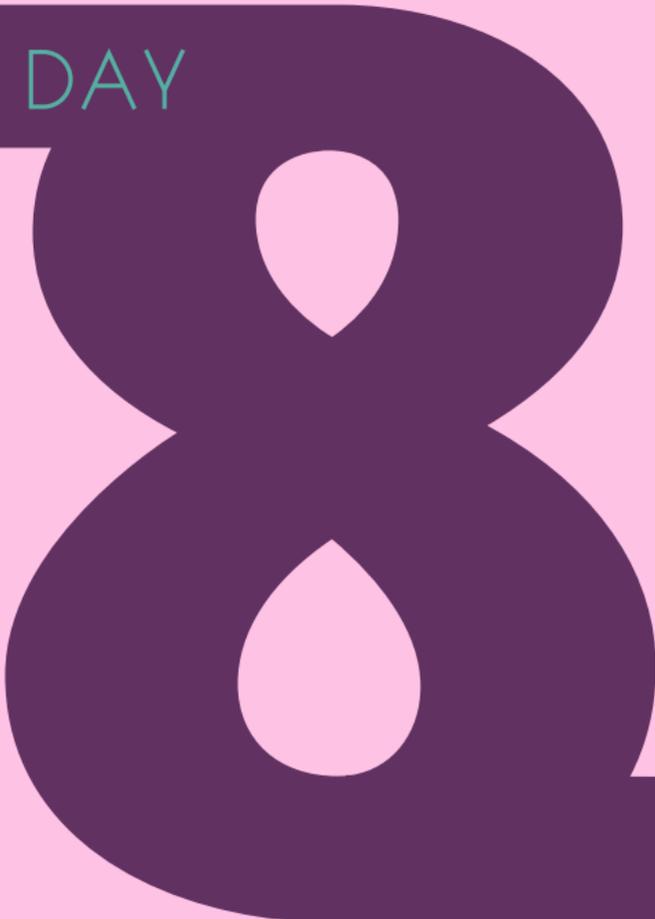


HAPPY WOMEN'S DAY



“There is ample evidence that investing in women is the most effective way to lift communities, companies, and even countries. Women’s participation makes peace agreements stronger, societies more resilient and economies more vigorous. Where women face discrimination, we often find practices and beliefs that are detrimental to all (...) At this crucial moment for women’s rights, it is time for men to stand with women, listen to them and learn from them.”

UN Secretary-General, António Guterres



“On this International Women’s Day, join me in celebrating them [activists working on women’s equality and rights] and honoring their work in the best way possible (...) They have created a momentum for change that builds on the promises of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. These 17 goals (...) are strongly interconnected, and gender equality is pivotal to achieving all of them. That means that all of us have a role to play in supporting women’s empowerment, at home, in our communities—and in the workplace.”

UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner

MARCH



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

365 days of a Gender Journey: Stories from UNDP Lebanon

FOREWORD

A year has passed since the release of the first edition of our annual newsletter that marks the International Women Day. The past year spotted important progress in advancing gender equality agenda. At the same time, it witnessed set-backs, especially in terms of reforming the electoral law and including a women quota.

Looking at this year in retrospective, I applaud, despite related loopholes, what the women's rights activists had long demanded - the parliament's repeal of article 522 of the penal code, under which rapists who marry their victims are exempted from punishment. I also welcome the reform of the municipal electoral law, providing women with the opportunity to choose to vote in their own constituency rather than that of their spouse. This period was also marked by the many achievements of the national women machinery, with which UN agencies have proudly partnered; this includes the development of a gender equality strategy based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and a strategy to combat violence against women. Equally important is the act of drafting laws to eliminate discrimination against women and encouraging the cabinet to nominate women in high and leadership levels of administrative positions. Finally, it is worth to mention the establishment of mechanisms to develop a national action plan to implement the UN Security Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, and to engage actively with civil society on many priorities for women.

Despite the efforts exerted so far to improve the situation, Women in Lebanon are still facing discrimination and inequalities. The 53% of the Lebanese population, is under represented, and is actually almost exclusively represented by men. The new electoral law that passed in June 2017, includes many reforms, but not any form of special temporary measure to encourage women to participate. This failure suggests that stronger political will and commitment and more ambitious measures are needed to boost women's political participation and empowerment. Civil society agents have taken the lead in providing women with opportunities and space to actively participate in elections, as candidates and voters. The coming months are critical in Lebanon to break the glass and make a real difference. As a first encouraging sign, among the nearly 1000 candidates running for the 2018 parliamentary elections, 111 are women, an all-time record; in 2009, only 12 were registered. This offers a new momentum to vote for more women and increase their chances of participation in the parliament.

