Women - Our Past, Our Present, and on to a Glorious Future. The focus of this event was on former, present and future female Parliamentarians.

CPA UK hosted the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Auditor General of the Turks and Caicos Islands for a four-day programme designed to increase the capacity of the PAC to perform its duties. The delegation met with their counterparts and staff from the UK Parliament, the Tynwald of the Isle of Man, and the UK National Audit Office.

The visit built on numerous successful programmes with the Turks and Caicos Islands, including but not limited to the November 2022 delegation visit for the Overseas Territories Forum, the Chair of the PAC's participation in the August 2022 Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts

Committees (CAPAC) Conference, and the October 2021 Post-Election Seminar in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The programme covered several topics, including developing PAC inquiries, effective questioning techniques, and understanding financial information. To complement the peer to-peer learning sessions, the Turks and Caicos Islands' PAC observed the UK PAC in action during their inquiry session.

- **In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?**

#### **STRENGTHENED THE PROVISION OF FORMAL AND TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) IN MEDIA AND ICTS, INCLUDING IN AREAS OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP**

- **Please describe your country's current national women's machinery (government entity exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women) and describe the measures that your country taken over the past five years to establish and/or strengthen it.**

Since the last reporting cycle, a policy decision was taken in 2021 to transfer the Department of Gender Affairs form from the Ministry of Education Youth, Culture, Library, and Social Service, to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Transportation, and the Telecommunication Commission in which it now sits. The Department occupies two separate offices in the Ministry. The other office is located in Providenciales and works out the Department of Social Development and Welfare.

Over the past five years the office has grown exponentially, the new edition includes the recruitment of a Safe House Manager, Two Gender Officers, a Research Program Office, , in February 2023, as of late the Deputy Director February 2024.

Significant investment in strengthening institutional mechanisms to advance gender equality i.e., the Safe House Policy, Domestic Violence Protocol, and the Gender Equality Policy, and the enactment of the 2015 Domestic Violence Ordinance.

The Department also established a national shelter for women who need help to leave violent homes, the Department has also launched several campaigns that aim to encourage behavioral change and reverse the circumstances that enable, condone, ignore, and treat violence against women as a normal part of life.

The Campaign targets both women and men, perpetrators of violence, survivors, and people who experience violence as well as witness it.

The Department of Gender Affairs is the National Machinery for advancing the status of women and promoting the achievement of gender equality in the Turks and Caicos Islands, has played a pivotal role in raising awareness at the community level around issues such as poverty, domestic and gender-based violence, health and women's access to and participation in decision making. Gender Affairs has advocated for the human rights of women and has been facilitating the development of policy and legislation for the empowerment of gender equity and gender equality.

The Department continues to focus on promoting Gender Equality as the Turks and Caicos Islands pursue social justice, sustainable growth, and Development. We are leading the way in Gender and green-responsive budgeting and other programs and policies that promote gender equality and gender Equity.

- **In the past five years, what other mechanisms and tools has your country used to mainstream gender equality across sectors? (e.g. gender focal points in the Executive, Legislature or Judiciary; inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms; gender audits, consultations with women’s organizations)**

Turks and Caicos has implemented various mechanisms to mainstream gender equality across sectors. One of the measures taken is the development of the National Gender Policy, which aims to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination in all areas of society. The policy focuses on six priority areas: governance and institutional strengthening, education and training, health and security, economic empowerment, social and cultural issues, and environmental sustainability.

The Department is responsible for coordinating gender mainstreaming efforts across sectors, providing technical support, and monitoring progress towards achieving gender equality. The target population for these measures is the entire population of Turks and Caicos, with a specific focus on marginalized groups, including women, girls, and migrant women.

While there is no specific budget allocated for gender mainstreaming efforts, the government has committed to ensuring that resources are available to implement the National Gender Policy and related initiatives. Impact evaluations are conducted periodically to assess the effectiveness of these measures and identify areas for improvement.

Lessons learned from these efforts include the importance of political will, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building to ensure sustainable progress towards gender equality. The involvement of civil society organizations and the private sector is also crucial in advancing gender equality and creating an enabling environment for all

➤ **If there is a national human rights institution in your country, what measures has it taken to address violations of women’s rights and promote gender equality?**

This report also examines the budget allocation trends for the Turks and Caicos Islands Department of Gender Affairs, focusing on its stability relative to overall government spending. Despite varying governmental priorities, funding for gender-related initiatives has shown consistency over time. The analysis delves into historical data, policy influences, and key contributing factors, highlighting the importance of sustained financial support for gender equality efforts. Challenges such as funding limitations and capacity constraints are acknowledged, alongside opportunities for leveraging public awareness and international commitments.

Recommendations are provided to enhance capacity, advocate for increased funding, and strengthen partnerships. Overall, the last reporting cycle underscores the significance of maintaining budgetary stability for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the region.

The Beijing Platform of Action (BPfA) committed countries to three strategic objectives (H1, H2, H3) under the theme of Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women. The BPfA provides for:

The creation and the strengthening of national machineries;

The integration of gender perspectives in the legislation, public policies, and programmes and projects; To generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning.

At present, the Department of Gender Affairs in Turks and Caicos is the main mechanism through which the vision and institutional capacities for gender equality in the country are being built. The actions for achieving these objectives listed above involve advancing women’s issues, promoting the involvement of women, training and engaging with policymakers at all stages, and effectively coordinating activities relevant to gender equality and equity at various national levels. Therefore, the need for additional technical trained staff to achieve these goals is an ongoing challenge.

