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*Situation Analysis Report*

*Elena Ferreras Carreras (Team Leader)*

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**Situation Analysis**

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## Acronyms

ABBAD	Resource Center for Gender Equality (Lebanese CSO)
AUB	American University of Beirut
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CAS	Central Administration of Statistics
CFUWI	National Committee for the Follow-Up on Women Issues
CMR	Clinical Management of Rape
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DV	Domestic Violence
EC	European Commission
ESCWA	UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
GA	Gender Analysis
GAPII	Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations Gender Action Plan 2016-2020
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
GPL	Gender Profile Lebanon
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GoL	Government of Lebanon
KAFA	Lebanese NGO name meaning “enough”, working on GEWE
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRW	International Centre for Research on Women
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International non-Government Organisation
ISF	Lebanese police (International Security Forces)
IP	Implementing Partners
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
LCRP	Lebanese Crisis Response Plan
LECORVAW	Lebanese Council to Resist Violence against Women
LLWB	Lebanese League for Women in Business
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MOSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
NCLW	National Commission for Lebanese Women
NGO	Non-governmental Organisations
NGS	National Gender Strategy 2018-2022
NPTP	National Poverty Targeting Program
OMSAR	Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform
OSMWA	Office of the State Minister for Women Affairs
PHC	Public Health Centres
SA	Situation Analysis report
SDC	Social Development Centres
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	Sexual and gender based violence
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SSF	Single Support Framework 2017-2020
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN Women	UN Organisation dedicated to gender equality

## **Executive summary**

The EU's "Joint Staff Working Document - Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020", or Gender Action Plan (GAP II) for the period 2016-2020, stresses the need for full and equal realisation of women's and girls' human rights and fundamental freedoms, the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The EU is fully committed to break the cycle of gender discrimination by supporting partner countries to establish a more enabling environment for the fulfilment of girls' and women's rights and to achieve real and tangible improvements in gender equality.

The EUD in Lebanon commissioned a Gender Analysis to provide insight into whether gender inequalities persist in Lebanon. The Gender Analysis looks into the causes of identified inequalities, how they intersect with other inequalities and how they impact on human rights enjoyment and/or benefits produced by, and access to, development efforts. The Gender Analysis is also expected to provide an understanding of the Lebanese government's commitment and capacity to work on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) issues.

This Situation Analysis (SA) report describes the key findings and recommendations focusing on:

1. Promotion of women's economic empowerment.
2. Prevention and protection of women & girls from all forms of gender-based violence (GBV).

Under the guidance of the EUD, the expert team consisting of Elena Ferreras Carreras (team leader) and Gulnar Wakim (gender and youth expert) gathered information mainly through meetings and consultations with relevant stakeholders.

The team leader undertook a desk review of available recent studies, secondary sources and statistics regarding gender equality and gender mainstreaming related to Lebanon.

This report highlights relevant recommendations and strategies, in line with GAP II to be included in future EU funded Programme(s).<sup>1</sup>

In 2014, following a campaign by women's and feminist organisations, the parliament passed Law 293 on the Protection of Women and Family Members Against Domestic Violence. The bill that passed was an amendment to one suggested by the coalition of civil society organisations.

At the institutional level, the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs (OMSWA) was created in December 2016. OMSWA has developed its National Strategy for Gender Equality (NGS) 2018-2022, which was developed with technical assistance from the EUD. OMSWA is responsible for coordinating actions between relevant stakeholders and to ensure the implementation of the NGS. However, despite much advancement, it is found that there are still inequalities and gaps.

The key findings observed further in this report related to GBV, include the overlapping of some donors' interventions (especially related to the elaboration of strategies, manuals and communication products); lack of coordination among actors; lack of data (about GBV prevalence); the need for a robust and reliable referral system; the need for common messages; and, the need of engaging men and boys in the fight on GBV. In relation to economic empowerment, the key findings are the existence of a restrained market; skills mismatch between the market and potential employees/workers; and, the role of social norms inhibiting women's access to employment and entrepreneurship.

Two showcases of good practices are included in this report, such as the experience of angel investors of the Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB) and the experience of an entrepreneur (designer)

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<sup>1</sup> Authorship: This report has been analysed and written by Elena Ferreras Carreras with the inputs and comments of Gulnar Wakim. Femconsult provided technical review and quality assurance of the report.

working with underprivileged women who are empowered economically and socially through working for this brand.

The recommendations provided for possible EU support and intervention within the framework of the Single Support Framework 2017-2020 (SSF) for Lebanon are in line with the priorities identified in the NGS 2018-2022, drafted recently by the OMSWA.

On GBV, the main recommendations stated in this report, are to promote a sustainable and efficient coordination of actors and the establishment of a strong and reliable referral system. The establishment of a gender observatory could be the framework for better coordination and collection of best practices, resources and lessons learned. Regarding entrepreneurship, the main recommendations are to create synergies with the private sector and to go beyond training towards employment and the creation of enterprises (even micro). A potential financial support for community based initiatives could promote income generation and the empowerment of women and their families.

## **1. Methodology of the Situation Analysis**

The team leader undertook a desk review of available recent studies, secondary sources and statistics in relation to gender equality and gender mainstreaming in Lebanon. The team conducted interviews and meetings with relevant stakeholders; more than 50 people were interviewed, from gender machineries (OMSWA, National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW)), line ministries focal points (Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and other relevant stakeholders), major Civil Society organisations (CSOs) working on women's rights, development and social protection, women in business, and other relevant state and non-state actors. The team also met the Central Administration for Statistics (CAS) to request information on their ongoing surveys (i.e. Household Living Survey) and on past surveys that were not implemented.

Among these meetings, the team discussed with donors and implementing bodies (such as UN WOMEN, UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), EU Member States, the Canadian Embassy, and other active stakeholders on GEWE.

In addition, a consultation meeting with key relevant CSOs working on women's rights and gender equality was organised in the EUD premises on November 2nd 2017. With 21 organisations participating, among national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the meeting provided key insights and recommendations for this report.

The team visited different projects in the country that are implemented by different partners, including a shelter.

The team approached new actors who were not in regular contact with the CSOs. Some of these actors were syndicates, particularly the syndicates of teachers, workers and taxi drivers. The team also interviewed key informants operating in the legal and the business spheres and also met female entrepreneurs with innovative businesses that have a strong social impact. The objective of these meetings was to include new stakeholders, to check what is done in the legal and economic sphere for women empowerment and to reduce gender based violence.

Finally, a review of communication materials and training materials was undertaken, looking at the available resources only (mainly NGOs' manuals and communication material) and their content.

It was observed that most actors in the civil society are operating on the issue of GBV whilst there are only a few stakeholders engaged in women's economic empowerment. The result of this imbalance has made the report more focused on GBV than economic empowerment.

## 2. Situation Analysis

### 2.1 Institutional and administrative analysis

Prior to 1998, there was no official body specialising in women's issues. The Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) department of women's affairs was the only official department dedicated to women. Under Law 720/1998, the NCLW was created to fill this gap, however it was not given any executive power. In 2017, the government launched the new OMSWA, which essentially grants a seat for women's affairs at the Council of Ministers.

Several governmental institutions are involved in GBV interventions. These include OMSWA, MoSA and NCLW.

#### **OMSWA**

OMSWA, created in December 2016, is responsible for coordinating actions across governmental and non-governmental institutions, along with international and national organisations, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, to ensure the implementation of the NGS by adopting Action Plans based on strategic priorities.

OMSWA has developed its NGS 2018-2022, with technical assistance provided by the EUD around 12 areas of actions<sup>2</sup> which include economic empowerment and GBV. In addition, it is preparing a strategy on GBV.

OMSWA represents the Government of Lebanon (GoL) at international level, following up with the implementation of international commitments on gender equality. OMSWA informed the team about its role coordinating the relevant government and non-government stakeholders to ensure effective, timely and constructive exchanges of information. OMSWA is responsible for implementing the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality and to ensure gender mainstreaming in the SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals).

The creation of the Ministry comes at a crucial moment for women in Lebanon. A lot of effort has been invested to promote gender equality in the last decade and this has been reflected in different sectors; laws have been passed, shelters established and most importantly talking about women's conditions is no longer taboo. However, there is still a lot to be done. Social norms remain discriminatory and the confessional structure of the country blocks the effort to move from gender inequality to equal citizenship.

The creation of the Ministry for Women Affairs strengthens these efforts to institutionalise the promotion of gender equality at the highest level<sup>3</sup>. Today, the ministry is working on establishing different action plans, based on a national strategy of gender; a special focus is given to GBV, women's access to public health, and gender equity at work<sup>4</sup>.

#### **MOSA**

MoSA is responsible for the oversight of local Social Development Centres (SDCs). There are currently 230 SDCs throughout Lebanon offering basic social services to vulnerable Lebanese families and community level support, including primary health care and vaccines, recreational activities for young

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<sup>2</sup> The 12 areas of actions are: Poverty; Legal Reforms; Power and Decision-Making; Education; Economy, Employment and Entrepreneurship; Gender Based Violence; Health; Media and Culture; Environment; Peace and Security; Natural Crisis and Disasters and Institutional Mechanisms

<sup>3</sup> Women's Affairs Ministry lobbies for gender equality in Lebanon, The Daily Star, Feb 28 2017.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2017/Feb-28/395451-women-affairs-ministry-lobbies-for-gender-equality-in-lebanon.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> Ogasapian: Work underway on strategy for gender equality, The Daily Star, 9 October 2017.