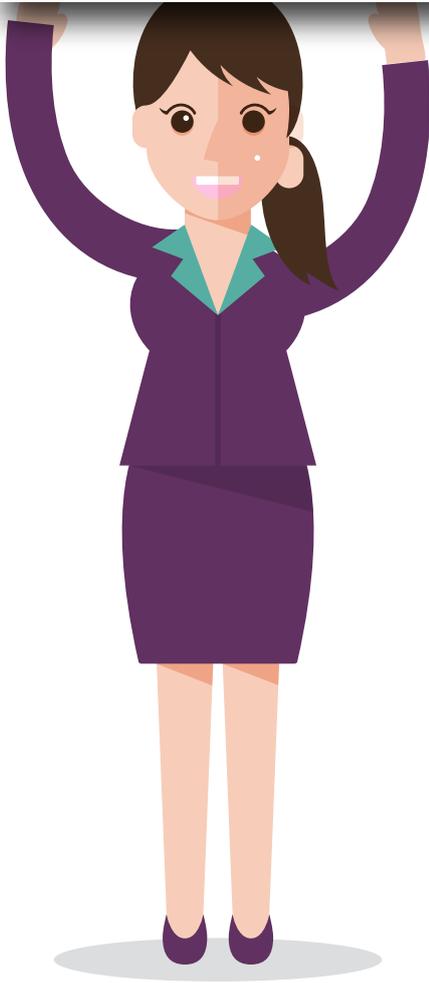
The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), jointly with other UN agencies, will continue building on these transformations, and will continue to place gender equality at the front of programmatic and operational priorities. and we will continue to strive to make SDG No. 5 "Gender Equality" a national priority. We believe that by empowering women, the state will experience less conflict and more stability and prosperity. To reach that end, social, economic, and political equality should remain a core priority.

The second issue of the newsletter will provide you with insight on UNDP's work in the past 365 days set the tone for the way forward towards gender equality.

Happy International Women's Day!

Philippe Lazzarini
UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator
UNDP Resident Representative

SUCCESS STORIES



WOMEN AS PEACEBUILDERS AND ACTORS OF CHANGE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

210 women representing local authorities and NGOs benefited from a series of conflict analysis workshops organized by UNDP's project "Peace Building in Lebanon", in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA). The workshops brought together active local stakeholders to analyze the tensions and challenges faced by their communities and villages, as a first step towards developing Mechanisms for Social Stability. As highlighted by Christiane, one of the participants from the town of Bouday (Bekaa Valley), "It is very important to talk about the problems of our communities, and analyze them. Once we discuss these issues, we begin the journey of solving them".

WARD ALMAKASSED: A LOCAL ECONOMIC HUB FOR ALL WOMEN IN BEIRUT

Following joint efforts between UNDP project in Palestinian Gatherings and the Makassed Association, the Ward Al Makassed center was officially launched in 2017 to serve as a local development hub for all women in Tarik El Jdide. Since then, Ward Al Makassed has been an all year-round an income-generating space empowering Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian women, through training, marketing and sales activities.

104 women have completed a four-month intensive training on food preparation, artisanal handicrafts, beauty care or English language classes. Many of the women graduates have already started a home-based income-generating activity or are taking part in Ward Al Makassed's catering services and exhibitions, capitalizing on a professional kitchen, an outdoor restaurant, and exhibition area rehabilitated by the UNDP. In 2018, UNDP is supporting the center in establishing a restaurant and beauty salon, in order to further develop the center's services and provide more women with income generating activities.

"27 years ago, I had to leave my work at a leading bank in Beirut to take care of my three children, sick father and blind brother. I found myself living isolated from everything; I was locked in sorrow. Halfway through my cooking course at Ward Al Makassed, I felt confident enough to present my vegetarian kitchen: 'Mom & Dad Daily'. I already have over 160 likes on my page on Facebook. I am not going to stop here; I will soon take a marketing course to further develop my brand." Ghada, Beirut

CLIMATE CHANGE: THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Based on the Paris Agreement's gender responsive climate change solutions, UNDP Lebanon will be addressing for the first time, climate change from the gender perspective. Along with 10 other countries, it is part of the Nationally Determined Contribution Support Programme (NDCSP), to bring a gender approach into climate policy framework at the national level. This would improve mitigation and adaptation actions. This project, through the in-depth gender analysis and subsequent capacity-building, will allow for an integration of gender into climate planning and consequently, a more effective achievement of Lebanon's Nationally Determined Contribution. This activity will tackle the roadmaps and implementation plans of the renewable energy and energy efficiency, reforestation, water, agriculture and transport policies.

Moreover, the gender mainstreaming measures planned in the NDCSP will help Lebanon fulfil its 2030 agenda. SDG 5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) includes a sub-goal pertaining to ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. Thus, the proposed actions under this project will pave the way for women to be included in the decision-making process when it comes to climate change and sustainable development policy formulation, hence helping the achievement of SDG 5.