Strengthening political full support and willpower to push the Gender Affairs agenda to ensure that the Unit achieves its stated goals and objectives is among the challenges facing the Unit. It must be noted, however, that although there is some minuscule support it does not produce any waves that will intensify the Unit’s results. This lack of support trickles into the various communities and further

diminishes and lessens the Unit's role and authority to influence change. Additionally, the relevant stakeholder's engagement with the reporting process and adherence to International standards as stipulated in the TCIG's signatory are not up to standard nor timely. Therefore, the information required is either deficient or non-existing and this influences the Unit's proactive approach to mobilize and sensitize other key agencies within society that can advocate for the development and progressive agenda of the Unit.

➤ **In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child, including adolescent girls?**

**Taken measures to combat discriminatory social norms and practices and increased awareness of the needs and potential of girl children**

The Government recognizes the International Day of the Girl Child each year during the reporting period with an empowerment session held on various islands. The day is used to highlight, and inspire young girls and equip them with vital and engaging content that will contribute to their ability to break boundaries and take charge of their future during a critical stage in their development.

The Department of Gender of Affairs enlists the help of NGOs and Government bodies to participate in various activities with all girls across government schools in Providenciales, Grand Turk, and North Caicos. The sessions covered the topic of leadership in 2020 where members of the Department of Gender Affairs joined the primary government schools for a brief session on Leadership. The Department of Gender Affairs created exhibition booths for girls of the H.J Robinson High School to engage them intellectually, foster their creativity, and bolster their confidence.

There was a paused in activities due to COVID-19 which resumed in 2023 with an all-island session on North and Middle Caicos. The Department held a girl power empowerment session on North Caicos at the Adelaide Oemler Primary School for all girls in all primary schools in North and Middle Caicos. One session was held on Grand Turk at the Eliza Simons Primary School, to remind girls that there are no limits to what they can achieve, just because they are girls. The Objectives of the sessions were to:



- To address the challenges that girls face with gender equality and equity.
- To promote the empowerment of girls.
- To educate the girls about their rights.

Over 150 girls were impacted from Grand Turk, Middle, and North Caicos.

### **Strengthened girls' access to quality education, skills development and training**

Attendance to pre-primary education is important for the readiness of children for school. Ensuring that all girls and boys complete primary and secondary education is a target of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Education is a vital prerequisite for combating poverty, empowering women, and economic growth, protecting children from hazardous and exploitative labour and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment, and influencing population growth.

In TCI, children enter primary school at age 6, lower secondary at age 12, and upper secondary school at age 15. There are 6 grades in primary school and 3 + 2 forms in secondary school. In primary school, grades are referred to as grade 1 to grade 6. For lower secondary school, grades are referred to as first form to third form, and in upper secondary as fourth form to fifth form. The school year typically runs from September of one year to June of the following year.

The gross intake rate to the last grade of primary school, primary school completion rate and transition rate to secondary education are presented in Table LN.2.7. The gross intake rate is the ratio of the total number of students, regardless of age, entering the last grade of primary school for the first time, to the number of children of the primary graduation age at the beginning of the current (or most recent) school year.

Completion rate of primary education represents the percentage of a cohort of children aged 3 to 5 years above the official age of the last grade of primary education, that is, the percentage of children who are 14 to 16 years old, who completed primary education in the Turks and Caicos Islands. Completion rates are also presented for lower and upper secondary education.

The table also provides the “effective” transition rate<sup>12</sup>, defined as the percentage of children who continued to the next level of education – the number of children who are attending the first grade of the higher education level in the current school year and were in the last grade of the lower education level the previous year divided by the number of children who were in the last grade of the lower education level the previous school year and are not repeating that grade in the current year.

A low effective transition rate indicates that a low percentage of students are transitioning to the next level of education. This brings to light the existence of potential barriers in an education system including financial obligations such as enrolment fees or the obligation to purchase textbooks or school uniforms; education supply and quality issues such as a limited number of teachers or classrooms and low-quality teaching; as well as social and individual beliefs on education such as low expectation in returns of advancing in education.

Table LN.2.8 focuses on the ratio of girls to boys attending primary and secondary education. These ratios are better known as the Gender Parity Index (GPI). Note that the ratios included here are obtained from adjusted net attendance ratios rather than gross attendance ratios. The latter provides an erroneous description of the GPI mainly because, in most cases, the majority of over-age children attending primary education tend to be boys.

**Table LN.2.7: Gross intake, completion and effective transition rates**

Gross intake rate and completion rate for primary school, effective transition rate to lower secondary school, gross intake rate and completion rate for lower secondary school and completion rate for upper secondary school, Turks and Caicos Islands MICS, 2019-2020

	Gross intake rate to the last grade of primary school <sup>1</sup>	Number of children of primary school completion age	Primary school completion rate <sup>2</sup>	Number of children age 14-16 years <sup>A</sup>	Effective transition rate to lower secondary school <sup>3</sup>	Number of children who were in the last grade of primary school the previous year and are not repeating that grade in the current school year	Gross intake rate to the last grade of lower secondary school <sup>4</sup>	Number of children of lower secondary school completion age	Lower secondary completion rate <sup>5</sup>	Number of adolescents age 17-19 years <sup>A</sup>	Upper secondary completion rate <sup>6</sup>	Number of youth age 19-21 years <sup>A</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>96.3</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>98.7</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>(99.5)</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>(177.2)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>99.3</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>97.7</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>Sex</b>												
Male	(123.9)	28	97.9	59	(*)	22	(*)	7	99.0	78	99.6	58
Female	(70.3)	30	100.0	36	(*)	12	(*)	8	(100.0)	45	(95.9)	62
<b>Region</b>												
Grand Turk	(*)	4	(95.6)	13	(*)	5	(*)	3	(100.0)	12	(94.2)	12
NCMCS CSC	(*)	5	(100.0)	7	(*)	4	(*)	3	(*)	4	(*)	2
Providenciales	(101.9)	49	(99.1)	75	(*)	24	(*)	9	99.2	107	98.0	106
<b>Mother's education<sup>B,C</sup></b>												
Lower secondary or less	(*)	5	(*)	15	(*)	4	(*)	0	na	na	na	na
Upper secondary	(102.6)	28	100.0	43	(*)	16	(*)	11	na	na	na	na
Higher	(99.2)	24	96.3	33	(*)	13	(*)	4	na	na	na	na
<b>Ethnicity of household head</b>												
Black/Negro/African	91.2	53	98.6	88	(99.5)	32	(179.5)	13	99.3	117	98.0	103
Other	(*)	6	(*)	7	(*)	1	(*)	2	(*)	5	(*)	17