[http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2017/Oct-09/421979-ogasapian-work-underway-on-strategy-for-gender-equality.aspx?utm\\_source=Magnet&utm\\_medium=Related%20Articles%20widget&utm\\_campaign=Magnet%20tools](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2017/Oct-09/421979-ogasapian-work-underway-on-strategy-for-gender-equality.aspx?utm_source=Magnet&utm_medium=Related%20Articles%20widget&utm_campaign=Magnet%20tools)



people, and VET. Not all SDCs are offering the same level of services nor are all of the SDCs sufficiently equipped in human resources to respond to the needs of men and women at community level.

Among its main projects, MoSA launched the National Poverty Targeting Program (NPTP) in 2011. The aim is to improve the living standards of the population and in particular of the poor and vulnerable, through the delivery of social assistance and social services. As part of its second phase (2014-2019), NPTP uses a pre-paid card system "Basket of Benefits" targeting the poorest Lebanese families, in collaboration with UN agencies and INGO partners. Assistance is delivered at the level of SDCs and includes medical insurance, medicine for chronic diseases, registration fees and books for public schools. This scheme, which provides direct financial support (but not Budget Support) to the Ministry, is partially supported by the World Bank.

In 2014, the MoSA was assigned by the Cabinet to take a leadership role in the coordination of the response to the Syrian crisis in Lebanon on behalf of the Government. MoSA was responsible for the drafting and oversight of the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) in 2014 (year 1 covering 2015-2016) and for the LCRP revision in 2015 (year 2 covering 2016). The LCRP is designed to: (1) Ensure humanitarian assistance and protection for the most vulnerable among Syrian refugees and poorest Lebanese; (2) Strengthen the capacity of national and local service delivery systems to expand access to and improve the quality of basic public services; and (3) Reinforce Lebanon's economic, social, environmental, and institutional stability.

The GBV interventions performed by MoSA were mainly developed through the "National Plan for Safeguarding Children and Women in Lebanon" and through training at varying levels. In October 2014, MoSA launched the National Plan which aims to provide the best possible protection services to girls, boys, women and service providers in the fields of child protection, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) and health. It also aims to support the Ministry to improve the structure of the child and women protection sectors, both on the national and local (SDCs) levels to build the capacity of national protection systems. The Plan was drafted with the technical support of UNICEF and the financial support of the EU.

Besides this, MoSA has trained:

- a) personnel operating in combatting domestic violence (2004-2010), including a campaign to curb sexual harassment against girls and teenagers;
- b) personnel working in the area of fighting GBV, in collaboration with the Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering (2005-2008);
- c) personnel working in social development centres and CSOs, in listening skills and providing adequate legal counselling to women victims of domestic violence (2008).

Currently MoSA is preparing its new Strategy for Social Protection, planned to be launched in December 2017, alongside another national strategic plan that will address GBV and sexual exploitation (funded by the EU programme and implemented by UNICEF).

## **NCLW**

The NCLW is an official body, which was established in 1998 by Law 720 and is directly affiliated to the presidency of the Council of Ministers.

As a National Women Machinery, NCLW works on enhancing the status of women and ensuring equal opportunities for men and women. NCLW acts as the consultative body of the government and of national councils and institutions on all issues related to the status of women including gender-based issues.

The General Assembly of NCLW is composed of 24 members appointed by the Council of Ministers, by decree for a renewable three-year term. Women members of the Parliament and ministers are considered ex-officio members of NCLW during their term and have a consultative status. NCLW has a new

Executive Bureau comprised of eight members elected by the General Assembly from its members elected in April 2017.<sup>5</sup>

NCLW's main objectives are to:

- Implement gender mainstreaming in public administrations through actions and mechanisms enforcing and institutionalizing Gender Focal Points' (GFPs) network in Lebanese public administrations and institutions.
- Oversee the implementation of the goals of international instruments and conventions which Lebanon has ratified.
- Create a knowledge database that will enable various stakeholders to monitor the progress and challenges of advancing gender equality and women's human rights in Lebanon.
- Foster networking and cooperation on issues related to gender mainstreaming between Lebanese non-governmental institutions and public institutions.
- Encourage the exchange of knowledge, experience and best practices related to women's issues at different levels through NCLW's strong partnerships with international, local and regional organizations and partners, to promote women's and gender advancement.
- Facilitate access to knowledge through NCLW library with resources available in French, English and Arabic.

The budget of NCLW is allocated from the budget of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, as well as from financial aid and donations received from international organisations.

Some of the roles of NCLW should be changed or amended due to the existence of the OMSWA, such as coordination between government and civil society and its role monitoring changes related to the situation of women in Lebanon.

### **Other**

The Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR) managed the Lebanese Council to Resist Violence against Women (LECORVAW) and the National Committee for the Follow-Up on Women Issues (CFUWI)<sup>6</sup>.

Although these initiatives are worth mentioning, the reality is that most efforts to combat GBV are non-governmental. There are many Lebanese NGOs working on women's issues and they have a wide array of mandates within the umbrella of women's affairs. The largest NGOs working on GBV are ABAAD and KAFA, who receive funding by the donor community and have established partnerships with ministries and UN agencies. However there is a myriad of new actors that work more silently on the issue. They have different levels of capacity due to their unequal access to local, regional and international events and training on women's issues and tools for advocacy.

In addition there is a GBV group led by UNHCR, organised with donors and implementers of national and international NGOs under the Emergency response. This group was established in 2013 in the framework of the response to the Syrian Crisis and it is linked to the Lebanese emergency response. The group meet on a monthly basis at the national level and also at the subgroups level, namely groups exist in each region. The group was established to coordinate efforts and harmonisation for case management. It has also established a formal referral system with guidelines and principles.

Some organisations, which provide services to women, have capitalised on the Syrian refugee crisis to receive funding. An issue of concern is the imminent threat of lower funding related to the crisis and the

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<sup>5</sup> NCLW has 12 permanent committees as follows: Legislative Committee, Economics and Labour Committee, Education and Youth Committee, Studies and Documentation Committee, Media and Public Relations Committee, Health and Environment Committee, and finally Committee for the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

<sup>6</sup> LECORVAW "provides direct services to women survivors of violence in Beirut and collaborated on the draft law on GBV, targeting women and service providers" while CFUWI "promotes awareness-raising on GBV through education and the image of women in school curricula; implements training sessions for individuals and professionals in both private and public sectors; and conducts studies and research related to GBV in school curricula targeting educators and students".

ensuing loss of ability to maintain services at current levels. This is most notably true in the primary healthcare sector where women currently receive essential services at no cost, including clinical management of rape (CMR) and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).

## 2.2 Protection from gender based violence

### 2.2.1 Advancements, walking the right steps

In 2014, following a campaign by women's and feminist organisations, the parliament passed Law 293 on the Protection of Women and Family Members Against Domestic Violence. The bill that actually passed was an amendment to that suggested by the coalition of civil society organizations. While the initial draft specifically called for the protection of women from domestic violence, it was amended to become a bill for the protection of all members of the family. This was not well accepted by CSOs, who deemed that the new law reduced the gendered nature of domestic violence and bypassed the particular vulnerability of women. However, the law details the response mechanism to be activated once domestic violence occurs and the victim files an official complaint.

Another achievement was the amendment of circular 58 by the Ministry of Public Health in 2015<sup>7</sup> at the request of the GBV national working group, which includes both NGOs and UN agencies. The original circular was issued in 2012 and requires hospital personnel to directly report cases of abuse to the Lebanese police (ISF) when a patient is discovered to have been physically assaulted<sup>8</sup>. The amendment to circular number 58, states that doctors and health professionals should be concerned about maintaining confidentiality in cases of rape or sexual assault and must discuss with the victims the option of reporting to legal authorities (MOPH, 2015).

In December 2016, the Lebanese parliament's Administration and Justice Committee agreed to abolish Article 522 of the Penal Code, which allowed rapists to evade prosecution if they marry their victims. This was finally abolished in August 2017.

### 2.2.2 Gaps identified

#### Lack of a civil law

The lack of unity in personal codes regulating personal status matters makes it difficult to overhaul the legal framework regulating the private lives of Lebanese women: it is in private situations mostly where they are most vulnerable to violence. In addition, while access to education for Lebanese women is not restricted nor is their ability to conduct business and own property, there are still no laws protecting women against sexual harassment in the workplace. Also, significantly, there are still not enough women participating in the political life and in decision-making.

Gaps in the law identified in a recent brief of the American University of Beirut (AUB) policy institute, 2017<sup>9</sup> imply that women facing GBV in Lebanon cannot fully rely on Law 293, because filing a case against an abusive/violent husband would require a level of economic empowerment that is unavailable to most of the abused women. Most of these women lack an alternative economic resource to that provided by their husbands, or outside the marital house. In such cases women do not favour legal solutions, as they and their children are economically dependent on the husband. Some of the findings of this study include the following:

- Only 175 official protection orders were released since the statement of Law 293(2014-2016);

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<sup>7</sup> As per the Lebanese Code of Medical Ethics, physicians are mandated to report witnessed or suspected abuse.

<sup>8</sup> Review of Gender Based Violence, UNFPA, 2012. [www.unfpa.org.lb/Documents/4-Review-of-GBV-Research-in-Lebanon.aspx](http://www.unfpa.org.lb/Documents/4-Review-of-GBV-Research-in-Lebanon.aspx)

<sup>9</sup> [http://website.aub.edu.lb/ifi/publications/Documents/policy\\_memos/2016-2017/20170716\\_domestic\\_violence.pdf](http://website.aub.edu.lb/ifi/publications/Documents/policy_memos/2016-2017/20170716_domestic_violence.pdf) AUB. *DISSECTING LEBANESE LAW 293 ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: ARE WOMEN PROTECTED?* (August 2017)

- Fourteen Lebanese women were killed by their intimate partners (husbands) after the statement of Law 293;
- The law is not able to protect a significant number of refugee women exposed to domestic violence;
- The Courts of Urgent Matters have limited capacity in issuing orders and in handling domestic violence issues<sup>10</sup>.