WOMEN IN PALESTINIAN GATHERINGS: CATALYSTS OF POSITIVE CHANGE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

In 2017, 50 Palestinian women have completed vocational and life skills trainings, expected to increase their chances to generate income from nursing, beekeeping, photography, hairdressing among other fields. In Tyre and Old Saida, 30 Palestinian women could launch or expand their small business, thanks to start-up kits or rehabilitation and equipping works implemented by the UNDP project.

Aware of women's central role in decision making and behavior shaping in their households and communities, the UNDP project in Palestinian Gatherings also relies on the active participation of women to bring positive change to these communities. In Kharayeb last year, Lebanese and Palestinian women were at the forefront of introducing solid waste sorting to their households and communities. Actively engaged as community mobilizers and main targets of the UNDP campaign, women in Kharayeb are allowing their community to daily save 85% of its recyclables.

"My grocery store is my home. I spend the whole day here. Poor conditions at the store made it not inviting for passers. It was very humid and no matter how much I cleaned it, I still felt that it was not clean. In December, UNDP rehabilitated my store, which allowed me to re-organize items in a better display. The old stones look new now. Walls are painted, the floor is tiled and there is better lighting and ventilation. The shop has a new wooden door with a sun and rain shed and most importantly I have a private toilet now! Since then, I meet new shoppers every day and my home feels much more comfortable."
Om Fouad, Grocery Shop Owner in Old Saida

"The new equipment provided by UNDP has made our jobs much easier. We no longer need as much time and resources in the kitchen. We are also making use of resources that used to go to waste, which has drastically boosted our profits".
Ms. Tamam Maroon, Head of the Ein Ebel Women's Cooperative



THE LEBANON HOST COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMME: FROM WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Lebanon Host Community Support Programme (LHSP) as a comprehensive, coordinated, and durable response toward the implications of the Syria crisis in the country, aims to increase stability in the most vulnerable areas across Lebanon. Several interventions in the fields of water, sanitation, waste management, livelihood, education, and health care systems aim to support and equip communities to better cope with the situation. Within this broad scope, LHSP focuses on the empowerment of women and the enhancement of gender equality within all its various interventions.

The Livelihood and Local Economic Development interventions in specific prioritized "Women Economic Empowerment" using different approaches: access to assets, skills development, and improving market access for women cooperatives.

LHSP interventions have allowed a total of 56 women to benefit from community kitchen support at local Social Development Centers and Health Care Centers by helping them improve their processing techniques and conform to high hygiene standards. In parallel, 91 women benefited from cooperative support initiatives that helped women coops define their needs and processes to optimize their output and add value to their production, as well as provide them with the needed equipment. The "Optimizing Marketing Capacities, Visibility and Promotion of Rural Women Cooperatives in Lebanon" project in Bekaa and Mount Lebanon supported a total of 21 women Cooperatives in improving their marketing strategies and visibility to target their audience, thereby boosting their productivity and exposure. As stated by Ms. Tamam Maroon, Head of the Ein Ebel Women's Cooperative, "The new equipment provided by UNDP has made our jobs much easier. We no longer need as much time and resources in the kitchen. We are also making use of resources that used to go to waste, which has drastically boosted our profits".

Focusing on youth employability, a total of 323 women benefitted from vocational training programmes across the country and 48 women were employed after the completion of the intervention in 2017.

Finally, in terms of environmental sustainability and recovery, LHSP reforestation interventions engaged a total of 236 women.



PARTNERING FOR GENDER

PARTNERING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO HELP WOMEN ACHIEVE FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

In the framework of their ongoing partnership since 2011, UNDP and Senteurs d'Orient, have teamed up with the Startline Foundation for the 2017 edition of the women empowerment program. The program is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, targeting a set of objectives including empowering women in eradicating poverty, and eliminating illiteracy. Awareness sessions were implemented in 5 governorates: the Bekaa, North Lebanon, South Lebanon, Mount Lebanon, and Beirut. The sessions were delivered to more than 100 women through educational trainings that offered thinking and planning competences, decision-making and negotiation skills, and most importantly, developed a sense of self-confidence to prepare women for their communal and occupational leadership roles.

The 2017 program design encompasses four distinct phases. The first entailed familiarizing participants with competitive business ideas such as financing tools, and a practical guide to developing their business ideas into concrete project. The second phase was an in-depth mentoring of participants to consolidate their business plans. The third phase prepared the finalist trainees for successful entry in the competitive market, with creative finalized business ideas, and the fourth and final chapter, provided the women with the opportunity to meet with potential investors to fund their startups. By the end of the sessions, 10 concrete projects were established and operational.