**Table LN.2.7: Gross intake, completion and effective transition rates**

Gross intake rate and completion rate for primary school, effective transition rate to lower secondary school, gross intake rate and completion rate for lower secondary school and completion rate for upper secondary school, Turks and Caicos Islands MICS, 2019-2020

	Gross intake rate to the last grade of primary school <sup>1</sup>	Number of children of primary school completion age	Primary school completion rate <sup>2</sup>	Number of children age 14-16 years <sup>A</sup>	Effective transition rate to lower secondary school <sup>3</sup>	Number of children who were in the last grade of primary school the previous year and are not repeating that grade in the current school year	Gross intake rate to the last grade of lower secondary school <sup>4</sup>	Number of children of lower secondary school completion age	Lower secondary completion rate <sup>5</sup>	Number of adolescents age 17-19 years <sup>A</sup>	Upper secondary completion rate <sup>6</sup>	Number of youth age 19-21 years <sup>A</sup>
<b>Wealth index quintile</b>												
Poorest 60%	(96.0)	38	100.0	59	(*)	14	(*)	6	98.8	68	96.8	79
Richest 40%	(96.9)	20	96.6	36	(*)	19	(*)	9	100.0	54	(99.5)	41

<sup>1</sup> MICS indicator LN.7a - Gross intake rate to the last grade (Primary)

<sup>2</sup> MICS indicator LN.8a - Completion rate (Primary)

<sup>3</sup> MICS indicator LN.9 - Effective transition rate to lower secondary school

<sup>4</sup> MICS indicator LN.7b - Gross intake rate to the last grade (Lower secondary)

<sup>5</sup> MICS indicator LN.8b - Completion rate (Lower secondary)

<sup>6</sup> MICS indicator LN.8c - Completion rate (Upper secondary)

<sup>A</sup> Total number of children age 3-5 years above the intended age for the last grade, for primary, lower and upper secondary, respectively

<sup>B</sup> The disaggregate of Mother's education is not available for children age 15-17 years identified as emancipated or those age 18 at the time of interview.

<sup>C</sup> The category of "Don't know/Missing" in the background characteristic of "Mother's education" has been suppressed from the table due to small number of unweighted cases.

na: not applicable

( ) Figures based on 25-49 unweighted cases

(\*) Figures based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases

**Table LN.2.8: Parity indices**

Ratio of adjusted net attendance ratios of girls to boys, in primary, lower and upper secondary school, Turks and Caicos Islands MICS, 2019-2020

	Primary school				Lower secondary school				Upper secondary school			
	Primary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), girls	Primary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), boys	Primary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), total <sup>1,2</sup>	Gender parity index (GPI) for primary school adjusted NAR <sup>3</sup>	Lower secondary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), girls	Lower secondary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), boys	Lower secondary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), total <sup>1,2</sup>	Gender parity index (GPI) for lower secondary school adjusted NAR <sup>3</sup>	Upper secondary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), girls	Upper secondary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), boys	Upper secondary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), total <sup>1,2</sup>	Gender parity index (GPI) for upper secondary school adjusted NAR <sup>3</sup>
<b>Total<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>96.4</b>	<b>96.3</b>	<b>96.4</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>89.1</b>	<b>95.9</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>(90.6)</b>	<b>(76.7)</b>	<b>81.5</b>	<b>1.18</b>
<b>Region</b>												
Grand Turk	96.0	100.0	98.1	0.96	(*)	(97.6)	(98.3)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(83.5)	(*)
NCMCS CSC	(97.7)	(98.6)	98.0	(0.99)	(*)	(*)	(96.3)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)
Providenciales	96.4	95.8	96.0	1.01	(86.2)	(95.6)	90.7	(0.90)	(*)	(76.1)	(81.0)	(*)
<b>Mother's education<sup>4</sup></b>												
Lower secondary or less	(*)	(*)	(100.0)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)
Upper secondary	96.6	92.7	94.6	1.04	(82.3)	(99.6)	89.9	(0.83)	(*)	(*)	(75.2)	(*)
Higher	99.1	100.0	99.6	0.99	(*)	(95.4)	96.8	(*)	(*)	(*)	(78.1)	(*)
Missing/DK	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	-	(*)	-	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)
<b>Ethnicity of household head</b>												
Black/Negro/African	96.1	95.9	96.0	1.00	86.3	95.8	91.6	0.90	(89.3)	(76.1)	80.4	(1.17)
Other	(*)	(*)	(100.0)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)
<b>Wealth index quintile</b>												
Poorest	(98.9)	(100.0)	99.3	(0.99)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)
Second	(100.0)	(99.5)	99.8	(1.00)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)
Middle	(89.1)	(100.0)	94.5	(0.89)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)
Fourth	(100.0)	(89.8)	93.5	(1.11)	(*)	(*)	(91.2)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)
Richest	(97.1)	(100.0)	98.5	(0.97)	(*)	(*)	(99.5)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)