Another factor working against women benefiting from this new law is child custody. Child custody in Lebanon is a sensitive matter, both in the context of religion, as well as society. It is a subject that falls entirely under the authority of religious courts. Each of the religious sects has set an age for child custody ranging from 2 to 12 years old. In reality, this prevents any minor under the age of 18 from the guardianship of the mother if she decides to protect herself from the violence of an abusive husband.

Law 293 does not cover marital rape, rather “marital right by force”, and is only invoked if physical evidence of violence is produced. Marital rape is also not an offence under Lebanese criminal law. For instance, Article 503 of the Penal Code states: “Whoever uses violence and intimidation to force someone other than his spouse to engage in sexual intercourse shall be sentenced to at least five years’ hard labour.”

### **The law does not protect refugee women**

Although Law 293 is intended to protect all women present in Lebanese territory, refugee women who are exposed to violence are not able to report to the Internal Security Forces’ help, either in the case of illegal residency in the country or if they are residents in camps. Refugee women who might be particularly exposed to different kinds of domestic and sexual violence are not, therefore, able to benefit from legal protection.

### **Trafficking**

In 2011, Law 164, Punishment for the Crime of Trafficking in Persons, was adopted. Chapter 3 includes applicable definitions of victims of trafficking – inclusive of sexual exploitation and prostitution. It directs the Ministry of Social Affairs to establish a trust fund for victims. The Human Rights Watch 2016/2017 Annual Report noted that the trust fund has yet to be established and that the Lebanese government’s response to sex trafficking remains uncoordinated.<sup>11</sup>

### **Early marriage**

There is no minimum age for marriage defined in Lebanon’s civil law; rather marriage is governed by the personal status codes of religious sects with varying minimum ages for marriage between males and females. According to UNICEF, in the Sunni and Shia communities, marriage can be approved for girls from the age of 9 and within the Jewish community from the age of 12½ (UNICEF, 2011). A 2016 UNICEF survey found that the highest proportion of women currently married or in a union between the age of 15 and 19 in Lebanon, is found among Syrian refugees, at around 27%, followed by Lebanese women and Palestinian refugees, at around 4% (Albawaba, 2017)<sup>12</sup>.

### **Enforcement**

Draft legislation to set the legal minimum age of marriage at age 18 within Lebanon’s Penal Code – in an effort to ban child marriage - was presented to the Presidential Cabinet in March 2017, but still needs to be debated by parliament.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive and threatening behaviour that may include physical, emotional, economic and sexual violence as well as intimidation, isolation and coercion. The purpose of domestic violence is to establish and exert power and control over another; men most often use it against their intimate partners, such as current or former spouses, partners or girlfriends. While other forms of violence within the family are also serious, by domestic violence we refer to violence against women in their intimate relationships, often referred to as intimate partner violence (IPV). ‘Gender-based violence’ and ‘violence against women’ are terms that are often used interchangeably as most gender-based violence is inflicted by men on women and girls. However, it is important to retain the ‘gender-based’ aspect of the concept as this highlights the fact that violence against women is an expression of power inequalities between women and men. The terms are used interchangeably in this report.

<sup>11</sup> The report further noted that Syrian women appear especially at risk for trafficking in forced prostitution and sexual exploitation.

<sup>12</sup> Lebanon moves forward on banning child marriage, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2017, Al Bawaba News. <https://www.albawaba.com/news/lebanon-moves-forward-banning-child-marriage-954184>

<sup>13</sup> Date not confirmed yet at the drafting of this study.

### **Limited awareness about the existence of the law**

CSOs are very active at raising awareness about GBV. Many organisations prepare their own campaigns, leaflets and videos, with messages that are striking and have considerable impact. The large number of different videos and communication products is disproportionately compared with the small and insufficient number of shelters and services for the survivors (8 shelters run by CSOs in the country<sup>14</sup>). As one informant said “*the society has understood the message, now it is time for implementation of services*”.

It has been observed during the mission that the different CSOs and organisations working to prevent GBV employ different messages and campaigns, without coordination or a commonality of approach. The different campaigns by the various actors use different slogans and images to impart information about the same issues: the law and the criminalisation of GBV, the fight against early marriage and the fight against rape. It has been observed that most of these campaigns are very aggressive in their images, where women’s bruises or wounds are shown, and men are portrayed as violent perpetrators. Most of the context of these videos is urban and very westernised, portraying urban middle class couples. The campaigns against early marriage appear to build their messages on the issue of “rights”, a language that may not be understood by more conservative segments of the population. Instead, messages around the economic cost or the health impact may be a more efficient means of reaching these groups. In any case, the effectiveness of these campaigns has not been evaluated.

### **Limited data**

So far, there is no official data on the prevalence of GBV in Lebanon. A proposal for a study was prepared by the CAS in 2008 but was not accepted at that time by the Prime Minister Office. Without data of prevalence, it is difficult to advocate for more budget allocation and the need for programmes and resources. More rigorous and longer-term data collection and analysis is needed to understand the impact of programmes and what factors most commonly contribute to the perpetuation of violence against women and gender inequality.

### **No formal referral system**

No formal referral system has been established. However, most organisations know each other and rely on their good relations to transfer survivors. There are only a few shelters available, not enough for the number of survivors. An effective referral system exists for child protection and the same could be implemented for GBV. According to conversations with MoSA, the future national protection policy should respond to this lack of a referral system.

### **Limited capacity of the court for Urgent Matters**

All cases of domestic violence (DV) going to court are treated by the courts for Urgent Matters, that do not have enough capacity to treat these cases in a systematic way. According to a study published by the American University of Beirut,<sup>15</sup> the authors explain that “The implementation of Law 293 is stated under the authority of the Courts of Urgent Matters, according to the text of the law. These courts have limited capacity in issuing orders and in handling DV issues due to their logistics as they are in charge of many other legal subjects. This point does not allow Urgent Matters’ judges to swiftly complete efficient investigations about the DV cases at hand. One of the judges mentioned that 30% of the cases admitted in one court were intentionally misreported.

Another issue is the restriction of the legal definition of violence pertaining to its physical form. Few judges expanded their definition of violence to cover the verbal, emotional, sexual and economic violence. However, this expansion in reading the text is related to the individual initiative of a judge and not to the legal text itself, placing abused women at the mercy of the wide explanation of a restricted text”<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Shelters are run by Caritas (5 shelters), Martha and Mariam (religious organization), ABAAD and KAFA.

<sup>15</sup> AUB, The authority of the courts & the limitation of the legal text.

<sup>16</sup> Fatima Moussawi, Nasser Yassine, DISSECTING LEBANESE LAW 293 ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: ARE WOMEN PROTECTED? American University of Beirut, August 2017.

## 2.2.3 Promotion of legal, economic and social aspects ensuring decent work

### **Economic participation of women in Lebanon**

The remaining challenges in the country, include the low participation of women in the economic and political life (with very low labour force participation and political representation)<sup>5</sup> and the gaps in terms of prevention, enforcement and implementation of measures and programme to address GBV.

### **Labour market participation**

There is a gap in labour market participation with the rate of women active in the labour market among the lowest in the world (World Bank, 2012). According to the CAS, a closer look at the characteristics of unemployed people shows that women are not looking for jobs despite the fact that they have the skills.<sup>17</sup>

It is found that the women that do work, work in professional positions. Looking at occupation, the CAS statistics show that 19% of the jobs in Lebanon are craft related and 14% are dedicated to senior officials and managers in both the public and private sector. Service, shop and market workers account for 13% of all workers. Although there are proportionately fewer women than men in employment in Lebanon, almost 26% of working women are occupied in professional positions (such as doctors, teachers, engineers) compared with only 8% of working men.<sup>18</sup>

However, it is noted that labour market data for Lebanon is limited and outdated (the CAS is preparing the launch of a new Household Survey<sup>19</sup> that will have a large component of questions related to labour force participation).

The low participation of women in the labour force in Lebanon has a high cost to the economy and a high cost to the family. According to the World Bank, referring to the Mena Region,<sup>20</sup> simulations using household data survey for the Mena region show that if rates of female participation in the labour force increased from their actual levels to predicted levels (which are based on the existing levels of female education, fertility, and age structure), average household earnings would increase by as much as 25 per cent. For many families, these increased earnings are the ticket to the middle class. Analyses based on cross-country data suggest that countries achieve higher levels of per capita income through increased participation by women in the labour force, which can contribute to faster economic growth.

If female participation rates had been at predicted levels, per capita gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates might have been 0.7 percent higher per year during the 1990s. This lost potential is significant when compared with an average per capita income growth of 1.9 percent for the decade.

### **Unemployment**

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates unemployment among Lebanese women to be twice the average.<sup>21</sup> Although there are more women being educated, this is not reflected in a corresponding degree of access to employment does not correspond. Women's enrolment and educational attainment has increased significantly during recent years, however there are not enough women entering the workforce.

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<sup>17</sup> The labour market in Lebanon, Statistics in Focus (SIF), Central Administration of Statistics, Lebanon, Issue number 1, October 2011. [http://www.cas.gov.lb/images/PDFs/SIF/CAS\\_Labour\\_Market\\_In\\_Lebanon\\_SIF1.pdf](http://www.cas.gov.lb/images/PDFs/SIF/CAS_Labour_Market_In_Lebanon_SIF1.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> The labour market in Lebanon, Statistics in Focus (SIF), Central Administration of Statistics, Lebanon, Issue number 1, October 2011. P 6-7

<sup>19</sup> funded by the EUD.

