



# Gendered Value Chains Study: Barriers and Opportunities

This research report has been prepared under the project “Women’s Economic Participation” funded by the Government of Canada and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme – UNDP.

**Disclaimer**

This information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press.  
The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of the UNDP and the Government of Canada.

Author:



# Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES .....	5
LIST OF FIGURES .....	5
LIST OF ACRONYMS .....	6
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	8
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	9
STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT .....	17
CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND.....	18
1.1 OBJECTIVES.....	20
1.2 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK .....	20
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY .....	22
2.1 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS AND SOURCES.....	22
2.2 DATA ANALYSIS .....	25
2.3 LIMITATIONS.....	25
CHAPTER 3: VALUE CHAINS SELECTION .....	26
3.1 DEFINING SELECTION CRITERIA .....	26
3.2 MAPPING AND PRIORITIZATION PROCESSES.....	26
3.3 SELECTED VALUE CHAINS AND GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE .....	28
CHAPTER 4: MAIN FINDINGS .....	30
4.1 OVERALL BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES .....	30
A. Lebanon’s Economic Environment .....	30
B. Legal Framework .....	32
C. Cross-cutting Services and Infrastructure .....	37
D. Bank loans, Financial Resources, and Assets .....	38
E. Business Development Services .....	39
F. Economic Institutions and Structures .....	40
G. Social Norms and Gendered Roles and Responsibilities .....	41
H. Women and Vulnerability .....	44
4.1.2 OVERALL OPPORTUNITIES.....	46
A. Increasing Interest in Promoting Women’s Economic Empowerment.....	46
B. Political and Systemic Commitments to Reforms .....	47
C. Shift in Perceptions of Women’s Roles and Capacities .....	48
D. Women’s Success in Loan Repayment and Leading Businesses.....	49
4.2 ANALYSIS AT THE VALUE CHAIN LEVEL .....	50
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS .....	85
CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS .....	87

6.1 LONG-TERM STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS .....	87
6.2 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS .....	87
6.3 CAPACITY-BUILDING AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT RECOMMENDATIONS .....	89
6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO VALUE CHAINS .....	91
6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORTING WOMEN’S ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND COOPERATIVES.....	92
6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORTING CROSS CUTTING SERVICES .....	94
6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENGAGING MEN .....	94
6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AWARENESS-RAISING .....	95
6.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTNERSHIPS, NETWORKING, AND ALLIANCE-BUILDING .....	96
REFERENCES .....	98
Annex 1: Gender Analytical Framework Table.....	101
Annex 2: Matrix for existing value chain selection .....	103
Annex 3: Matrix for new value chain selection .....	105
Annex 4: Justification for each selected Value Chain .....	107
Annex 5: Current and Future Projects .....	110
Annex 6: Checklist of Exclusivity.....	111
Annex 7: Women Equality Principles CEO Statement of Support.....	112

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Short-listing of the 12 Value Chains for Consideration .....	27
Table 2: List of the New Value Chains Identified .....	27
Table 3: List of selected value chains by sectors.....	29

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Map of the Most Vulnerable Cadasters in Lebanon .....	18
Figure 2: Overview of the methodology.....	22
Figure 3: Scores of the short-listed existing value chains .....	28
Figure 4: Mapping of the selected value chains as per geographic regions .....	29
Figure 5: Perceived difference in income between men and women .....	32
Figure 6: Additional resources/services required by women to acquire non-traditional roles .....	39
Figure 7: Division of responsibilities between men and women in the same household .....	41
Figure 8: Factors that limit the advancement of women in economic roles .....	42
Figure 9: Woman's control over her own income .....	43
Figure 11: Female Labour Force Participation in Lebanon-2010 .....	47
Figure 12: General personal characteristics specific to women which give them an added value in economic roles.....	49
Figure 13: Value Chain Map for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables .....	51
Figure 14: Freekeh Value Chain .....	53
Figure 15: Small Ruminant Value Chain.....	54
Figure 16: Oregano Value Chain .....	61
Figure 17: Essential Oils Value Chain .....	64
Figure 18: Supply Chain Management Overview .....	72
Figure 19: Digital Marketing Value Chain .....	78
Figure 20: Public Infrastructure Chain of Activities .....	81
Figure 21: Overview of non-traditional roles for women across different value chains.....	84
Figure 22: Agrofood start-up pamphlets .....	90

# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>AUB</b>	American University of Beirut
<b>BDS</b>	Business Development Services
<b>BLC</b>	Banque Libanaise pour le Commerce
<b>BP</b>	Brevet Professionnel
<b>BT</b>	Brevet Technicien
<b>CAP</b>	Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle
<b>CAS</b>	Central Administration of Statistics
<b>CBI</b>	Centre for the Promotion of Imports
<b>CDR</b>	Council for Development and Reconstruction
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>CNSS</b>	Caisse Nationale de Sécurité Sociale
<b>DAI</b>	Development Alternatives, Inc.
<b>DAWRIC</b>	Direct Action for Women: Reform, Inclusion and Confidence
<b>DM</b>	Digital Marketing
<b>ECOSOC</b>	Economic and Social Council
<b>EDL</b>	Electricité Du Liban
<b>ESCWA</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Groups Discussions
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GiZ</b>	German Development Agency
<b>Ha</b>	Hectare
<b>HACCP</b>	Hazard analysis and critical control points
<b>HIVOS</b>	Humanist Organization for Development Cooperation
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>IDAL</b>	Investment Development Authority of Lebanon
<b>IECD</b>	Institut Européen de Coopération et de Développement
<b>IFC</b>	International Finance Corporation
<b>IFPRI</b>	International Food Policy Research Institute
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-Governmental Organization
<b>IP</b>	Internet Protocol
<b>IRI</b>	Industrial Research Institute
<b>ISO</b>	International Organization for Standardization
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>KiT</b>	Karlsruhe Institute of Technology
<b>LARI</b>	Lebanese Agriculture Research Institute
<b>LCRP</b>	Lebanese Crisis Response Plan
<b>LHSP</b>	Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme

<b>LIVCD</b>	Lebanon Industry Value Chain Development
<b>LL</b>	Lebanese Lira
<b>LLWB</b>	Lebanese League for Women in Business
<b>LMT-A</b>	Lebanon Mountain Trail Association
<b>M</b>	Million
<b>m<sup>2</sup></b>	Square meter
<b>MoA</b>	Ministry of Agriculture
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Environment
<b>MoET</b>	Ministry of Economy and Trade
<b>MoI</b>	Ministry of Industry
<b>MoSA</b>	Ministry of Social Affairs
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MT</b>	Metric Tons
<b>MW</b>	Megawatt
<b>NCLW</b>	National Commission for Lebanese Women
<b>NEEAP</b>	National Energy Efficiency Action Plan
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NREAP</b>	National Renewable Energy Action Plan
<b>NSSF</b>	National Social Security Fund
<b>OMSWA</b>	Office of the Minister of State for Women Affairs
<b>Oxfam</b>	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
<b>PPA</b>	Power Purchase Agreements
<b>PV</b>	Photovoltaic
<b>RE</b>	Renewable Energy
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>Sida</b>	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
<b>SME</b>	Small and medium-sized enterprises
<b>SNV</b>	Netherlands Development Organization
<b>STEM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
<b>ToT</b>	Training of Trainers
<b>TS</b>	Brevet de Technicien Supérieur
<b>UoM</b>	Union of Municipalities
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>UNIDO</b>	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>USD or US\$</b>	United States Dollar
<b>VC</b>	Value Chain
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>WEP</b>	Women’s Economic Participation

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Gendered Value Chain Study in Lebanon is a coordinated result of hours of readings, interviews, surveys and research, editing, reviewing, proofreading, etc. The NIRAS team is comprised of five persons who contribute a wealth of competences and knowledge in the field of gender equality and value chains in Lebanon and internationally.

During the mapping process, NIRAS interviewed more than 75 persons from various organizations, governmental and private agencies, as well as women from different walks of life. The team didn't expect to learn as much as it did while identifying barriers and opportunities for Lebanese and Syrian women in Lebanon. A special thanks goes to the wonderful working and non-working women that were encountered and interviewed in Beirut and outside of Beirut. Your insights, experience, and knowledge was inspiring!

NIRAS would also like to thank all the public institutions that supported the team with their input to this report by providing information on their programs, strategies and policies relevant to this project.

Finally, NIRAS expressly acknowledges the unwavering support of Sawsan Nourallah (Women's Economic Empowerment Coordinator) and Leon Chammah (Senior Livelihood and Local Economic Development Coordinator) at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for their guidance and tireless commitment to the mapping and analysis process and for facilitating the completion of this report by NIRAS.