**Table LN.2.8: Parity indices**

Ratio of adjusted net attendance ratios of girls to boys, in primary, lower and upper secondary school, Turks and Caicos Islands MICS, 2019-2020

	Primary school				Lower secondary school				Upper secondary school			
	Primary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), girls	Primary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), boys	Primary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), total <sup>1,2</sup>	Gender parity index (GPI) for primary school adjusted NAR <sup>3</sup>	Lower secondary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), girls	Lower secondary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), boys	Lower secondary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), total <sup>1,2</sup>	Gender parity index (GPI) for lower secondary school adjusted NAR <sup>3</sup>	Upper secondary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), girls	Upper secondary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), boys	Upper secondary school adjusted net attendance ratio (NAR), total <sup>1,2</sup>	Gender parity index (GPI) for upper secondary school adjusted NAR <sup>3</sup>
<b>Parity indices</b>												
<b>Wealth</b>												
Poorest/Richest <sup>1</sup>	(1.02)	(1.00)	1.01	na	(*)	(*)	(*)	na	(*)	(*)	(*)	na
<b>Orphanhood</b>												
Orphans/non-orphans	(*)	(*)	1.04	na	(*)	(*)	(*)	na	(*)	(*)	(*)	na
<sup>1</sup> MICS indicator LN.11b - Parity indices - primary, lower and upper secondary attendance (wealth); SDG indicator 4.5.1 <sup>2</sup> MICS indicator LN.11c - Parity indices - primary, lower and upper secondary attendance (area); SDG indicator 4.5.1 <sup>3</sup> MICS indicator LN.11a - Parity indices - primary, lower and upper secondary attendance (gender); SDG indicator 4.5.1												
<sup>A</sup> The disaggregate of Mother's education is not available for children age 15-17 years identified as emancipated or those age 18 at the time of interview. The sum of cases in the disaggregate may not equal the total denominator. na: not applicable ( ) Figures that are based on 25-45 unweighted cases (*) Figures that are based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases												

## Incorporated stem education/closure of gender digital divide in access to digital tools and competencies for girls

STEM education is taught from the primary school level to the tertiary level in the Territory. At the primary level, the government seeks to incorporate STEM through career and life skills across the learning areas<sup>7</sup>. Integration of career and life skills increases students' capabilities to think critically and develop hands-on skills. This helps bridge the gap for girls often left behind in this area. This is

<sup>7</sup> (<https://gov.tc/cdu/index.php/primary/curriculum>).

grounded in developing STEAM and STEM skills with a focus on problem/project-based learning. Students are engaged in activities that provide them with the skills and competencies needed to function in the 21st Century. Opportunities are made for students to solve authentic problems/projects to develop skills that allow them to contribute to society as creative problem-solvers to become well-informed citizens.

### **The Math Lab**

The Math Lab was founded in 2019. Fortis TCI, the Territories provider of Electricity signed a three-year partnership agreement with The Math Lab, a local education and training facility, to deliver a series of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) development programs for students. The company has committed \$20,000 per annum for the next three years to support STEM programs, build science literacy, and stimulate a passion for innovation.

The inaugural program for 2022 is the country's first-ever robotics symposium scheduled for Saturday, January 29, in Providenciales. This event provides registered participants ages 13 to 17 with the opportunity to design, code, and build real robots under the direction of a robotics engineer and computer scientist from overseas.

Other programs slated include an annual Easter Coding program, Speed Math Competitions, a STEM Summer Program, a second Robotics Symposium, a STEM after-school skills development program, and a tutoring assistance program in Math and Science. The planned format of these programs is set to align with COVID-19 safety protocols.

Girls are active participants in all the programs offered by the Math Club.

- **In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and land degradation?**

**Strengthened evidence and/or raised awareness about gender-specific environmental and health hazards (e.g. consumer products, technologies, industrial pollution)**

**The Public and Environmental Health Department (EHD)**, within the Ministry of Health and Human Services, serves as a vital entity dedicated to ensuring the well-being and quality of life for all residents of Turks and Caicos Islands. The Department's primary mandate is to assess, correct, control, and prevent environmental factors that pose potential threats to the health of both present and future generations. These encompass a wide range of factors, including biological agents such as viruses and bacteria, physical elements like air and water quality, housing conditions, noise pollution, waste management, and socio-economic determinants like education, lifestyle choices, and policy implementation.

Scope of EHD Activities: The EHD operates across diverse areas of environmental health management, encompassing Solid and Liquid Waste Management, Vector Control, Food Hygiene and Safety, Port Health, Air and Water Quality Management, Pollution Prevention and Control, as well as Environmental Impact Assessments for Planning and Land Use.

Integration of Gender Perspectives: Over the past five years, the Public and Environmental Health Department has proactively worked towards integrating gender perspectives and addressing gender concerns within its environmental policies. This concerted effort has particularly focused on environmental health legislation and compliance, as well as integrated vector control measures. Here are some key actions taken:

1. Promoting Women's Participation and Leadership: The Department has made significant strides in promoting gender diversity and leadership within its ranks. Currently, 75% of the management positions within the Public and Environmental Health Department are held by women, including roles such as Deputy Chief Environmental Health Officers and the Vector Control Coordinator. Furthermore, women constitute 45% of the overall staff complement within the department. This

demonstrates a strong commitment to gender inclusivity and representation at all levels of decision-making.