Hanan Itani, an enthusiastic participant from Beirut, mentioned how the workshop broadened her knowledge, in that: "The workshop taught me skills that I can incorporate in my upcoming business. I acquired about the market, about raw material, I also learned about competent uses of technology in machinery, and gained knowledge on customer demographic." Hanan materialized her idea of a chocolate confectionery following the sessions.

MUNICIPALITIES, PARTNERS TO PROMOTE WOMEN IN COMMUNITY SECURITY

The recruitment of women in the ranks of the municipal police is perceived by a small number of municipalities to better engage with the population, identify and answer to differentiated needs notably with vulnerable groups, and have a more diversified institution.

In 2017, the UNDP Community Security and Access to Justice Project identified and partnered with three municipalities with female police personnel: Burj Hammoud, Mina, and Zahle. Those municipalities encourage the promotion of women within municipal police forces. Audio-Visual exhibitions were jointly organized in order to showcase the role and impact of women municipal police, both within the municipal police and in their communities. Through the exhibitions, the municipalities (i) encouraged mayors and Head of Municipal Police of neighboring municipalities to hire women Municipal Police; (ii) sensitized citizens on the importance to count women within Municipal Police forces; and (iii) encouraged women to consider Municipal Police as a job like any other.

The Mayor of Zahle recognized that "women officers are capable of better communicating with the population, mediating small conflicts, overall servicing the population, and engaging with communities". Both Mayors of Zahle and Al Mina pointed out that recruiting women municipal police personnel reflects the Lebanese society and the demand of population to service their needs. As for women officers they believe that becoming part of the municipal police gives them self-confidence and strength; and has empowered them to lead the lives they value.

ESTABLISHING A JOINT ROADMAP FOR WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

In preparation for the 2018 parliamentary elections, the UNDP Lebanese Elections Assistance Project (LEAP) in partnership with the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs (OMSWA), the European Union and UN Women, launched a gender roadmap for women political participation and representation. The roadmap was announced during the "Fostering the role of political parties to promote women's representation in the upcoming Parliamentary elections 2018" workshop in January 2018, attended by 160 representatives from embassies, civil society, elections' and gender experts and political parties. Aiming to enhance the meaningful participation of women in the upcoming elections, the joint roadmap presents alternatives, other than quota, to increase women's participation in politics and help in advocating and influencing public behaviour to support the inclusion of women in public life. The gender roadmap includes the development and production of a public media awareness campaign that targets Lebanese women as candidates and voters following the electoral calendar timeline. It also entails organizing info sessions for potential women candidates, independents and party members, to enhance their capacities to manage their upcoming electoral campaigns, and preparing a meeting with the media outlets to discuss the role of the media to promote women's candidates and increase awareness on their participation in the political life.

UN AGENCIES PARTNERING WITH THE NATIONAL WOMEN MACHINERY FOR UNSCR 1325

In 2017, UN agencies in Lebanon (incl. UN Women, UNFPA, ESCWA, OHCHR, UNIFIL, and UNDP) developed a joint initiative to support the Government of Lebanon with the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. The NAP is currently under development by the National Commission for Lebanese Women and the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs, following a participatory process, and with the support of the UN agencies. Meetings were also facilitated with Members of Parliament and parliamentary committees to discuss the draft NAP. It will be consolidated through a thorough validation process, capacity building of stakeholders, and awareness raising.

365 DAYS OF PARTNERSHIP WITH THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WOMEN AFFAIRS (OMSWA)

12 months through the partnership with the Office of the Minister of State for Women Affairs, is an opportunity to take stock of the numerous achievements of the very young institution. After the establishment of the project in February 2017, support was provided to the Ministry through different angles, including awareness raising, legal reform, strategic development, enhancement of women political participation, and capacity building. In terms of raising awareness, the project developed different communication tools, including a website, accounts on all social media outlets, and published a monthly newsletter, entitled "Women Voices". The project also had many media campaigns to advocate for a draft law on sexual harassment, gender equality, and women empowerment at all levels. With the support of the UNDP project at the Office of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, several legal proposals were submitted to the Council of Ministers and Parliament, including penalization of sexual harassment, discrimination in terms of the National Social Security Fund, paternity leave, code of ethics for the media, municipal elections, etc... Some of the laws passed incl. abolition of Art. 522 of the Penal Code and amendments to the municipal elections law. In addition, OMSWA partnered with many counterparts (incl. UNFPA and ESCWA) on specific strategies to tackle key strategies from a gender perspective, including the Prevention of Violent Extremism Strategy, and a Strategy to combat Violence against Women. Most importantly, the project supported the Ministry in all consultations and drafting of the National Gender Equality Strategy (2017-2030) taking as a basis the SDGs. Women political participation was one of the main thematic areas on which the project focused in 2017. As such, it developed a partnership with LEAP and UN Women to come up with a national plan to enhance women participation and find alternatives to the absence of a quota (ref. to separate newsletter entry). In this framework, it also worked closely with the Presidency of the Council of Ministers on the appointment of women in leadership positions by making recommendations. As a result, 27% of the new diplomatic appointments include women, 30% of the Supervisory Commission on Elections are women, 17% in the Social and Economic Council, and 23% of High Officials in national security positions were allocated to women. Finally, the project introduced capacity building initiatives on SDGs and gender mainstreaming, as well as on sexual harassment in the workplace.