<sup>20</sup> <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/976361468756608654/pdf/281150PAPER0Gender010Development0in0MNA.pdf> World Bank, Mena report: Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa, Women in the Public Sphere, 2004 pp 94-110

<sup>21</sup> Towards Decent Work in Lebanon: Issues and Challenges in Light of the Syrian Refugee Crisis, ILO, 2015.

Another point to be considered is that family businesses and the involvement of the entire family in agricultural work remain important in Lebanon. Historically, agricultural and pastoral societies are known not to pay women directly for their work; their income is dependent on a family member.

Until now, women in rural areas have been given the economic responsibility for selling products. Unfortunately, this is unsustainable and it does not provide women financial independence or a fundamental role in economic growth.

Women's work in family businesses (small businesses, entrepreneurship, agriculture) is not generally rewarded. Although women carry out very important tasks they are unpaid and it is considered that supporting their husbands is part of the woman's role. The income goes to the father or the husband.

### **Access to asset and entrepreneurship**

There is no data on women's land ownership in Lebanon.<sup>22</sup> However, it is common practice to limit the transfer of real estate to male children and women face difficulties acquiring land tenure in rural areas.<sup>23</sup>

In 2016, female early stage entrepreneurship level (16% of the population) was lower than male' (26% of the population).<sup>24</sup> 37% of female and 41% of male early stage entrepreneurs report to have started their business out of necessity rather than opportunity.<sup>25</sup>

Women participate in the ownership of 43% of companies and 5% of firms are principally women owned.<sup>26</sup> In meetings however, key informants mentioned that women entrepreneurs are facing difficulties and that many women "entrepreneurs" may be participating in the firm of their husband or family, without real access to decision making. In addition, women have less opportunities to access finance with only 3 percent of bank loans going to female entrepreneurs.

According to the International Financial Corporation, the main barrier to increase the participation of women in business in Lebanon remains access to finance. While this constraint is universal for all small and medium enterprises, regardless of gender, it tends to disproportionately affect women-owned businesses.<sup>27</sup>

### **The impact of the Refugee Crisis**

The arrival of a large number of Syrian refugees has also challenged the delicate societal and intercommunity balance in Lebanon. Lebanese women and girls are particularly affected, as insecurity and violence rise.<sup>28</sup>

Weak job creation, especially for the increasing number of women in the job market and in locations beyond Beirut (for example, Tripoli and the north), limits the development of economic and human capital, and high unemployment is often of long duration. The stakeholder consultations highlighted that insufficient job creation and limited market is a cross-cutting theme, particularly the poorest, with the caveat that social protection also has a strong role to play for the more vulnerable members of society.

The lack of quality, well-remunerated jobs pushes youth and others who are disillusioned with the status quo to emigrate. The country's low-jobs-producing economy is also exacerbated by the influx of Syrian refugees, who are increasingly competing for jobs and putting downward pressure on wages, especially

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<sup>22</sup> According to CEDAW report, May 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, CEDAW, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> Global Entrepreneurship monitor, 2016-2017, table 8, p 120

<sup>25</sup> Global Entrepreneurship monitor 2016-2017, table 8, p 120

<sup>26</sup> World Bank, Enterprise Surveys, 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Sources used: CAS (2011) , "The labor market in Lebanon"

[http://www.cas.gov.lb/images/PDFs/SIF/CAS\\_Labour\\_Market\\_In\\_Lebanon\\_SIF1.pdf](http://www.cas.gov.lb/images/PDFs/SIF/CAS_Labour_Market_In_Lebanon_SIF1.pdf) ; ILO (n.d.), ILOSTAT (database) ; ILO (2015), "Towards decent work in Lebanon: Issues and Challenges in Light of the Syrian Refugee Crisis"

<sup>28</sup> Le Borgne, Eric; Jacobs, Thomas J.. 2016. Lebanon : Promoting Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity. Systematic Country Diagnostic; World Bank, Washington, DC.pp 100-101. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/23102> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO."

affecting the unskilled, women and youth.<sup>29</sup>

Until now, the economic empowerment of women in Lebanon has been approached separately from GBV. The studies and reports tend to focus on the status of women, violence, inequality, etc. Civil society put more efforts in terms of awareness, capacity building and training. However, economic empowerment has been left behind.

Today, there is a move towards economic empowerment as a crucial component for gender equity. Economic empowerment of women is key to GBV prevention. Reducing GBV requires a holistic approach which improves women's socio-economic standing in order to reduce their financial dependency and their ensuing vulnerability and susceptibility to violence. In light of this, it is important to look at women's actual access to financial resources and their essential expenditures.

Data regarding women's employment in Lebanon remains very poor. Yet, looking at employment from a gender perspective, the percentage of women in the education system, banks and healthcare is high. Women's participation in the labour market has increased but their household responsibilities remain largely unchanged and their salaries remain lower than those of men.

## **2.2.4 Political participation**

Gender inequality in Lebanon is particularly stark once political empowerment is taken into account. According to World Economic Forum (2017), Lebanon is the world's tenth worst country in terms of gender equality, ranking 137 out of 144 countries surveyed, with a gender gap score of 0.596. This low score is driven mostly by the country's poor performance with regard to political empowerment<sup>30</sup>, ranking 143 in political participation. Notwithstanding the weak ranking, Lebanon's absolute scores are similar to those of other countries in the region ( Tunisia is ranking 117; Bahrein, 126; Algeria 127; Egypt, 134; ; Jordan, 135; Morocco, 136; Syria, 142; Yemen, 144).

Women need to be more active in political life. Greater participation of women in the political process will be key to achieving change. At the global level, numerous positive measures are effective in stimulating women's political voice and agency, including the establishment of quotas (for example, reserving a specific number or share of positions for women in political parties, parliaments and local councils). Quotas are controversial and have as many supporters as critics. In Lebanon, supporters argue that quotas compensate for obstacles that impede women from their fair share of political seats. Opposition to quotas can be reduced by ensuring that the positions are filled through a competitive and participatory process, rather than through direct appointment.

The Coalition Women for Politics, a coordination mechanism led by NCLW with CSOs, on advocacy for the quota system was established in summer 2016. The creation of this Coalition was considered a big achievement, as a high number of CSOs, nearly all the women CSOs in Lebanon, are members of this network. For the first time in 15 years CSOs and NCLW agreed on a unique message<sup>31</sup> on the advocacy for a quota system for women in politics in Lebanon. However, nothing materialised. After the elections none of the parties that agreed to increase women's participation did so. The parties felt that a new quota for women was going to complicate the share of power further<sup>32</sup>, among the already existing quota systems (the confessional quota, including the quota of political parties within the different confessions). For these reasons, the female quota was abandoned.

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<sup>29</sup> Le Borgne, Eric; Jacobs, Thomas J. 2016. Lebanon: Promoting Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity. Systematic Country Diagnostic; World Bank, Washington, DC. Pp 109-110.

<sup>30</sup> [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2017.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf). The global gender gap index measures the relative gap between women and men across four key areas: health and survival, educational attainment, economic participation, and political empowerment.

<sup>31</sup> All members of the coalition agreed to request a minimum of 30% women's candidates, as the main message of the campaign

<sup>32</sup> Walid Hussein, The 'Female Quota' in Lebanon: A Temporary Solution to a Chronic Political Problem, Heinrich Boll Stiftung-Middle East, 17 February 2017.

<https://lb.boell.org/en/2017/02/17/female-quota-lebanon-temporary-solution-chronic-political-problem>



Although the participation of women in civil society in Lebanon is large, women are still not participating in formal politics. The recent failure of the quota system for elections is an example of how actors seemed to agree on a need to bring all parties together, at the end the decision makers decided not to establish the demanded 30% quota.

This example shows that the bottom-up approach will not succeed, unless it is matched by the government's leadership and commitment to establish a more equal political environment.

It is worth highlighting that it is not enough to issue laws obligating the electoral roll to incorporate a fixed gender quota. The law must contain articles which make it incumbent for political parties to ensure clearly defined proportions of female representation in legislative and local assemblies<sup>33</sup>.

### **3. Complementarity and Lessons Learnt from Previous Interventions on GBV and Social Norms**

#### **3.1 Actors working on GBV**

Violence against women is clearly related to culturally rooted attitudes and beliefs; it is therefore important that interventions and programmes analyse the different patterns of violence and their “causes”. To date, little research has been done on male attitudes and beliefs that contribute to partner violence in Lebanon; an exception is the qualitative IMAGES country report.

IMAGES is a multi-year, multi-country initiative developed in 2008 by Promundo and the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW). The aim is to build up the evidence-base to inform how public institutions and policies might be changed to foster gender equality as well as to raise awareness, among policymakers and programme planners, of the need to involve men in health, development, and gender equality issues. It includes a questionnaire for men and for women which both have a set of core questions and other questions that are adapted in each country or region to include key and emerging context specific issues, such as gender equality, gender relations, and women's empowerment.

Produced under the UN Women Regional Programme Men and Women for Gender Equality and funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), with the collaboration of ABAAD, the Lebanon country report forms part of the IMAGES MENA (Middle East and North Africa) multi-country study in Egypt, Morocco, Palestine and Lebanon.<sup>34</sup>

The study objectives are:

- To assess the current behaviours and attitudes of men on a wide range of gender-related issues and to compare these results with women's attitudes and behaviours;
- To explore factors that may explain variation in men's behaviours in their family lives and intimate and sexual relationships, including childhood experiences of violence, gender norms, stress, migration, and unemployment, among others.

This type of study can certainly contribute to understand men's practices and attitudes related to gender equality and also helps to inform, drive and monitor policy development and programming engaging men and women.