2. Capacity Building Initiatives: Recognizing the importance of equipping its officers with the requisite knowledge and skills for effective performance, the EHD has implemented various capacity-building initiatives. These initiatives aim to enhance the professional competencies of officers while also fostering personal development. Notable programs include the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) Certification for Vector Control Officers, Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) & Certified Professional in Food Safety (CP-FS) certifications for Environmental Health Officers, and Food Safety Certification programs.

Impact and Lessons Learned: These efforts to integrate gender perspectives into environmental policies have yielded significant impacts, including enhanced gender diversity in leadership positions, improved representation of women in environmental decision-making processes, and strengthened capacity among officers to address gender-specific health concerns. Lessons learned from these initiatives underscore the importance of ongoing training and capacity-building programs to ensure that officers remain abreast of emerging challenges and best practices in gender-responsive environmental health management.

The Public and Environmental Health Department remains committed to advancing gender equality and inclusivity within its mandate of safeguarding public health and environmental well-being. By continuing to prioritize gender perspectives in policy development and operational practices, the Department aims to create a more equitable and sustainable environment for all residents of Turks and Caicos Islands.

➤ **In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction and building environmental and climate resilience?**

As a low-lying coral-based archipelago, the Turks and Caicos Islands is at an increasing disadvantage for the adverse side effects of climate change, especially susceptible to natural disasters and hazards such as hurricanes. The Government of Turks and Caicos recognizes that although Turks and Caicos Islands ‘may play a very small contributing role to global climate change, is one of the most vulnerable... like the rest of the Caribbean, the TCI’s beautiful beaches, coral reefs, mangroves, fisheries, bird life, and essentially the tourism products and the livelihoods which are focused on the coast are all threatened by climate change’<sup>8</sup>. In 2008, approximately 8,000 persons were adversely affected during Hurricane season, and in 2017, Hurricane Irma resulted in an estimated USD \$500 million in total damages. In addition, it was estimated that the cost of total damages caused by Disasters from 2000- 2021 was \$1 Billion<sup>9</sup>.

Most recently, in 2022, Hurricane Fiona made landfall in Turks and Caicos Islands as a Category 3 Storm. While ‘preliminary assessments revealed that the damage across the country was minimal’, the full restoration of phone, internet and utilities required additional time and resources<sup>10</sup>. To address climate change and promote disaster resilience, The Department of Disaster Management and Emergencies (DDME) leads the Disaster and Risk Management response in Turks and Caicos and has incorporated the CDEMA approach to Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM), in terms of disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery in Turks and Caicos Islands. The DDME also promotes education and sensitization for the public to raise awareness of the Turks and Caicos approaches to disaster responses, covering a range of issues including: a Family Emergency Plan, Hurricane Preparedness, Earthquake and Tsunami materials, as well as Guides on Family Emergency Plans, Guidance for Senior Citizens and Disaster volunteer programming knowledge materials.

---

<sup>8</sup> TCI DDME (2022). [Hazards: Climate Change](#)

<sup>9</sup> Relief Web (2022). [OCHA: Turks and Caicos Islands: Overseas Territory Profile \(June 2022\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> SUN TCI (2022). [Turks and Caicos Re-opens after Hurricane Fiona](#)



**Climate and environmental resilience (e.g. disaster laws addressing vulnerability of women in disaster)**

**Turks and Caicos Islands Disaster Management (National Systematic Shutdown) Regulations 2023**

In a resolute effort to ensure protection from loss of life and damage to property, the Turks and Caicos Island Government has approved a new Regulation that will allow a systematic shutdown to be implemented in the event of a hazardous situation such as a tropical storm or hurricane. The Disaster Management (National Systematic Shutdown) Regulations 2023 are made under section 64(2)(c) of the Disaster Management Ordinance. These new Regulations provide the Government with the legal framework to implement a phased/systematic shutdown of the entire Turks and Caicos Islands or a phased/systematic shutdown of any island that is impacted by a hazardous event.

The Regulations include the following components: National Shutdown Order, Offence and Fixed Penalty, Staggered Approach, Public and Private Sector Shutdown Procedures, Essential Services, and the All Clear/Reactivation Procedures.

**National Shutdown Order:** The National Systematic Shutdown Regulations which comes into operation on October 20th, 2023 will allow H.E. the Governor under the guidelines set out in the Regulations to issue a shutdown order requiring the closure of businesses and services and restrict the movement of persons within the Islands. The issuance of the shutdown order would be in effect for every sector of the Island(s). A shutdown order can be issued after the Turks and Caicos Islands have been issued a ‘Warning’ notification, for example about a tropical storm or hurricane.

**Offence:** A shutdown order will be issued with a timeline required for enforcement. Individuals and businesses who fail to comply with a shutdown order may be found liable for committing an offense and can be sentenced to a fine of \$10,000 or imprisonment for two years, or both.

**Fixed Penalty**

The Royal Turks and Caicos Islands Police Officer as the enforcers, can issue a ticket to individuals and businesses found to have been in breach of a shutdown order.

An individual opting to plead guilty can produce the ticket to the Clerk at the Magistrate Court on or before the date present on the ticket and pay the Fines as follows:

- (a) individuals can be charged a fine of \$500.00
- (b) Businesses can be charged a fine of \$5,000.00.

Staggered approach: The National Shutdown order can be issued utilizing a staggered approach to allow for Private and Public Essential Sectors identified in the Regulations to implement systematic closure of operations for as long as possible towards the enforcement timeline. It is intended that this approach will allow national operations to be smoothly transitioned toward closure.

Essential Services: The Regulations identify essential Services/Agencies for both the private and public sector. The general public is encouraged to become familiar with these services/agencies.

