



MEN AND WOMEN FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN LEBANON



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The Issue

Standing at 145 out of 153 countries (Global Gender Gap Report 2020), Lebanon has one of the highest overall gender gaps in the world, and amongst the lowest rates of women's political participation (149 out of 153 countries) and labour market participation (139 out of 153 countries). Sixty percent of Lebanese women report having experienced some form of sexual harassment in the street, 31 percent of women in Lebanon report ever experiencing one or more forms of intimate partner violence, and 24 percent of men report ever perpetrating one or more forms of intimate partner violence.

The depth and pervasiveness of gender inequality in Lebanon finds its roots in a complex history of sectarianism and conflict. Gender dynamics are structured around militarised notions of masculinities and social norms that see women secondary to men. At the household level, gender relations are structured around the inequitable distribution of labour between men and women, which see women primarily as mothers and caregivers, and men as providers.

Family law in Lebanon, which underpins and codifies gender inequalities, is governed by personal status laws established in line with religious confessions. Critical to addressing gender inequalities in Lebanon, is understanding and changing social norms around gender relations work, which needs both women and men. As a first step to this, in 2017 Promundo and UN Women in Lebanon conducted the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) (as part of a multi country survey within the Arab states), which found that while many men in Lebanon still hold deeply entrenched inequitable views, some change is noticeable, with men beginning to embrace gender equality.

Our Strategy for Change

UN Women's programme "Men and Women for Gender Equality" (2015-2019), funded by the Government of Sweden, was developed to address the root causes of gender inequality as identified by the IMAGES data. The programme has a bottom-up approach that addresses social norms, legislation and policies related to gender inequality. The programme entered its second phase in 2019 with the following objectives:

1. **Implementing and replicating interventions for challenging social norms and promoting gender equality at the community level.**
Support is provided to community-based initiatives across the country with focus on engagement of youth and fathers/other men in violence prevention and childcare. These initiatives identify male champions and roll out a model on engaging fathers in sharing unpaid care work. Key service providers spread messages about fatherhood linking to UN Women's regional 'Because I am a Father' campaign and engages men as spokespersons.
2. **Supporting key institutions (academia, faith-based institutions, military agencies, media) to integrate/promote gender responsive practices.**
UN Women works with partners and the government of Lebanon to support institutions commit to gender-responsive practices to promote gender equality and male engagement (universities/schools/governments/ministries).
3. **Advocating for the government to reform and/or develop laws, policies and strategies that promote gender equality.**
Civil society organisations/coalitions aiming to reform the legislative and policy environment in line with international

Rachel Dore-Weeks
Head of Office, Lebanon, UN Women
Email: rachel.weeks@unwomen.org

norms and frameworks are supported. This includes targeting legislation to end violence and discrimination against women, parental leave policies and the inclusion of “engaging men and boys” in national strategies to promote gender equality. National policy dialogues, seminars and roundtables are organised in that regard in collaboration with the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW).

Theory of Change-Phase II

If (1) Communities demonstrate more gender equitable behaviours; if (2) Key institutions (academia, faith-based institutions, media, governments) and networks integrate/promote gender-responsive practices; and if (3) Laws, policies and strategies promoting gender equality are drafted, revised and/or approved; then (4) Men and women in Arab societies can equally exercise their rights and opportunities as active citizens in their communities and countries; because (5) equality will be promoted at all levels of society through positive behavioural change and through a favourable legislative environment.

Results: Phase I

The evaluation of Phase I of the programme found that:

- Community-based interventions have made progress in promoting gender equality on the individual level, particularly in attitudes. There is also emerging evidence of changes in behaviours and power dynamics among family members of direct beneficiaries, with families reporting more equitable distribution of work and an increased choice for women.
- Innovative techniques, (including positive deviance, arts-based activities, peer groups to engage men and boys in this work), proved successful in influencing individual-level changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours towards more gender-equitable practices.
- UN Women supported the adaptation of “Program P” (a regional gender transformative fatherhood curriculum developed by PROMUNDO and rolled out in Lebanon by UN Women’s local partner ABAAD) to the Lebanese context, to complement community based interventions. This was rolled out across communities in Lebanon, targeting men and their female partners, who were married

with at least one child between the age of 0 and 5. Upon completion, women reported sharp decreased levels of physical violence by their partners (from 28% to 11%). An 11% reduction in reports of economic violence and a 6% reduction in emotional violence were also evident. Change was also observed in men’s attitudes on confining women to the care of the home and the children (from 83% to 54%), and on designating men as the primary decision makers in the home (from 68% to 29%).

- To institutionalise the initiative, ABAAD, in coordination with UN Women, is negotiating an agreement with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) to have the curriculum endorsed by MoSA and to train a number of trainers from the Social Development Centers on the finalized Program P curriculum.

Impact: 2019-2022

- Communities have more gender equitable behaviours.
- A model for engaging fathers in gender equality exists and is embraced by national actors.
- Key national institutions integrate/promote gender-responsive practices.
- Civil society organisations have greater capacity to advocate for legal and policy change.
- Laws, policies and strategies to promote gender equality are drafted, revised and/or approved.

Partnerships for change

- Authorities from a range of ministries (social affairs, education, youth and sports etc), parliamentarians, municipalities and the National Commission for Lebanese Women;
- Faith-based organisations;
- Women, youth and men’s grassroot groups and organizations;
- National civil society organizations and feminist organizations;
- UN agencies and the World Bank;
- Interagency coordination groups;
- Research institutions;
- The private sector;
- The media.