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<sup>33</sup> Walid Hussein, *The Female Quota in Lebanon; A Temporary Solution to a Chronical Political Problem*, Op. Cit.

<sup>34</sup> Keedi, A., Yaghi, Z., and Barker, G. “We Can Never Go Back to How Things Were Before”: A Qualitative Study on War, Masculinities, and Gender Relations with Lebanese and Syrian Refugee Men and Women. Beirut, Lebanon: ABAAD and Washington, D.C.: Promundo. May 2011 [https://promundoglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/IMAGES-Study\\_Quali\\_Eng.pdf](https://promundoglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/IMAGES-Study_Quali_Eng.pdf) The study presents evidence gained from quantitative data collected via a household survey, supplemented by two studies on intimate partner violence (IPV): a qualitative study on IPV reporting and a quantitative study on IPV experience and perpetration

In terms of other knowledge products, AUB developed a policy brief<sup>35</sup>, with interesting recommendations. One of these recommendations is that civil society actors still need to work on raising awareness about domestic violence and about the use of Law 293, as only 175 protection orders were released between 2014 and 2016, compared to the significant number of DV cases that occurred in these three years.

In partnership with ABAAD Institute for Gender Equality (ABAAD), UN Women provided GBV awareness training to a total of 1,074 young women and men in the areas of Tekrit and Khreibet el Jundi, in Akkar (out of a target of 1000 beneficiaries). The training benefitted 318 men and 756 women.

UN WOMEN and ABAAD will target particular articles in their 2017 campaign for 16-days of activism. The targeted articles (505 and 518)<sup>36</sup> need also to be abolished as a follow-up to last year's campaign targeting the "Rape Marriage Law", or article number 522.<sup>37</sup>

UNFPA works on the following activities:

- reinforcing the capacity of the national system to improve prevention and responsiveness, through interventions with the law enforcement sector or support to the SDCs/PHCs;
- empowering communities to better protect themselves against GBV, through peer to peer interventions, interventions targeted male youth and community-based projects supported by Municipalities;
- preventing and responding to the needs of women and girls at risk/survivors, through support to safe spaces, access to health, psychological, legal support, etc..

In addition to interventions related to service provision and capacity development, UNFPA and the CSO KAFA are also implementing targeted advocacy initiatives, such as "Raise the Age" Campaign and knowledge management/generation of evidence interventions, such as the recent survey on prevalence and determinants of early marriage in the Bekaa with UNFPA and AUB. UNFPA furthermore promotes mainstreaming GBV in other sectors of interventions and fosters an integrated approach between GBV and reproductive health.

UNFPA, in partnership with KAFA and UNDP, is currently developing a GBV curriculum for the Municipal Police that will be institutionalised within the ISF Academy. This type of initiatives should continue to be implemented to ensure that all police forces are trained on GBV. UNFPA is also rolling out the 2015 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines on integrating GBV in humanitarian interventions at national and field levels, in partnership with UNHCR and UNICEF. Finally, UNFPA has led a comprehensive desk review and analysis at global, regional and country level of resources, guidance, manual, good practices on engaging men and boys, with a special focus on male youth against violence against women and girls. under the umbrella of the National SGBV Task Force.

Care Lebanon, is implementing a project to address a key turning point in girls' pathway to education and empowerment in Lebanon – the transition from intermediate to secondary school. Data clearly shows the majority of Syrian refugee and Lebanese girls are attending primary and intermediate education, however there is a barrier in maintaining enrollment rates, retention, and transition into secondary school.<sup>38</sup> Only 57% of Lebanese girls, and a mere 3% of Syrian girls, are currently registered in secondary education, leaving the country far from achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4's target to ensure that all girls and boys complete primary and secondary education.

During the transition from intermediate to secondary school, girls are dropping out, losing the peer support

<sup>35</sup>[http://website.aub.edu.lb/ifi/publications/Documents/policy\\_memos/2016-2017/20170716\\_domestic\\_violence.pdf](http://website.aub.edu.lb/ifi/publications/Documents/policy_memos/2016-2017/20170716_domestic_violence.pdf) AUB. *DISSECTING LEBANESE LAW 293 ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: ARE WOMEN PROTECTED?* (August 2017)

<sup>36</sup> Article 505 refers to having sex with a minor, and allowing the marriage between the offender and the minor if she is at least 15 years old and article 518, which concerns the seduction of a minor ("virgin") with the promise of marriage.

<sup>37</sup> Article 522 of the Penal Code was abolished by the parliament in August 2017. The so called "Rape marriage law" allowed rapists who marry their victims to escape prosecution. Its abolishment was a victory for campaigners, civil society activists, and women all over Lebanon.

<sup>38</sup> When compared with other countries in the region, Lebanon's gross and net enrollment rates are considered low. For instance, net enrollment in secondary education reaches 96% in Qatar and 87% in Jordan, while it's only at 57.3 % in Lebanon. BankMED, "Analysis of Lebanon's Education Sector", 2014: <https://www.bankmed.com.lb/BOMedia/subservices/categories/News/20150515170635891.pdf>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

networks provided by the relationships with teachers and classmates, and missing out on key skills development at a critical moment in their lives. This limits their future ability to obtain higher paying, quality jobs and to engage in self-employment beyond informal markets. By using the Positive Deviance<sup>39</sup> approach, the project aims at encouraging a group of girls to become change-makers who can influence their own communities and serve as mentors for other girls at risk of leaving school before developing the skills and conceptual knowledge needed to pursue meaningful learning and life options.

Work promoting women rights in Lebanon has taken place for over 10 years. Before that time, several organisations, syndicates and unions promoted equality between women and men and the liberation of women. The most important association was the Lebanese League for Women's Rights led by the activist Linda Matar<sup>40</sup>. The League is still active and coordinates with the different women's organisations in the country, such as those of the Palestinians and the Kurds. The League is also part of the Women Union, an international committee grouping women's associations from all over the world. Other political parties gave particular attention to the presence of women. Yet, women's rights were not considered important, and priority has been given to political or religious groupings.

### 3.2 Best practices on economic empowerment, access to employment and entrepreneurship

UN Women, in partnership with respective national stakeholders, conducted a gender-sensitive Labour Market Study covering two main geographic areas, namely Akkar and Tripoli, which are among the poorest areas hosting Syrian refugees. Considering the great disparity in terms of quality of livelihoods between regions and within the target areas of interest, this study offered a good opportunity to identify main economic challenges of the region.

The study offered an overview of the Syrian refugee crisis, the influx of refugees in Lebanon, their legal status, impact on livelihoods, situation and international response plans. It has shown that programmes in these two areas of interest did not necessarily translate into higher quality livelihoods for Syrian refugees, due to poor infrastructure in these two areas which failed to attract any businesses or investments. At the same time, women and youths face protection challenges in this region with poor services rendering the area one of high risk.

The objective of the study was to identify skill gaps that would assist UN Women target its training activities. The study utilized both desk and field reviews, to try and understand the demand and supply sides of the labour market in Akkar and Tripoli. The fieldwork identified potential growth sectors in the areas, as well as potential employment opportunities for women in these sectors on the demand side; while education and skills levels available to vulnerable women and girls were identified on the labour supply side.

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#### Best practice: Engaging Fathers, an initiative of Care Lebanon

This advocacy initiative led by CARE Lebanon aims at creating a pathway for **enhancing the role of fathers in the lives of their children in a positive, equitable, and non-violent way**. It is expected that this will **promote human rights and gender equality** of all men and women, girls and boys from different communities living in Lebanon. Within the wider framework of promoting the role of fathers, the initiatives seek to address key concerns related to gender equality and child protection. The goals aim to engage men in the “positive fatherhood” campaign through photo and video documentation. Adolescent boys and adolescent girls are actively engaged in the “positive fatherhood” campaign through interactive theatre and the community (men and women) is reached with positive messages on the role of fathers to promote gender equality and child protection.

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<sup>39</sup> Positive Deviance is a problem solving, asset-based method grounded in the belief that individuals and communities have assets and resources that they have not yet tapped into. Pascale, Richard, Jerry Stermin & Monique Stermin: *The Power of Positive Deviance: How Unlikely Innovators Solve the World's Toughest Problems*, 2010.

<sup>40</sup> Linda Matar is an activist for women's rights: <http://www.weeportal-lb.org/news/linda-matar-relentless-activist-women%E2%80%99s-rights>

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**Sarah’s bags story; another best practice example**

Sarah’s bags is a fashion label and a social enterprise, that produces hand beading and embroidery bags are known for is meticulously crafted by a team of over 200 women, among whom are female prisoners, ex-prisoners and underprivileged women in Lebanon. Most of the designs are created to showcase their skills. Trained by the Sarah’s Bag team, they are skilled artisans in their own right and some have been with the company since it first launched in May of 2000. Some of the prisoners used the income they earned to overturn wrongful convictions; others to support their families while they are incarcerated. Once out of prison, Sarah’s Bag encourages its artisans to train other women in their towns and villages, thus creating much-needed jobs in some of the poorer communities in Lebanon. As a result, these women are soon regarded as valuable members of their communities and their new status helps them to reintegrate into society and ease the stigma of being ex-prisoners. Since 2013, Sarah’s Bag has also provided the artisans working behind bars with certificates of completion, proof of their training and work experience with the label so they can find work once they are out of prison.

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**Showcase of a best practice:**

The LEBANESE WOMEN ANGEL FUND (LWAF), a project of the Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB) that started in May 2017 with a partnership with IM-Capital, to foster the integration of women in entrepreneurship by graduating batches of qualified women angel investors to invest in women-led startups.<sup>1</sup> LWAF succeeded in attracting 22 businesswomen, who each contributed \$10,000 to the fund, for a total of \$220,000. This amount is being matched on a fund level by iSME, the \$30 million grant and equity co-investment program affiliated with the Lebanese Kafalat loan guarantee corporation.