Sharing Knowledge

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

A series of roundtables were organized by the UNDP team at the Ministry of Economy and Trade to map women entrepreneurship initiatives and actors within the SMEs ecosystem in Lebanon, as well as the legal ecosystem for women entrepreneurship. The meetings that brought together representatives of several Ministries (incl. OMSWA), the Office of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the National Commission for Lebanese Women, the Central Bank, the Economic and Social Development Fund, and Berytech, were an opportunity to share knowledge on existing and upcoming initiatives in the country and latest trends. It also provided an overview of current legal policies and regulatory systems to ensure equality. Recommendations were developed to improve the business environment for women entrepreneurs.

YOUNG LEADERSHE

The UNDP Lebanese Elections Assistance Project (LEAP) and UNDP CO gender focal points provided a training session on “Gender Equality Guidelines” in the framework of the Women in Front project “Young LeaderSHE”, supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Lebanon. The project aimed at engaging and empowering university students (of both genders) to become active citizens in the private and public spheres. Twenty students were selected from four Lebanese universities: Saint Joseph University (USJ), Notre Dame University (NDU), Lebanese International University (LIU) and Antonine University (AU). The interactive session addressed an overview of gender conceptualization, international instruments, Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender Equality, and the specific context of women in Lebanon.

During the session, students were encouraged to share experiences, provide opinions, debate among each other, and suggest solutions to the main challenges in Lebanon.

The students were also provided with a framework for creative thinking and coming up with ideas to implement a women participation and representation campaign in the framework of the 2018 parliamentary elections, in the absence of a quota, as a temporary special measure. Most importantly, Young LeaderShe resulted in the establishment of gender equality clusters in the participating universities, which would extend to the remaining academic institutions in Lebanon.



TRAINING SESSIONS: “LEBANESE WOMEN IN ELECTIONS 2018”

UNDP’s Lebanese Elections Assistance Project in partnership with UN Women and “Women in Front” organized info sessions throughout Lebanon, targeting women candidates, with the aim of enhancing their capacities to participate in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

The info sessions provided more than 500 participants from 8 regions, with information on how to run and vote during the upcoming parliamentary elections. The presentation covered the electoral cycle, the new electoral law and electoral calendar, the required documents to run for elections, legal framework, preprinted ballot papers, preferential vote, electoral campaign, how to include women in lists, negotiations and networking.

DESK REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF RESOURCES RELATED TO MALE ENGAGEMENT AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

During the 2017 National Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) Task Force retreat, the need for carrying out a comprehensive desk review of the existing resources and practices at global, regional and country levels has been raised as a priority, in addition to the need for enhanced coordination of the interventions carried out in Lebanon. Therefore, a Desk Review and Analysis of Guidance, Tools and Practices related to the Engagement of Men and Boys against Violence against Women and Girls was carried out jointly in the framework of the partnership between UNDP and UNFPA Lebanon, on behalf of the SGBV Task Force. Based on the findings collected, recommendations were developed in collaboration with SGBV organizations. Findings and recommendations were summarized in a paper endorsed by relevant stakeholders, including the Ministry of Social Affairs. Among other recommendations, UNDP and UNFPA Lebanon are following up on the development of a National 3W Mapping of actors and interventions (who-what-where); a Training Package on “Engaging with Males on VAWG”, and a Guidance Note on Soft Skills and Compilation of Good Practices. The remaining recommendations have been included in the 2018 SGBV Task Force Action Plan.

“It is amazing how organizations are willing to discuss and exchange about male engagement. They want to improve and enhance their programming in SGBV prevention/mitigation by engaging men, male youth and boys... This desk review will undoubtedly contribute to their objective and therefore to the SGBV TF priority and commitment to scale up men and boys engagement against Violence against Women and Girls”. **Elsa Maarawi, Consultant in charge of the Desk Review and Analysis on Engaging with Men and Boys on GBV.**

YOUNG FEMALE LEADERS IN TRIPOLI THINK TOGETHER ABOUT A COMMON WOMEN’S AGENDA IN THE CITY

“Together we can have a louder voice. Together we can be important female leaders in Tripoli. Together we can discuss women related issues and plan for the future. That’s what I have learned from this workshop,” proudly said Darine Samarani, a female leader who attended “The Tripoli Young Female Leaders Conference” in November 2017.