All Clear: The Regulations provide the Government with the right to issue the All Clear for the reactivation of the Turks and Caicos Islands. The general public is reminded that residents are required to remain indoors (homes/buildings) until the All Clear is given.

# SECTION 4



## NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

➤ **Please describe your country’s national strategy or action plan for gender equality, including its name, the period it covers, its priority, funding, and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the targets under SDG 5.**

The Country is in the process of finalizing its gender equality policy to be launched in 2024. The policy will be called the Turks and Caicos Islands National Gender Equality Policy. The policy is set to run for five years from 2024 to 2029. The goals of the policy are to:

**Goals:**

- Providing an efficient, effective structure for Gender Equity and Social Justice.
- Advising government, civic, and social organizations on issues affecting women and men.
- Liaising with local committees in neighboring islands, and regional and international agencies dealing with women’s affairs.
- Domestic and Family Legislation Reform / Review

The overall target population for the policy will be all women and girls, men and boys in the Territory. There will however be a special focus on those living in informal settlement communities, immigrants, youth, persons living with disabilities, the LGBTQ community, sex workers, persons in common-law unions, and women in agriculture. These key groups are directly impacted by some of the main issues in the TCI thus they must be engaged to ensure that the policy is reflective of the realities on the ground:

<i>Target Groups to Consider for the National Gender Equality Policy: Turks and Caicos Islands</i>
• <i>Undocumented persons in informal settlement communities</i>
• <i>Immigrants</i>
• <i>Youth</i>
• <i>Persons living with disabilities</i>
• <i>Sex workers</i>
• <i>Victims of Trafficking</i>
• <i>Persons in common-law unions</i>
• <i>Women in agriculture</i>

*The policy is yet to be costed neither as the final decision on who will fund the document been made. However, it is desired to be funded through public-private and International Development partners. The Policy will have five focus areas as reflected in the chart below;*



The Document is directly aligned to the 2030 development goal as it seeks to eliminate all forms of violence against women, such as human trafficking, and sexual exploitation, and value unpaid domestic work through public services, infrastructures, and social protection policies. Focus 3 strategic objectives clearly states: “Enhance the national response to gender-based discrimination and violence, sexual harassment, and trafficking, through improving access to justice, quality essential services and referral pathways towards ensuring the safety and security of victims/survivors of violence”. This will enhance the services of the referral pathway and provide protection for victims and survivors of domestic violence.

- **Please describe your country's system for tracking the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting), including the approximate proportion of the national budget that is invested in this area.**

The Government tracks the budget through the Budgets Department in the Ministry of Finance. There is a call for budgets annually around September, this leads to the submission of KPIs. These are then reviewed by the Ministry management and submitted to the Budget Officer. The final budget is then submitted to The Budget Department in preparation for the Appropriation Committee. After the budgets are defended they are then., submitted to the House of Assembly for approval.

Each budget since 2023 must submit the Gender Impact for all their KPIs before approved. The government is in Phase 1 of the introduction of Gender budgeting and is still unable to say exactly what portion of the budget addresses gender needs. Each department is however asked to review gender statements to show how they will be impacted by their department's programme budgets.

Phase 1 is assisted by the Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Center (CARTAC). The raw budget shows inequity in gender norms for the Territory.

The next step in introducing Gender Responsive Budgeting is tracking budget planning and implementation. Our next step is to implement a procedure to review all of the expenditures and tag those that are considered to target gender equality in line with the approved definition of budget expenditures for gender equality. It will assist in ensuring that individual expenditure captures gender needs of the population.

➤ **What formal mechanisms are in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

The government uses the Department of Gender Affairs to compile the information for the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which is done by allowing various groupings to send their response to inform the process.

The Sustainable development goals are tracked through the Premier's Office. This is done through the use of information collected for the Vision 2040 document and the country's annual budget KPIs.

The Vision 2040 plan reflects the Territories collective aspiration for the highest human development index that can be supported by the economic opportunities available to the TCI for the future. Its goal of triple-bottom-line sustainability - economic, social, and ecological - will be achieved through a governance framework is optimized through the country's natural resources, human capital, investment climate, development potential, and innovation and technology

The development of the Vision 2040 document drew on several documents that were previously prepared many of which had been informed by wide public consultations. Secondly, gaps were filled through the efforts of a technical team from the Ministry of Finance and other government departments with the assistance of a consultant. These efforts included the undertaking of necessary research and the drawing on expert knowledge including through consultations with government ministries and departments, other public-sector agencies, as well as with private sector and other non-governmental representative bodies

To meet the goals articulated in Vision 2040, The government needs leadership that will work with all stakeholders to drive the process, deliver on every promise, and meet every goal from all areas of society including the public and private sector, international development partners, civil society, women's rights, and faith-based organizations.

There are specific mechanisms set up to monitor the Vision 2040 over the period leading up to the year 2040 which will see the government meeting with various stakeholders and groups at varying intervals. This will inform the government's achievement of the Sustainable development goals. Its

monitoring and evaluation framework voluntarily incorporates the 2030 SDGs into its development planning framework as this would help the country keep focus on sustainable development imperatives.

The Government through the Ministry of Finance also monitors the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals through the Annual Budget KPIs focusing on various ministries and Department's work. They all have to show specific goals that coordinate with the SDGs.

➤ **Please describe how stakeholders have contributed to the preparation of the present national report.**

Through official correspondence, presentations on the international process, and dissemination of the BPFA guidance notes, the national gender machinery the Department of Gender Affairs, communicated with relevant and key NGOs, CSOs, Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), representatives, and Permanent Secretaries for collaboration at all levels on the preparations for the National review report, to benefit from their experience and expertise as well as they are called upon to contribute to the preparation of the report.