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## 4. Recommendations

### 4.1 Institutional level

OMSWA should fully consolidate its role of coordinator, advocating as well as enforcing an accountability framework within all state and non-state actors involved in the gender agenda in Lebanon.

It should also ensure to coordinate with civil society which is very active but prioritising the key issues where to intervene. Establishing a dialogue with the main CSOs together and not with each of them separately. OMSWA should be able to encourage the main CSOs working on women's rights to work together and for instance to organise joint campaigns. OMSWA should work towards achieving a long term objective to ensure that Lebanon is no longer a patriarchal society affected by traditions and discriminatory religious laws regulating family matters. OMSWA also need to coordinate with other institutional mechanisms of the national women machinery to clarify all roles and mandates. It is also recommended that gender units or focal point are re-established in public institutions to mainstream gender equality in national sector strategies and plans in an effective way

Another key recommendation<sup>41</sup> on the role of OMSWA is to ensure that international instruments, particularly the CEDAW, is effective by harmonising domestic legislation accordingly and to continue enhancing the participation of women in decision-making in all levels (political, administration, economic life etc.).

An exercise looking at the different strategies developed by relevant actors, to identify synergies and overlapping is necessary, in order to ensure a smooth coordination of actors and to recognise where each actor brings added value. The GBV strategy of OMSWA may be overlapping with the Social Protection strategy and the Strategy on GBV and Exploitation currently been developed by MoSA. NCLW also has a long-term strategy that is under review to fit the SDGs. MoSA due to its resources, capacities, infrastructures and experience should be leading on the side of the protection and case management of GBV.

### 4.2 GBV and the SDGs: an opportunity for further progress

Despite considerable progress made, it is important to continue reinforcing the commitment of Lebanon to condemn violence against women and promote their human rights. In the context of the SDGs, there is a window of opportunity. Among the 17 SDGs, SDG number 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) has three (from a total of 9) targets relevant to the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls<sup>42</sup>.

Understanding violence against women, as a human rights issue, does not preclude other approaches; instead it encourages a comprehensive, multi-sectorial and holistic response.

The key priorities are:

- the revision of legal framework related to the age of marriage;
- to revise the shortfalls within the law 293 on protecting women against family violence, exceptions within the law 522, etc;
- to continue advocacy for full implementation of law 293, i.e. funds for victims has not been established by MoSA etc<sup>43</sup>;
- to enhance the capacity of law enforcement actors, especially judges;

<sup>41</sup> Recommendations of the National workshop on GBV April 2017

<sup>42</sup> Three targets: 1) End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere; 2) Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation; 3) Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

<sup>43</sup> A decree to provide a budget for the law 293 is still pending of approval.

- to contribute to the fight against impunity and continue promoting women participation in the public life.

### **Review of the laws**

Lebanon ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1996. Apart from some reservations<sup>44</sup>, the country has agreed with the convention.

Article 2 condemns discrimination against women in all its forms and the signatories agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women, including several commitments such as:

- To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;
- To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women<sup>45</sup>

Therefore Lebanon, to be compliant with CEDAW, needs to review the law in respect of domestic violence and also needs to revisit other laws that have related impacts, to make sure all discriminatory articles are eliminated in laws related to labour, employment and civil matters.

If review of Law 293 is not on the current agenda of the Lebanese Parliament, the AUB report advises that CSOs should make use of the law in its current form and enable women to use it and benefit from it.

In addition, it is important to ensure the enforcement of existing laws and engagement of judges and lawyers together who have created jurisprudence with sentences that have helped women to solve their cases (on nationality, divorce, custody, alimony etc.).

### **Effective coordination for visible results**

The GoL is ultimately responsible for the safety and health of its citizens, and it is therefore crucial that the government commits to reducing violence against women, which is a major and preventable public and societal problem. Violence by an intimate partner is, worldwide, found to be the most prevalent form of violence against women.

International best practice first requires that the government acknowledges that the problem exists. This has been achieved in Lebanon. The second step is that the government must make a commitment to act: to plan and implement national programmes, both to avert future violence and to respond to it when it occurs with all available mechanisms and resources as well as to allocate necessary resources for prevention, intervention and sanction of GBV cases.

This will require that the government, where necessary supported by international agencies, invests significant resources in programmes to address violence against women. The priority should be to prevent violence against women and particularly intimate-partner violence, but also to include other important issues, such as early marriage, rape, and sexual harassment.

Reducing violence against women in Lebanon will require an enormous effort and concerted and coordinated action by a range of different sectors (e.g. health and social services, religious organisations, the judiciary and police, trade unions and businesses, CSOs, and the media), each providing their various

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<sup>44</sup> Lebanon has expressed reservations concerning specific articles: Article (9/2) that guarantees equal rights for men and women with regard to their children's citizenship. Article (16/1) that commits states to apply proper measures to eliminate discrimination against women in marriage and family relations.

<sup>45</sup> The other principles related to article 2 are:

- (a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;
- (b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;
- (c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;
- (d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;
- (e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;

added value and expertise. It was found by the team that there is a lack of general coordination and much overlapping in actions, where actors have not yet clarified their different roles (e.g. who does what, who is leading, who is accountable, how to report and to whom). The experience of the GBV group under the emergency response is a good practice that should provide the basis for a long term coordination of actors working on GBV in Lebanon.

### **Multi-sectorial approach**

Recognising violence against women as a public and societal problem does not mean that the OMSWA should be expected to deal with the issue alone. Similar to other complex issues, multi-sectorial action is required, with the OMSWA playing an important role, but also MoSA (on issues related to social protection), Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, General Security and civil society have a role to play.

Not all sectors will be equally able to address, or be amenable to addressing, the problem. Therefore it is important that a formal mechanism is created and provided with sufficient resources to coordinate multi-sectorial efforts. The form this takes (a national committee, a task force, a coordination of the different gender units within ministries, or other) may vary, but international experience suggests that identification with the highest level of political office is crucial.

The aforementioned WHO study shows that, worldwide, many women in violent partnerships do not seek help from the courts. This tendency has been confirmed in Lebanon with still very few women seeking assistance through the courts. This might suggest that those in the criminal justice systems (police, investigators, medico-legal staff, lawyers, judges, etc.) need to be properly trained and sensitised to be able to consider and address the particular needs and priorities of such women.

In Lebanon, training to the police forces has been provided by different CSOs<sup>46</sup> and it is recommended that these trainings should continue to be provided to all the services involved (judges, national security etc.) on a regular basis. Furthermore, OMSWA, MOSA and the National Security should be involved to participate in such systematic training. The aforementioned AUB study concluded that legal authorities are highly advised to unify the interpretation of Law 293's limited legal text. In order to achieve this, training for judges should be provided and imparted by jurists and judges who are sensitive to gender equality and who have created jurisprudence in favour of GBV victims.

It is important that those services administering the criminal justice system, especially the police, should remain neutral when dealing with women complainants and not take the side of the perpetrator. Cases are known that the police has suggested that the woman is somehow at fault, telephoning her husband or sending her home, or is disbelieving or denigrating the women. It is necessary to have a comprehensive approach to assist these women. There should be support for women bringing complaints, making sure they are kept informed of the progress of their cases and the requirements of their participation, as well as ensuring their safety as witnesses. Furthermore, those convicted need to be appropriately punished.

Finally it is recommended to develop a coordinated approach between the criminal justice system and appropriate civil law protection, to ensure that women's safety is paramount. For example, it is necessary to order a man to remain at distance from a partner who has experienced violence. The potential for intimidation by a male partner must be addressed and sentencing should be adapted to the specific circumstances and requests of the woman.

### **Coordination among donors and implementing partners**

It has been observed that there is poor coordination between donors and implementing partners on the gender agenda in Lebanon. Despite having an active civil society working on gender equality, the gender agenda actors have been found highly unstructured and uncoordinated with poor accountability system.

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<sup>46</sup> in particular KAFA.

This contributes to weak communication and overlapping among interventions. It is recommended that a system should be put in place to share information and create synergies. It is furthermore suggested that this should be coordinated by OMSWA and MOSA, with the participation of NCLW and key CSOs some key ministries and donors , to ensure that all the necessary actors are involved. CSOs and services should continue to collect experiences and accumulate testimonies of survivors. These best practices and this evidence can be used as advocacy tools to rectify the flaws of Law 293.

The donors could require more transparency and coordination between governmental and non-governmental institutions to avoid the current situation where most of actors work independently. Joint coordination between OMSWA, MOSA and NCLW is crucial which should entail redefining the role of each of them and clarifying their mandates in terms of GBV prevention, protection, intervention and sanction and other issues to be covered under the gender agenda. The MADAD programme could be an opportunity to establish a sustainable Gender coordination group (not only on GBV). The donors, for instance the EUD, should be able to compel the main CSOs working on gender equality and women's rights to cooperate in joint campaigns or programmes, in order to enhance effectiveness and efficiency. The GBV group established under the emergency response should continue to ensure coordination and harmonization on the GBV matter.

### **The establishment of a formal, efficient and sustainable referral system**

According to several informants, such as ministries, CSOs, implementing partners and some donors, the different services providers for survivors of GBV are working with an informal referral system.

Notwithstanding the work already carried out, protocols and referral systems need to be put in place to ensure that appropriate care, follow-up and support services are available for survivors. In settings where resources are limited and referral is not possible, there should be a minimum level of staffing aware of the problem. They should provide information about legal and counselling options as well as supportive messages emphasising that such violence is unacceptable, that women are not to blame for it, that it is a widespread problem and that there are mechanisms and resources to help them. In places where antenatal services include male partners in parenting classes, adding an anti-violence component to such activities may be an avenue for prevention.