This conference was organized by UNDP’s “Peace Building in Lebanon” project, implemented within the framework of the Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme (LHSP) as part of the Mechanism for Social Stability (MSS) in Tripoli. Women from the private and public sectors, and civil society sectors exchanged ideas on the current status of girls and women in Tripoli, their priorities, the main challenges they are facing and policy recommendations on how to improve their lives. These ambitious and motivated women gathered around the same table to answer common questions, shared their stories of volunteerism during the Bab al-Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen clashes, or on life changing decisions and lessons learned from their political participation in the recent municipal elections. In addition to voicing their problems, hopes and aspirations, women participants benefited from this conference to network and get to know other female leaders in the city. They all agreed on using this opportunity to sustain future joint initiatives.

CO Initiatives and Gender in Numbers

2=Number of projects with a Gender Marker of GEN3: totally focusing on gender equality and women empowerment.

184=Total number of female UNDP Lebanon Staff Members, out of a total of 363. They therefore represent 50.68%.

162,329=Number of total female beneficiaries in 2017 by UNDP's project "Lebanese Host Communities Support Programme

27=Total number of female UN Volunteers working with UNDP, out of a total of 40. They therefore represent 67.5%.

21= Percentage of beneficiaries from the UNDP, UN Women and Women in Front sessions, among the

5,205,889.48=Total amount in USD of expenditures targeting gender equality and women empowerment in 2017 by the Country Office, out of the 64 Million Delivery, which represents 8.1%

111 women candidates to the 2018 Parliamentary Elections.

6,772,231=Total amount in USD of estimated budget targeting gender equality and women empowerment in 2018 by the Country Office, out of the 64 Million planned delivery, which represents **10.5%**. This figure is an estimate and is likely to increase.

NOMINATION OF A GENDER AND YOUTH GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

On October 3, 2017, Ray Bassil, Lebanese Olympian and trap shooting champion, was named UNDP Lebanon's Goodwill Ambassador for youth and gender. In a ceremony held at the Grand Serail in the presence of Prime Minister Saad Hariri and United Nations officials, Bassil was celebrated and acknowledged for her international recognition and distinction in the mostly male-dominated field of trap shooting. Ray Bassil has committed to bring her individual experience, knowledge, and awareness advocate for and support the interventions targeting youth, women, and gender-equality in Lebanon.. She will also support UNDP in mobilizing resources to help support and empower women and youth across Lebanon.

WOMEN SECURITY AWARENESS TRAINING

In coordination with UNDP's regional security team, 3 one-day training sessions were offered to women from Country Office and project teams, to enhance security awareness. In total 49 women benefited from the training, on preparedness to work place and residential/social security hazards. The sessions specifically addressed security measures, cultural awareness and social media, violence against women and sexual harassment, travel security measures, and stress management. Additional resources and recommendations and tips were provided for each of the areas looked at.

COMMUNICATING IN A GENDER SENSITIVE/RESPONSIVE WAY

The Gender Focal Point has delivered a training session on gender sensitive/responsive communication targeting 20 Country Office and project colleagues with communication, monitoring and evaluation, reporting, and gender related functions. The aim of the training was to raise awareness on common gender insensitive communication mistakes and provide alternatives to have a transformative impact on overall interventions. The interactive session used theoretical material, real life examples, and case studies to focus on the rationale of gender sensitive communication, principles for written and audio-visual communication, and methodology for data collection and analysis. The session also provided specific tips as well as a glossary and key words. As a result, whenever possible current or previously developed material is being revised to reflect on a more gender sensitive way of communicating. The gender team is also working on developing a toolkit on gender sensitive communication; it will be released in the 2nd quarter of 2018.

ADDRESSING GSS ISSUES FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Following the issuance of the results of the 2016 Global Staff Survey (GSS) results, members of the Gender Focal Team held a discussion session with women members of the Country Office, to have a gender outlook and reading of the survey. Discussions shed light on the fact that issues were not targeting employees based on gender considerations or discrimination, but are of broader concern. The three main areas that need improvement, ie. work-life balance, communication and implementation of decisions, and reflection of opinions and ideas, were addressed. Following the session, recommendations were developed from a gender perspective and shared with Senior Management for proper follow-up and commitment.

UN ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT IN LEBANON

From 10 to 13 December 2017, a mission from the Multi-Partner Trust Fund for the UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict visited the UNDP and UNFPA Lebanon joint SGBV project along with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. In addition to meeting the Representatives and Teams from both Agencies, the mission also conducted a site visit to the ISF Academy with the project's implementing partner KAFA (Enough Violence and Exploitation) to discuss strategies and interventions aiming at reinforcing the capacities of the Municipal Police to better serve survivors of violence. The mission also met with a group of international and national SGBV organizations members of the National SGBV Task Force who actively contributed to the desk review and analysis of resources related to male engagement. The representatives of those organizations had the opportunity to exchange with the mission on the importance of the project in the country efforts to structure, advance and coordinate the engagement of males against sexual and gender-based violence and violence against women, as well as to promote gender equality and women empowerment. The mission was part of a sub-regional initiative, which targeted visits to Jordan and Lebanon.