➤ **Please describe your country's action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women.**

The Country has not yet received the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.



# SECTION 5



# DATA AND STATISTICS

➤ **What are the most important areas in which your country has made the most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?**

Over the past five years, significant progress has been made in gender statistics at the national level in the following key areas:

**Conducted New Surveys:**

The Statistics Authority (formerly known as the Statistics Department) implemented the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in collaboration with UNICEF. This survey was designed to capture indicators from 11 of the 16 sustainable development goals and it assisted with generating comprehensive national baseline information on specialized topics such as time use and gender-based violence. The MICS has facilitated a deeper understanding of gender disparities and informed policy-making aimed at addressing these inequalities. The MICS was fully funded by UNICEF and came at no direct cost to the Authority. The MICS was the first survey conducted by the Authority that included questions specifically designed for males and others specifically designed for females. Additionally, it is the only survey conducted by the Authority where female respondents were interviewed by female interviewers and male respondents were interviewed by male interviewers.

**Capacity Building**

Efforts to strengthen the use of gender statistics have been encouraged through extensive capacity-building initiatives. Members of staff have participated in a range of trainings and seminars designed to enhance their skills and knowledge in the area of Gender Statistics. Noteworthy among these are the Regional Sensitization and Training Workshop on CARICOM Agreed Minimum Standards for the Management of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Administrative Data; the Gender Statistics and Indicators Training Course; and the Gender-Based Budgeting Training Course. These programs have equipped staff members with the expertise to effectively manage and utilize gender statistics, thereby improving the quality and impact of gender-related data collection and analysis. These trainings/workshops were regionally funded and came at no direct cost to the Authority.

**Established an Inter-Agency Coordination Mechanism**

To further strengthen the collection and use of gender statistics, an inter-department working group

has been established. Organized by the Department of Gender Affairs, this mechanism consists of a technical working group comprising representatives from various government departments that collect some form of data. This coordinated approach ensures consistency, enhances data sharing, and fosters a comprehensive understanding of gender issues across different sectors.

These advancements reflect the Statistics Authority's commitment to improving gender statistics, which is essential for fostering gender equality and empowering all citizens.

➤ **Over the next five years, what are your country's priorities for strengthening national gender statistics?**

The Statistics Authority has identified several key priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years. These areas include but are not limited to the following:

**Re-processing of Existing Data**

A major focus will be on re-processing existing data from censuses and surveys to produce more disaggregated and new gender statistics. All surveys within the Authority have captured the gender variable, cross tabulations can be using this variable along with other variables to provide additional gender-disaggregated statistics. By re-examining this data, we aim to uncover deeper insights into gender disparities and trends that may have been previously overlooked. This process will help to create a more detailed and nuanced understanding of gender issues across various demographic groups.

**Conduct of New Surveys**

The Statistics Authority plans to conduct new surveys that will focus on special issues relating to gender statistics. The Authority will also add components on time use and gender-based violence to all of our existing surveys aside from the MICS that already have these components. These surveys will fill critical data gaps and provide a comprehensive picture of gender-related issues, enabling the development of targeted and effective policies and programs.

### **Statistical Capacity Building:**

The Statistics Authority plans to organize additional training and workshops to provide staff with a better understanding of gender indicators and their relevance to various sectors; improve techniques for collecting gender-disaggregated data; and provide training on the use of statistical software and tools relevant to gender data analysis. Adequate training will ensure that gender statistics are effectively used to inform decision-making processes and to promote gender equality. By focusing on these areas, we aim to significantly advance the quality and impact of gender statistics, thereby supporting the development of more equitable and inclusive policies and programs.

➤ **What gender-specific indicators<sup>7</sup> has your country prioritized for monitoring progress on the SDGs?**

*In the narrative report, please also explain any challenges in collecting and compiling data on these indicators.*

*In the online survey, you will be asked if your country has defined a national set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs (YES/NO); if YES, you will be asked how many indicators are included in the national set, how many of those indicators are gender-specific, and whether data collection and compilation on gender-specific indicators has begun (YES/NO).*

The Turks and Caicos Islands currently do not have an official list of indicators that we prioritize but we look at those particularly related to health, education, economic participation, violence against women, and political representation, to monitor their progress. Addressing gender inequality and empowering women and girls in the TCI.

Health and Well-Being (SDG 3): Reducing the number of teenage pregnancies and guaranteeing access to sexual and reproductive health services are crucial goals. These metrics aid in measuring and enhancing women's health outcomes and access to essential healthcare.

Education (SDG 4): Gender equality in education is a key area of concern. The Turks and Caicos Islands monitor primary, secondary, and university enrollment rates to ensure that females have equal opportunities to attend school. We also monitor literacy rates among women and girls, as education serves as a crucial tool for economic engagement and empowerment.

Economic Gender Equality (SDGs 5 and 8): We evaluate economic gender equality using measures such as the percentage of women in leadership roles and pay parity for comparable labour. Women's employment rates are given priority, even those in the unorganized sector. These steps contribute to the understanding and resolution of obstacles preventing women from fully engaging in the economy.

SDG 5 and SDG 16 pertain to Violence Against Women. Monitoring the incidence of intimate relationships and domestic violence is crucial for defending women's rights and ensuring their protection. The effectiveness of legislative frameworks and survivor support services is evaluated by monitoring the reporting and prosecution rates of gender-based violence. Political Participation (SDG 5): A crucial measure of political empowerment is the percentage of seats held by women in local and national legislatures. This contributes to ensuring that women participate in decision-making at all governmental levels.