**NIRAS Sweden AB Team** <sup>1</sup>



---

<sup>1</sup> Roula Haidar, Hania Chahal, Edward Antoun. Directed by Nora Kokanova, and managed by Nathalie Pano



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lebanon ranks 140 out of 149 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index for 2018. This low ranking in the Gender Gap Index is primarily a result of ranking at the bottom in the Economic Opportunity and Participation sub-index (136th) and the Political Empowerment sub-index (147th). While women in Lebanon possess the capacities to play leading roles in civil society organizations and in managerial positions within both the private and public sectors, their presence at this level within the workforce is still very low when compared to men. Few women in Lebanon reach positions of management or senior posts: firms with women as top managers in Lebanon account for only 4%, while the percentage is at 5% in the MENA region and at 19% worldwide<sup>2</sup>.

To address this gender gap and women's limited access to, control of, and ability to benefit from economic opportunities, UNDP launched the Women's Economic Participation (WEP) project within the framework of the Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme (LHSP). The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the economic empowerment of Lebanese and Syrian refugee women by improving the conditions for women's integration, development, and economic empowerment within key value chains in Lebanon, alongside capacity building for local authorities and economic development agencies to support this participation and mainstream gender equality within their internal strategies. This particular study has been commissioned to explore opportunities for the creation of value chains with potential growth where women have non-traditional roles and greater potential for economic participation and leadership. It specifically aims at analysing existing and new value chains in Lebanon from gender perspectives, integrating both value chain analysis and a gender analysis approach.

The methodology uses a combination of literature reviews, key informant interviews, and surveys to explore four identified women's economic empowerment variables: access, participation, control, and benefit. The research also focuses on analysing key barriers hindering women's economic participation and leadership at the macro, mezzo, and micro levels. Data collection involved stakeholders in the public sector (representatives of governments, ministries, municipalities) and private sector (businesses, buyers, traders, etc.), as well as community members, including women (household caretakers, farmers).

While mapping out the existing and new value chains for further investigation and analysis, the specific value chains were prioritized according to three main criteria: 1) Economic Growth (20%); 2) Women Empowerment (50%); and 3) Programmatic Criteria (30%). The selection process resulted in the prioritization of eight existing and four new value chains:

- 1. Fresh Fruits and Vegetables**
- 2. Small Ruminants**
- 3. Freekeh**
- 4. Oregano**
- 5. Honey**

---

2 Women in Lebanon - Infograph 2019, World Bank, ILO and UNICEF

6. Essential Oils
7. Rural Tourism
8. Renewable Energy
9. ICT with focus on Digital Marketing
10. Supply Chain and Logistics
11. Construction with a focus on Restoration
12. Handicrafts

## Overall Barriers

The overall barriers of women economic empowerment and participation were centered on five main themes pertaining to the economic, legal, cultural, and social contexts.

- **Lebanese Economic Environment:** The regional crisis, political instability, and tension in the country have significantly affected the Lebanese economy, slowing its growth and reducing job opportunities and salaries. Only 22% of working-age women are active, making them more than three times less likely to participate in the labour force compared to men<sup>3</sup>. The low participation of women in the labour market hinders their control over benefits and their promotion to leadership positions. At the entrepreneurial level, women participation is even lower at only 16% since women tend to be more wage-employed than self-employed. Women also assume more roles in lower-paid jobs, usually based on individual contracts rather than on established posts, and more so in the public than the private sector. More importantly, women face exploitation and discrimination in informal sectors, precisely in rural areas where women undertake productive tasks as part of their natural social roles as wives or daughters (family workers) not as economic activity and without recognition or remuneration.
  
- **Legal Framework:** Despite Lebanon's ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) with reservations, and other international conventions, constitutional commitment to gender equality and non-discrimination is not reflected in legislations and practice, which thereby-hinders women's economic participation. The labour law includes several discriminatory codes that, for example, prohibit women participation in certain professions considered "hard," and lacks clear mechanisms for protecting women's rights in terms of remuneration, promotion, and competence in the private and public sectors. In addition, measures for social security and protection - including parental leave, welfare benefits, and safety from sexual harassment - are absent. Furthermore, other laws that do not explicitly govern the economic sector also significantly affect women's economic participation and leadership. For example, the Personal Status Law governing inheritance, marriage, divorce, and child custody is widely seen as one of the primary sources of discrimination against women; not only does it

---

3 Ibid

influence women's abilities to inherit or own assets and properties, but also limits women's autonomy for mobility, thereby affecting women's participation in the labour market and entrepreneurship. Moreover, regarding the equal pay right, women are paid, on average, 71% of what men earn, despite their higher level of education. The income inequity gap is less, but not eliminated, in the case of women with higher education degrees. This discrimination in salaries is more apparent in the private sector as it does not exist in the public sector. However, unbalanced promotions between men and women, favouring the former, lead to underpaid qualified women in the public sector.