The WHO recommends the use of reproductive health services as entry points for identifying women in abusive relationships and for delivering referral and support services. The widespread availability and use of reproductive health services, including antenatal care, family planning services, and services dealing with sexually transmitted infections, means they are potentially useful for identifying women in abusive relationships and offering them referrals or support services. This conclusion is reinforced by the WHO study results which show that:

- a) severe physical violence during pregnancy is not uncommon, threatening both the mother and the unborn child, and
- b) there are significant associations between physical and sexual violence by partners and miscarriage and induced abortion, as well as with high parity and HIV risk.

Providers of reproductive health services, therefore, may be more likely than other health providers to see abused women. However, unless providers are aware of, and willing to address, violence and coercion, they will be unable to promote women's sexual and reproductive health effectively.

In the context of Lebanon, health services could be an entry point in addition to Social Development Centres (SDCs) already existing in the country and offering a varying range of services, including prevention and information on GBV, as well Public Health Centres (PHCs) depending on the Ministry of Public Health as well as CSO centres. From December 2012, the SDCs were identified as the primary hub of the emergency response in areas particularly affected by the influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon and as they already provide services and training, they could be a good entry point for the development of One-



Stop Shop centres<sup>47,48</sup> to be hosted in SDCs, health centres and where available, with a multidisciplinary team (social protection, health, legal, economic assistance). The model of a “one stop” shop centre is important for creating a safe and supportive environment for women and girls to seek immediate protection, medical treatment and legal assistance, although it is not cost-effective for all settings. The centres are designed to reduce the number of institutions that a survivor must visit to receive basic support following an incident of violence by coordinating the assistance and referral process through one location.

Worldwide, frequently survivors of sexual and gender-based violence report that the way police, hospitals and courts are set up does not provide an appropriate atmosphere to report on violence. For example, police stations may lack private interview rooms or specially trained officers who know how to respond and interview female survivors. Hospitals may also lack private treatment rooms or the facilities to conduct the specialised examinations and analysis needed to provide the medical evidence that assists in prosecution of a legal case.

Good international best practices prescribe that a network of different levels of shelters and safe houses needs to be put in place. This refers to emergency safe houses for the first 48 hours and shelters to accommodate women and their children for a maximum stay of 6 months. Whatever care is offered, health services, SDCs and CSOs centres should be places of safety and confidentiality for women and girls. The security of shelters needs to continue to be protected by all means available.

### **Prevention and information: the need for a common message**

Ideally Lebanon should launch joint campaigns, for example during the 16 days of activism of 2018, March 8 and other key moments. Campaigns such as “zero tolerance campaigns”, campaigns targeting women facing abuse with information on what to do in case of violence, campaigns on how to help as a witness, and how to stop violence, where to go in case of violence, could be designed and led jointly with the major CSOs, donors and agencies.

International best practices recommend the use of common messages. By having unified messages for each campaign, overlapping will be avoided, funds will be used in a more sustainable way and impact will be maximised. Joint campaigns have proved to be efficient<sup>49</sup>.

### **Targeting social norms**

Longitudinal research is also needed on the evolution of violent behaviour by intimate partners over time, examining whether and how it differs from the development of other violent behaviours.

Several guidelines using the information of different programmes to address GBV, have identified that best practices need to include the following components:

- i) Transforming socio-cultural norms, with an emphasis on empowering women and girls;
- ii) Rebuilding family and community structures and support systems;
- iii) Creating conditions to improve accountability systems;
- iv) Designing effective services and facilities;
- v) Working with formal and traditional legal systems;
- vi) Assessment, monitoring, and documentation of GBV;
- vii) Involving men as a key strategy for transforming socio-cultural norms and highlighting the importance of equal participation by women, men, girls, and boys in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating programmes.

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<sup>47</sup> A Hospital-based model developed in the 90s, which has been replicated across regions worldwide. One-stop shops, usually provide some or all of the following services: Immediate medical assistance (e.g. treatment for physical injuries, emergency contraception and HIV post-exposure prophylaxis kits); Medical testing, for example for HIV/AIDS, STIs, pregnancy; Forensic facilities to collect and analyse the necessary forensic evidence for prosecution; Trauma / psychological counselling; Criminal investigations unit, where survivors can report a crime and a case file can be opened; Legal assistance; Temporary shelter/ safe accommodation.

<sup>48</sup> Not all countries have the same services for instance in the UK, Domestic Abuse One Stop Shops are a drop-in service for both women and men - who feels that he or she could benefit from support, help or advice. It is a free and confidential service and no appointment is necessary. It contains several professionals such as local Housing representative, specialist domestic abuse advisor, representative from the Citizens Advice Bureau and a Solicitor.

<sup>49</sup> Such as the Joint campaign to prevent GBV by targeting men in Vietnam, launched first time in 2008, and that have proven to be a good practice to be replicated worldwide [http://www.endvavnow.org/uploads/browser/files/communications\\_campaign\\_viet\\_nam.pdf](http://www.endvavnow.org/uploads/browser/files/communications_campaign_viet_nam.pdf)

The aforementioned study produced by Promundo, recommends that:

- i) Community leaders need to be empowered through training on violence against women and gender equality so as to be a powerful voice for the messages and programmes, as well as through resources. Creating a positive message via multiple points of entry within communities is critical to on-going efforts to scale up programmes at local and national levels;
- ii) Working within existing institutions and using existing structures, as a catalyst for engaging participants, must be enhanced. Schools, religious groups, labour organisations and communities must be engaged from the initial programme planning phases so that messages and themes can be tailored to their unique challenges.
- iii) Women and girls should be included in efforts to engage men in GBV prevention, both as beneficiaries, and as facilitators when appropriate, and to serve as a voice of accountability.

### **Engaging men against violence: men as agent of change**

Very little of the material revisited during the mission as part of this analysis on GBV in Lebanon, has a positive image of men as partners, agents of change or witnesses to fight GBV. ABAAD is among the few Lebanese CSOs using the masculinities approach<sup>50</sup>. ABAAD has a masculinity expert and has started working with men (“programme Ra”<sup>51</sup>). Some communication materials, such as the “men in the shadows”<sup>52</sup>, showed some examples of men positively changing the norms, even though the video starts with a violent episode). In general, all videos against GBV, addressing rape, early marriage or domestic violence, were explicit and contained violence. Some were extremely violent and even difficult to watch. It is not clear whom they are targeting and what is the main message. Almost all show very urban settings and environments and couples who may well not be representing the whole population. Most of the videos could be seen as reinforcing the image of men as aggressors and not part of the solution.

According to a meta review on GBV, carried out in 2006 and reviewing 58 evaluations of programmes in GBV prevention, those programmes that promote gender-equitable relationships between men and women by engaging men in discussions of gender and masculinity, with deliberate efforts to transform gender norms, may be more effective in producing behaviour change than more narrowly focused interventions, which merely acknowledge gender norms and roles. These guiding principles, and the complexities of putting these strategies into practice, are further supported by evidence presented in a 2013 series of articles documenting programmes that engage men as allies in GBV prevention by facilitating a deliberate questioning of gender norms and power dynamics.

It is recommended that initiatives engaging men should involve organisations with experience of, and a sound methodology for, engaging men worldwide, to make sure the approach is appropriate. Some good examples are the MenEngage Network, ProMundo and the HeForShe Campaign<sup>53</sup>.

### **Data collection**

CEDAW general recommendation n.19 on violence against women establishes the obligation of states to compile statistics and research on GBV. The Beijing Platform of Action reiterated in 1995 the need for government and non-government agencies to collect and compile data on domestic violence, especially on prevalence, causes and consequences.

Expanding household surveys or labour-force surveys to include questions about GBV will be more cost effective and sustainable as to avoid repeating the socio-demographic collection of data and the training of data collectors. Population based surveys (household surveys) are one of the most reliable methods of

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<sup>50</sup> Care Lebanon has also developed its own programme to engage men, and started to implement it.

<sup>51</sup> Programme Ra – named after *Rajol*, the word for man in Arabic – is the first adaptation of Promundo’s Program H in the Middle East.

Programme Ra was adapted for the Lebanese context in order to promote discussion about gender with young men living in Lebanon – including host and refugee communities. Developed by Promundo and partners in Brazil over a decade ago, Program H has been widely used around the world in programming to end violence against women and girls.

<sup>52</sup> Prepared by ABAAD

<sup>53</sup> <http://menengage.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/WRC-statement-on-men-and-GBV.pdf>

<https://promundoglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Working-with-Men-and-Boys-to-Prevent-Gender-Based-Violence.pdf>

<http://www.heforshe.org/en>

obtaining information. In these surveys women are questioned about their experience with violence, regardless if they have reported it or not.<sup>54</sup> The CAS has the capacity of collecting data from all different ministries<sup>55</sup>. The CAS could be the receptor of the different reports on GBV.

In addition, it will be useful to identify measurement tools which safely collect information from the partners, such as health providers, SDC centres, CSOs, Shelters, to gauge the impact of programmes on behavioural changes. For instance, after the launch of campaigns, is an increase observed in the number of survivors using the services or calls to the existing help lines and hotlines? These data could be collected and processed by the future Gender Observatory to be put in place by the MADAD programme.

Furthermore, future efforts should seek to gather data over a longer period of time and with randomised control groups, all of which have tremendous resource implications.

Evaluation designs must include properly established and monitored control groups to measure the attribution of changes over time. Research aimed at informing the design and delivery of interventions where these do not exist needs to be accompanied by evaluation research on the short- and long-term effects of programmes, to prevent and respond to partner violence. This includes school-based programmes, legal and policy changes, services for victims of violence, programmes that target perpetrators of violence and campaigns to change social norms.