The TCI has a difficult time gathering and assembling gender-specific data despite these efforts. Data gaps and discrepancies are a significant difficulty. Comparisons may occasionally be challenging and unreliable due to the TCI's inconsistent collection and reporting of comprehensive data across all gender-specific factors. Another major obstacle is resource limitation, which makes it difficult to carry out frequent and thorough surveys due to a lack of technical and financial resources. The gathering and application of gender data about the SDGs have not received regular funding.

The TCI is concentrating on several strategic initiatives to solve these issues. To guarantee a unified approach to gender statistics, they include creating gender-responsive policies and programs, improving training and capacity building for the Statistics Authority, and setting up inter-department coordination structures. The Statistics Authority plans to fill in the gaps in traditional survey data, by making use of new technologies and alternative data sources, such as administrative data and big data.

➤ **Which data disaggregation<sup>8</sup> are routinely provided by major surveys in your country?**

All of the above data disaggregation's are provided by major surveys conducted by the Statistical Authority. These disaggregation's help policymakers to design effective and targeted interventions. They also help to monitor the progress toward national and international goals, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

From the list provided the most relevant disaggregation from our major surveys would be the following:

**Sex**

Disaggregating data by sex reveals differences in experiences and outcomes between men and women, highlighting gender inequalities in areas such as education, employment, health, and migration.

**Age**

Age disaggregation helps identify the specific needs and challenges faced by different age groups, such as children, youth, adults, and the elderly. This is essential for designing age-appropriate policies and programs.

**Disability**

Data on people with disabilities is crucial for understanding their unique challenges and ensuring that they are included in all aspects of society.

**Income**

Income: Income-disaggregated data highlights economic disparities and helps target poverty alleviation efforts. It shows how income levels affect access to services and opportunities.

## **Migratory**

Understanding the experiences and trends of migrants not only helps address issues related to integration and access to services but also indicates population growth.

## **Section Six: Conclusion and Next Steps**

### **CHALLENGES/LESSONS LEARNT**

*The compilation of this report which measured the progression of the BPPA throughout Turks and Caicos Islands had some challenges and lessons learned. It was expected that the process of gathering the necessary data from multiple agencies would not occur without challenge.*

*There is a need for gender mainstreaming across government and the private sector bodies which routinely treat with planning for and allocating resources to men, women, boys, and girls. Central repositories of gender-disaggregated data are not yet available within many of these agencies in as ready or useable a fashion as they should be. However, their remit dictates the necessity for it. As constructs of gender equality and equity become more prevalent and are mainstreamed into the development of the country it is expected that the ability to respond to requests for information to fulfill reporting requirements will be enhanced as a natural consequence.*

*The response time of the agencies contacted proved a hindrance to the collection collation and representation of the information needed for the report. Time spent in waiting and follow-up devoured a significant portion of that allocated and impacted the ability to adhere to timelines set for submission. Both the collation and drafting process were heavily impacted by the lag which seemed unavoidable in many instances due to competing priorities and staff allocation as explained by the partners contacted.*

*The lack of gender-disaggregated data among certain sectors presented challenges making it harder to see the full picture. This way, you can more clearly see how the experiences between men and women differ. The data collected often does not distinguish between genders, allowing the recipient to see and quantify the different experiences between genders. Earmarked for partners across multiple sectors, the training will not only sensitize the importance of having these data sets but will provide vital knowledge on strategies and tools that would enable their collection and collation.*

*This reminded the government that collecting gender-disaggregated data is important for tracking progress and making informed decisions toward gender equality. Limited data means limited*


*knowledge and uninformed decision-making. This is a vital part of any country's Sustainable Development Goals achievement.*

*These challenges also revealed the grave need for gender focal points within various sectors required to share their information with the department to fulfill the areas covered by this report. Liaison with departments that were able to allocate a staff member with the requisite knowledge and access to the needful was a much smoother process than that which involved entities without the ability to allocate personnel. This also presents a strong case for the development of gender focal points within the Turks and Caicos Islands. the KPIs of the Department of Gender Affairs for the fiscal year 2024/2025. Moving the needle forward on this measure would go a long way in*



*mitigating time and response challenges as it would also strengthen the culture of collaboration with the department and its equality objectives.*

*In closing it is noteworthy to mention that as in the case of the invisibility of some communities, there are concerns about some areas of the legal and legislative framework which can benefit from enhancement to fit modern challenges. Similar to the Domestic Violence Ordinance of 2015 which came into force in 2021, there is the need for legal frameworks to address sexual harassment and technology-facilitated abuse and violence. These infractions are currently present in the community but those who suffer them have no legal recourse through which they can seek protection or redress.*



The Ministry of Home Affairs,  
Telecommunication,  
Broadcasting, Energy and  
Utilities, and the  
Telecommunication  
Commission




DEPARTMENT OF  
**GA**  
GENDER AFFAIRS

**The Department of Gender Affairs  
commemorates the annual  
16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**

*"Orange the world: End violence against women now!"*

**November 25, 2021 - Members of the public are encouraged to join the Gender Department, and our regional and global partners in wearing the colour orange to signify their commitment to working towards ending violence against women and to unify all activities and bring attention to the issue of gender-based violence (GBV).**

**December 3, 2021 at 10:00 am - Gender Affairs will host the "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" exhibition in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Broadcasting, Energy and Utilities parking lot in Grand Turk, which will include a visual display showcasing stories of women and girls who have experienced violence and a short skit tackling key GBV issues.**



For more information, contact the  
Department of Gender Affairs at:  
649-338-2681 - Grand Turk  
649-338-4004 - Providenciales