- **Labour Legislation when it comes to Syrian Refugees:** In January 2015, the restrictions on the influx of displaced Syrians made attaining the required legal papers an impossible and costly mission for most of the refugees. Discriminatory categorization was applied for new entrants and those renewing their papers, favouring people with adequate financial resources, and restricting entry or the right to remain for the poorest families. Additionally, as of 2017, any displaced person who starts work loses the humanitarian refugee status. This indirectly deprived Syrians of the right to work, while some continue working illegally, but with worse work conditions (short-term jobs, minimal remuneration, etc.) especially since they cannot request any legal protection or social security.
- **Cross Cutting Services and Infrastructure:** The sense of safety and protection needed to encourage and support women's economic involvement is lacking in most cases in terms of social and medical insurance, day-care services, and reliable and safe transportation. These represent the main challenges for women's participation and access to services, markets, and employment opportunities. Agriculture workers, household caretakers, freelancers, and workers in informal sectors still do not receive any social or medical insurance.
- **Bank Loans, Financial Resources:** Women are less likely than men to have access to financial institutions, bank loans, and financial resources as they have fewer assets and less land ownership because of the Personal Status law in Lebanon and the dominant culture. They still depend on men in the family to provide financial resources, or for eligibility to apply for bank loans or attain collateral coverage.
- **Business Development Services (BDSs):** BDS providers are not sufficiently gender-focused, with little awareness of the constraints that women face. There is not enough attention given to the needs of women enterprises at different levels, or to the geographical distribution of such services. BDSs mainly address micro enterprises and SMEs.
- **Economic Institutions and Structures:** The prevalence of the informal sector in the Lebanese economy, the lack of special regulations to simplify SMEs procedures, and the presence of family business models, pose more challenges to women economic empowerment. The cooperative structure, in its current state, is not a successful alternative to allow for women entrepreneurs.

- **Social Norms, Gender Roles, and Responsibilities:** The root causes of women limited economic participation and leadership is traced back to the social norms that dictate the expected roles of women and men. In Lebanon, women's participation in the labour market is further constrained by deep structural power relations that result in men controlling financial decision-making processes, an uneven distribution of household and home care work, limited awareness of women's rights, social restrictions on women's mobility, low self-confidence amongst women, and specific resulting risks such as gender-based violence (GBV).

It is important to note that women living in vulnerable situations such as in poverty, with a refugee status, in a context of violence and sexual harassment, or suffering from disability face additional barriers in terms of market entry and promotion.

## Value Chains Barriers

- **Limited Access of Women to Markets and Technology:** Women have limited access to technology, mainly because they carry out activities dictated by their superiors, such as planting or harvesting in a traditional way and manually without the use of any technology. Additionally, in the case of essential oils, for example, there is an inability to scale up from traditional oil extraction to an industrial-level method. This requires investment, technical knowledge, and business support all of which are not easily accessible for women.
- **Limited Support for Business Management in Rural Areas:** Women seeking to start their own business in rural areas cannot access the business management support required, nor any rural incubators that can serve the local communities and encourage women to establish businesses with access to finances based on sound business models.
- **High Cost of Energy and Land:** Inheritance law is particularly influential in the agriculture sector, where women, more often than not, do not have access to land. This is particularly challenging for women engaged in processing activities, whether fruit or milk processing, as they need to ensure a consistent supply in order to manufacture the products; this incurs more cost, influences market access, and further limits market opportunities.
- **Mobility and Availability for Small Ruminant Milking and Processing:** A common feature for the small ruminant and agricultural value chains is that women also have limited knowledge of the safety and quality standards regarding the different products; this, in turn, affects market access and linkages with potential buyers who require assurance of quality before purchasing. The processing methods are still traditional, artisanal, and don't always respond to the market demand.
- **Basic Awareness of the Type of Different Activities Related to Forestry:** Women are not

really aware of the activities involved in forestry that can generate income. What they see now are weak commercial forest-related activities with a minimal potential to generate income. The link between forests, essential oils, and the production of honey is not yet clearly visible to women, who therefore prefer to focus on other activities.