TECHNICAL CONSULTATION MEETING ON FOSTERING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

UNDP Lebanon participated in the "Technical Consultation Meeting on Fostering Women's Political Participation" that was organized by UNDP's Regional Hub for Arab State and held in Amman, on the 26-27 September 2017. It brought together Gender Focal Points and practitioners from the different countries of the region. The participating COs were: Iraq, Palestine, Somalia, Algeria, Yemen, Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, and Lebanon. The meeting was the inception of a larger research project that will review the existing systems, policies, and barriers that limit women's political participation in the reviewed countries. The meeting also aimed at validating and discussing a desk review on the Temporary Special Measures for women's political participation in the region, which was prepared by the hub. The specific areas of discussion during the 2 days included a review of UN Mandates on Women's Political Participation, with a particular overview on the roles of UN Women, DPA, and UNDP, the types of quotas and different electoral scenarios, and temporary special measures and their impacts on electoral systems. In addition, each participating country was requested to present an overview of the specificities of women political participation. Each area explored was followed by open discussions, which were used as recommendations for the next steps and gave a sense of the gaps the study should be addressing, aligned with the aims of the 2030 Agenda, especially SDG 5 on Gender Equality and SDG 16 on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.

The Lebanese delegation (the largest delegation participating in the meeting), jointly presented an overview of the different barriers, which hinder women's political participation in Lebanon. The presentation of the delegation focused on the COs approach to have a holistic intervention bringing together the three main poles, to address participation: the Ministry, the Parliament, and the electoral system, while working with all stakeholders including UN agencies and civil society. The delegation ended up presenting opportunities and entry points, emphasizing on the work of institutions. The Lebanese delegation suggested that in the post-meeting phase, it will establish a working group to actively review the study during the different phases, and will establish a national consultation process (through focus groups) to involve the stakeholders.

Campaigns

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) – 2017 CAMPAIGN

In the frame of the United Nations Gender Working Group (GWG) in Lebanon, co-chaired by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women, the 16 UN participating agencies, including UNDP, jointly mark the 16 Days of activism Against GBV by implementing an outreach activity in a collaborative manner. The campaign raised public awareness on GBV and gender discrimination in Lebanon focusing on the legal framework, public life, health, employment, education, agriculture, etc. Sixteen key messages were selected by the different UN agencies and a media package was prepared in coordination with the UN Information Center (UNIC). During the campaign, facts and figures on GBV were disseminated daily by all UN Agencies through different social media outlets. In addition, a 30-second animated TV spot was produced to raise the public awareness about GBV and gender inequality. It was broadcasted on all 9 Lebanese TV channels throughout the campaign, including during evening peak time.



#BEYONDALLIMITS : A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The Gender Focal Team of UNDP teamed up with the Office of the Minister of State for Women Affairs (OMSWA) to launch a two-weeks social media campaign. Inspiring stories from Lebanese women, including women in politics, a journalist, pilot, scientist, and Olympian champion, were shared on both OMSWA's and UNDP's accounts. In parallel, the broader public, both men and women, were encouraged to engage in the campaign by sharing success stories of women around them and invited others to do so as well. During the campaign's period, key facts were shared about the status of women and on women empowerment in Lebanon, illustrated by animated infographs.



#طموحك_ما_إلا_حدود
#BeyondAllLimits

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN ON ENHANCING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS

Within the framework of the roadmap between OMSWA, UN Women, and UNDP (ref. to Partnerships' section), a public media awareness campaign was developed and launched on the January 10, 2018 with an overall objective of enhancing the role of Lebanese women for effective and meaningful participation in the upcoming 2018 Parliamentary Elections. Targeting all Lebanese citizens, the campaign focuses on raising the public awareness on the role of women in leadership, politics and electoral process and promoting an inclusive electoral process and a fair portrayal of women political leaders. Moreover, the campaign aims at encouraging political parties to nominate women in leadership positions, women activists to run for elections and voters to vote for women candidates.

The awareness campaign includes TV spots, radio spots, billboards, posters and LED visuals, and is divided into three phases with 3 different messages (follow the hyperlinks):

- **First phase** promotes women's participation in elections;
- **Second phase** endorses women as candidates; and
- **Third phase** promotes women as voters. (To be released on the 2nd week of April 2018)



VOTER EDUCATION AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGN TARGETING WOMEN

In preparation for the parliamentary elections, the UNDP’s Lebanese Elections Assistance Project developed and produced four animated videos addressing women and providing them with all the necessary information related to voting and running for elections. The videos come as part of a broader voter education and information campaign, that complements the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities’ awareness initiatives. The videos (follow the hyperlinks) were broadcasted on all TV outlets, and local news’ websites, and they were uploaded on UNDP’s social media platforms to reach a wider audience.