In this regard, the WHO Handbook for the documentation of interpersonal violence prevention programmes provides useful guidance for the systematic collection, from diverse settings, of information on programmes for the prevention of interpersonal violence. Ultimately, the aim is to identify successful and promising interventions, and publicise the results to promote the scaling up of such efforts.

Any survey or data collection needs to be done in partnership, or with the support/review, of the CAS, including qualitative studies to ensure accuracy of methodology.

In terms of international best practices, Spain has placed the register in charge of collecting data on women facing violence in the Ministry of Justice and the register includes information about the survivor (sex, age, relationship to the accused), the perpetrator, punishable offence and interim measures, such as protection orders and final judgement. The National Statistics Institute collects data on protection orders and the final judgements.

### **The cost of violence**

ESCWA and UN Women are proposing to analyse the cost of violence, in order to enable the state to fully undertake its role as duty bearer, confirming the gravity of the GBV as a public and not private matter. This is expected to make the case that gender-based violence drains economic resources from many sectors, private sector, government, communities and individuals, and it could contribute to reducing social acceptability of violence. Economic analysis can influence national budget allocation. The example of Egypt, as the first Arab country to undertake such cost analysis, where despite serious lack of data, it provided reliable evidence that combating GBV in Egypt should be a priority that requires swift government action. The National Council for Women will use the results to encourage policy makers to invest in institutionalising protection and response services for GBV across all relevant sectors.<sup>56</sup>

The case for these types of studies is based on the fact that violence has multiple economic impacts for both individuals and households (e.g. missed work, poor physical and mental health, out of pocket expenditures to access services and, in the long term, affecting access to education, skills and workforce). At the community and at governmental level there are many costs such as loss of potential, for example lower earnings and profits, the result of reduced productivity, and in terms of providing services to survivors and investing in programmes to prevent violence.

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<sup>54</sup> UN Women, ESCWA and LAU: Status of Arab Women Report, 2017, pp21-25

<sup>55</sup> There is decree law that mandates the CAS for this

<sup>56</sup> Source: UN Women, ESCWA and LAU: Status of Arab Women Report, 2017. P17, Referring to an UNFPA study on the economic cost of GBV violence in Egypt, 2015.

### **4.3 Economic empowerment recommendations**

Given the increased number of men and women seeking employment opportunities in Lebanon and the regressive economic conditions, it is important to explore new non-traditional approaches to work opportunities for women and men.

Improving access to finance is at the centre of improving equal opportunities for all, promoting gender equality and increasing the economic freedoms and opportunities that women have to contribute to their families and societies. However, in order to address the persistent gap in financial access for women, it is important to fully understand the complexity of the problem and to go beyond easy solutions. Thorough research and analysis of the local market, including collaboration across different stakeholders, is needed to face the challenges. Societal norms or laws shape the choices that women and men make, including their choices in term of employment or business creation.

Deteriorating working conditions and informality are major concerns and require a strong collaboration among different sectors and programmes, such as livelihoods support and protection sectors. Women and youth of both sexes are the primary groups benefitting from trainings according to several reports.<sup>57</sup> Further emphasis is needed to increase their access to income, employment and entrepreneurship. This can be achieved through innovative vocational training and ecosystem support to social entrepreneurship endeavours. During the process, this also contributes to break the barriers of local cultural stipulations regarding what work women can and cannot traditionally carry out.

Since there are fewer actors working on the issue of economic empowerment and there is less body of evidence, there are lesser recommendations provided on this subject. However the aforementioned recommendations related to the social norms and the legal review needed, both detailed above will also have an impact on enabling women's participation in the economic sphere.

#### **Greater inclusiveness of women in decision making process**

A greater inclusiveness of women in decision-making processes, which will promote equal opportunities in the economic and social spheres, should be promoted in addition to a greater accountability of institutions to advance fairness and equality. Gender equality is an integral part of good governance and sound economic business. A review of the legislative environment to provide consistency between women's rights and legislation is also needed.

#### **A supportive infrastructure that will facilitate women's participation in the public sphere**

Women are more constrained by their immediate physical environment than are men. Investments in standard infrastructure in the region where it is needed and a better access to safe transport and access to IT, could contribute to better access to economic opportunities and allow women to combine work and family responsibilities. Transport was mentioned by several stakeholders and during the consultations as a main barrier for accessing economic opportunities. Transport was considered unsafe, in terms of sexual harassment, by several interviewees.

#### **Education and skills**

Continued attention to education is essential, particularly in areas that provide women with better market skills. Although men in Lebanon face a similar problem, women face additional challenges due to gender inequalities, derived from social norms and values. These issues could be addressed by providing vocational and lifelong learning opportunities.

#### **Market-led approach**

A Market-led approach by implementing partners, should be undertaken that limits the one-size-fits-all capacity building programmes of CSOs and instead implements tailored skills training to match the needs of the market. During the CSOs consultation, participants highlighted the need of:

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<sup>57</sup> Lebanon crisis response 2017-2020, pp 108-123 and ILO (2015), Towards decent work in Lebanon.

- Avoiding repetitive type of trainings that reinforce gender roles and promote new type of training like accounting, IT, language, and technical skills.
- Engaging the private sector in order to create job opportunities for those who have followed the tailor made trainings and to enforce existing policies against any type of discrimination, together with ensuring equal pay rights and equal opportunities.
- Including systematic market surveys/feasibility studies, by geographic area, prior to the design of projects related to economic empowerment, access to employment and access to finance.
- Adopting a long-term work approach to eliminate social norms and cultural barriers that prevent women from accessing certain jobs, create their own business and to adopt affirmative actions against the glass ceiling which is prohibiting women from achieving managerial and leadership positions

### **Access to finance**

Recommendations on access to finance include:

- Larger dissemination of information about existing funding mechanisms and Angel funding<sup>58</sup>
- Training on proposal writing and/or business plans to be able to benefit from available funding opportunities;
- Promote financial products and equity funds in order to support women-led initiatives.

In order to promote women economic empowerment, participants of the CSO consultations highlighted the need to increase work on finding innovative solutions such as:

- Implement initiatives that address access to market and value chain development;
- Develop vocational trainings tailored based on the needs in collaboration with the private sector;
- Focus on rural tourism, eco-tourism and agro tourism;
- Create synergies between the private sector, NGOs and unemployed men and women.

Some projects were mentioned, such as the example of the “Knowledge City project” in Akkar, that aims to attract companies from the diaspora to create jobs in impoverished regions, with women and men trained according to the skills needed and the continuity of cooperatives in rural areas that have proven effective.

### **Promoting Family-Friendly Policies**

Promote family-friendly policies and working conditions which enable fathers and mothers to balance their working hours and their family responsibilities.

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<sup>58</sup> An **angel** investor (also known as a business **angel**, informal investor, **angel** funder, private investor, or seed investor) is an affluent individual who provides capital for a business start-up, usually in exchange for convertible debt or ownership equity.

## **5. Risks and assumptions**

### **5.1 Risks**

- The OMSWA mandate will not be renewed in the future following the elections in May 2017
- Difficulties of coordination of the national actors (OMSWA, MOSA, NCLW)
- Low level of commitment of the GoL on GBV and economic empowerment of women, because of competing priorities
- Difficulty of implementing a sustainable referral system that will involve all actors, with defined protocols and responsibilities and will have the necessary resources.
- Difficulties to access markets and have regular incomes.
- Many women facing multiple inequalities may not have access to GBV services and economic opportunities
- Market will continue to shrink
- No possibility for establishing an equity fund for women-led companies
- Conflicts in the country and region

### **5.2 Assumptions**

- OMSWA will continue to be the main interlocutor for the gender agenda.
- Governmental authorities remain supportive of creating gender equality, the fight against GBV and women's economic empowerment.
- Participatory dialogue with all stakeholders and commitment to support the OMSWA agenda.
- Coordination of all actors on GBV, including the main national CSOs.
- Both men and women will be fully engaged regarding women's rights and gender equality.

## **6. Conclusions**

Although women participate actively in the social and cultural life of Lebanon, they have continued to face discrimination in various spheres. Particularly related to access to rights and because of their weak political and economic participation. There is a need for a broader empowerment of women to participate in economic life, including in non-traditional activities and to be free of violence.

Despite “six years of the Syrian Crisis”, Lebanon remains at the forefront of the emergency response and has shown an exceptional commitment and solidarity to the people displaced by the war<sup>59</sup>. Consequently, the country is hosting around 1.5 million refugees. The crisis has deepened some existing problems, such as unemployment, informality, longstanding inequalities (rural/urban, socio economic and among regions) and GBV in a context where few jobs and resources are available.

However there is an opportunity to capitalise on many of the best practices, lessons learned and practices that have been implemented during this year. Innovative programmes to address gender inequalities and exclusion have been tested and have proven to be effective. New responses and tools have been drafted and designed, especially on GBV prevention and intervention.

In a challenging context, CSOs, government organisations, development partners, entrepreneurs, and individuals have had success in fighting GBV. There is still a need to do more work towards the economic empowerment of men and women in the regions, beyond providing training in skills and microfinance. At the same time, social norms should continue to be addressed that are an impediment to the women’s full participation in the economic, social and political spheres.

Finally, there is a need for capitalisation of experiences and for enhancing the coordination and synergies among donors, GoL, UN Agencies and CSOs on the gender agenda that will benefit men and women living in Lebanon, to enhance effectiveness of the interventions and ensure sustainability.

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<sup>59</sup> Lebanon crisis response plan 2017-2020