- **Male Dominance in Different Sectors:** Construction, renewable energy, and supply chain management jobs are highly dominated by males which makes it difficult for women to breakthrough and gain support in order to further integrate into these sectors. Men hand over different senior roles to their male peers rather than to a woman for the same reasons: a lack of confidence in her abilities.
- **Unfavourable Work Environment:** Working conditions within the renewable energy, construction, and supply chain management sectors range between fair for both genders – specifically in the back office and management domains - to harsh/tough for field work that requires early working hours, heavy commuting, transporting goods from one place to another, working in the field, and handling heavy weight material. While such conditions are unfavourable for both genders, the impact is higher on women in terms of mobility and safety, and they are, in turn, discouraged by such conditions and skeptical about their abilities to withstand jobs of that kind.
- **Lack of STEM Education for Women and Awareness on the Potential of the Sector:** There is lack of sufficient women integration in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education. There is not enough counseling and orientation to motivate more women to pursue such specialties, which could increase their opportunities for integration within different emerging sectors, be it renewable energy, supply chain management, or logistics.

## Overall Opportunities

Despite substantial challenges, several initiative and efforts across the country have presented opportunities for women and men to redefine traditional roles and question existing power relations, especially in terms of women's economic participation and leadership.

- **Increasing interest in women's economic participation:** In the last year, there has been a revival and increased funding for long-term strategic work on women's economic empowerment. Most recently, this interest has been manifested through joint efforts by the World Bank, International Finance Cooperation, Government of Canada and Norway to support the efforts of the governments of Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan towards enhancing women's economic participation, through the establishment of the World Bank's Mashreq Regional Gender Facility.
- **Political and systemic commitments to reforms:** The Lebanese government has committed to a national action program aimed at empowering Lebanese women economically with a goal to increase women's participation in the labour market by five percent in the

next five years. This will take place alongside the implementation of an economic, reformist, investment and service-based, and social program which relies on the basic foundations of the Lebanese government's vision for women economic empowerment presented at the CEDRE conference, and on the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). There is commitment to diversifying the production and service sectors to expand resources for growth through specific initiatives in the sectors of agriculture and industry, as well as in the fields of environmental, religious, and medical tourism, financial services, and knowledge economies.

- **Shift in perceptions of women's roles and capacities:** The advancement of women's participation and leadership in the public, political, and economic spheres have played a great role in shifting perceptions of women gender roles. It has also enabled women to gain the confidence to assume new roles within the workforce.
- **Women's success in loan repayment and leading businesses:** High return rates on loans taken by women and success rates of women-led businesses are also encouraging factors to build upon and promise better access to resources and control over benefits. New ways of doing business, such as working from home or seizing new opportunities in providing or receiving outsourced services as well as interconnectivity and technological advancements, are presenting new opportunities for women economic empowerment.

## Value Chain Opportunities

There are also different opportunities for women at the value chain levels: handicrafts, ICT-DM, essential oils, forestry, rural tourism, supply chain management, renewable energy, construction, and more.

- Handicrafts and ICT-DM sectors provide flexibility, in that women can work from home without a need to commute to the workplace.
- For handicrafts, ICT-DM, and essential oils, requirements for investment costs are not high and can be attained via access to loans or grants, which can enable women to start-up their own businesses. Start-up opportunities also exist in rural tourism where women can run their own businesses, such as guesthouses or catering businesses, and these usually involve other family members as part of management.
- Regarding forestry, increased awareness within communities on the importance of forests and their potential can facilitate access of women to forests for honey production, oregano collection, or even essential oil production.
- For essential oils, there is market demand for oregano, laurel, and lavender oils alongside opportunities to explore potential linkages with pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries, and the food industry. Exploring new markets also applies to the handicrafts sector through e-commerce, thus cutting on costs of marketing costs.
- There is growing demand for supply chain management as a means of improving efficiency and further developing value chains, especially in terms of logistics.

- Renewable energy technology is a growing field that can create new opportunities. It can be applied to the agriculture sector to improve energy efficiency and reduce hazards on the environment in terms of generating energy sources.

The real opportunity is the potential for linkages between the different sectors that can create even more favourable environment for women's economic empowerment.