- 1) [Introduction to the new electoral law 44/2017: video](#) includes information and details about the new articles in the Electoral Law 44/2017.
- 2) [Who is eligible to vote? :](#) video contains information about who is entitled to vote and what are the official documents required for voting.
- 3) [How to Run? :](#) video includes information on how to run for candidacy as individuals and lists and what documents should be obtained.
- 4) [Official ballot papers :](#) video contains information about the preprinted ballot papers, how to mark them and identify valid from invalid ballots.



Publications

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN THE NATIONALITY LAW: ITS IMPACT ON LEBANESE FAMILIES AND ISSUES OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION

As part of the 17th issue of the Peace Building news supplement distributed with all main press outlets in Lebanon, an article by Dr. Fahmiyya Sharafeddine, University Professor, Activist and Researcher in Sociology was published, addressing the woman nationality law in Lebanon. The article highlights the main challenges women and their families face due to the discriminatory law, specifically in terms of education, healthcare, employment, inheritance, and psychological aspects. It also provides an overview of impacts on national integration, and recommends a proactive approach towards the passage of the law. The article was discussed by the author with journalists during a session, which followed the dissemination of the news supplement.



LABOR DISTRIBUTION: A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

The UNDP Fiscal Policy Advisory and Reform project at the Lebanese Ministry of Finance carried out a study on labor distribution in Lebanon’s formal private sector, using data of 403,857 tax payers to map gender inequalities in income and access to employment, across economic sectors, age, marital status, and area of residency. The study shows that women in Lebanon are highly underrepresented in the formal labor market at 34%, a number that decreases drastically for higher income brackets, whereby for every 100 individuals in the top 1% income group, less than 20 are women. This underpins the presence of a glass ceiling that keeps women from climbing up the economic ladder, and restricts their participation to lower paying jobs. This disparity is uniform across all sectors including sectors in which women represent the bulk of employees (such as Education, Health, and Social Work), whereby women’s median incomes represent half to two-thirds of men’s median incomes in higher income groups. While the study presents extensive new information on Lebanon’s gender pay gap and labor inequalities, the UNDP team aims to further advance their analysis with qualitative field research and looks to publish a comprehensive assessment in the coming period.



The Way Forward

Plan of Action (2018-2019)

Based on the Gender Strategy and national priorities, and building on the previous years' achievements, the UNDP Country Office will, among other areas of intervention, focus on the following objectives:



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Resilient nations.*

- Further expand gender programming and projects' formulation through the implementation of gender analyses to precede the design of new projects, and part of the appraisal, monitoring, and evaluation of ongoing initiatives.
- Provide institutional and technical support to public institutions, including the national women machinery, and national stakeholders to prioritize gender issues and mainstream gender in different areas of engagement, including policy and legal reform, provision of protection and security, and economic opportunities.
- Engage all stakeholders (incl. public and private sectors, academia, civil society, and media institutions) towards the advancement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5- Gender Equality.
- Capitalize on spring 2018 parliamentary elections, to focus on women political participation, and build on the momentum to address again the issue of women quota and temporary special measures for the next electoral cycle. Actively engage at the regional level with the UNDP Arab State Bureau's regional center on the joint project on women political participation.
- Build on synergies, partnerships, and concrete initiatives launched in 2017 to further progress on niche gender areas in innovative ways, tackling for instance gender in climate change, economic empowerment and entrepreneurship, and rule of law and gender justice.
- Meet capacity gaps, by resorting to the UNDP Arab State Bureau's regional center and to other UN agencies, for technical support, and sharing of tools and best practices.
- Maintain within the Country Office and with UN agencies, the internal dialogue on gender issues and mainstreaming. Actively participate in and contribute to the UNCT Gender Working Group, and other joint efforts, including contributions to the development of a national action plan on UNSR 1325.
- Encourage projects and country office to actively communicate gender results and contributions, through the provision of concrete tools and guidelines, and based on gender disaggregated data gathering and monitoring. Report on gender mainstreaming activities within programme and projects' implementation through all corporate platforms.
- Share the latest news and trends from the gender communities of practice with relevant CO and project colleagues.
- Implement further capacity building and training activities for the Country Office on gender related concepts, analysis, and planning.
- Engage Country Office members in gender sensitive activities within the work environment, and ensure senior management and all units' buy-in and commitment towards achieving all requirements for the gender seal eligibility. Highlight gender objectives and enabling activities as part of the selected strategic priorities for the Country Office.
- Ensure proper implementation, monitoring, and updating of the gender strategy, through the Gender Focal Team.