### **Breaking Stereotypes and Promoting Non-Traditional Roles for Women to Facilitate Women's Economic Participation and Leadership:**

- For agriculture, breaking stereotypes entails taking on new roles that are more at the higher end of the value chain: managing cold storage facilities, overseeing outlets or access in wholesale markets, engaging in marketing and trade for export, and more.
- For tourism, local female guides should be encouraged to host tourists. Women can also work as security guards for natural parks and other projects in rural areas that require security guarding to ensure the safety of visitors.
- For supply chain management, women can be trained to specialize in different types of handling processes, based on the targeted goods; for example, handling art goods, perishable goods, hazardous material, or other types of goods.
- For renewable energy, women can claim new roles in providing renewable energy services such as solar energy, particularly for women-headed households or in remote areas that large supplier companies do not access. Women can also take part in setting up windmill energy projects, specifically by driving special trucks that transport heavy loads, such as the windmills for installation.
- For construction, women can work on-site in monitoring the rehabilitation and restoration of old buildings, managing rental laws, or in other various management roles at the head office. Other small projects include rehabilitating old houses or other houses within Lebanese and Syrian communities.

## Recommendations

- **Policy Level:** Changes in labour law and personal status law, and new laws addressing sexual harassment are needed. More friendly procedures at the macro level are crucial to encourage the creation of micro and small enterprises, start-ups, and cooperatives for women economic environment.
- **Capacity-building and Women Empowerment:** This includes sustainably implementing trainings and coaching, developing CAP Programs (Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle) in non-traditional specialties and in needed VC skills, equipping technical/vocational training curriculums with modern and technologically advanced machinery and tools, creating on-the-job training, and providing linkages between supportive companies/SMEs to the economic integration of women and all vulnerable groups.

- **Support to Women-led SMEs and Cooperatives:** This includes securing seed funds in selected private banks to provide women with financial resources without a need for collaterals, widening the BDS coverage to different value chains and regions, supporting the establishment of new businesses with respect to different value chains and regions, and providing long term business support and business coaching to secure solid business results for women entrepreneurs.
- **Engaging Men:** Including men in the process and in programs at the community level is essential in order to increase women participation. Additionally, encouraging supportive men-led businesses and encouraging them to include and promote women in the company could yield a positive impact on their businesses.
- **Awareness raising at the community level:** Organizing awareness campaigns through municipalities at the community level, targeting both men and women, to endorse women economic empowerment and break the stereotypes is effective. Awareness campaigns on women's roles, capacities, and rights can help break stereotypes for both men and women at the macro level and then at the community level. It is also important to introduce awareness programs in schools targeting behavioural changes in both boys and girls, and indirectly, in their parents.
- **Partnerships, Networking, and Alliance-building:** It is important to select strong partners with field experience to recruit groups of women to work with in each geographic area. This can be done in the form of using municipal linkages to promote rural communities, attract people to visit, and encourage local economies and "Produits du Terroir," (local products). Recommended partners to work with, based on their mandates and expertise, include: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), GIZ, General Directory of Cooperatives, General Directorate of Technical Education, Bank of Lebanon, NGOs working in micro-finance, Kafalat, social media figures, renowned Lebanese artists, and NGOs working on gender awareness campaigns.



## STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The first section of this report presents the situation of the Lebanese and Syrian refugee women in the political and socio-economic contexts of Lebanon. It then continues to describe the analytical framework of the research including the selection process for the value chains.

The report then provides the findings of the study and an analysis of the overall barriers and opportunities for women's access, participation, and control of existing economic resources across the 12 selected value chains, at the national level. It continues with illustrating the findings for each separate value chain to provide an overview of the set of related activities, women's positioning within the value chain, barriers hindering women's economic participation, and opportunities for economic growth where women have non-traditional roles and greater potential for economic participation and leadership.

Finally, conclusions and a set of recommendations/observations on the best way forward for the project are provided. The annexes provide an overview of the tools used during data collection such as the value chains evaluation grid and other research documents.

## CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

Since 2011, the Syria crisis has greatly affected Lebanon, contributing to a sharp slowdown in Lebanon's economy, an increasing number of unemployed people, and emerging social tensions. Economic growth has declined from an annual average of 7% in the six years prior to the Syrian crisis to 1% in 2015 and 2016. Economic sectors such as finance and real estate, trade, tourism, and construction were mostly affected by the situation.<sup>4</sup>

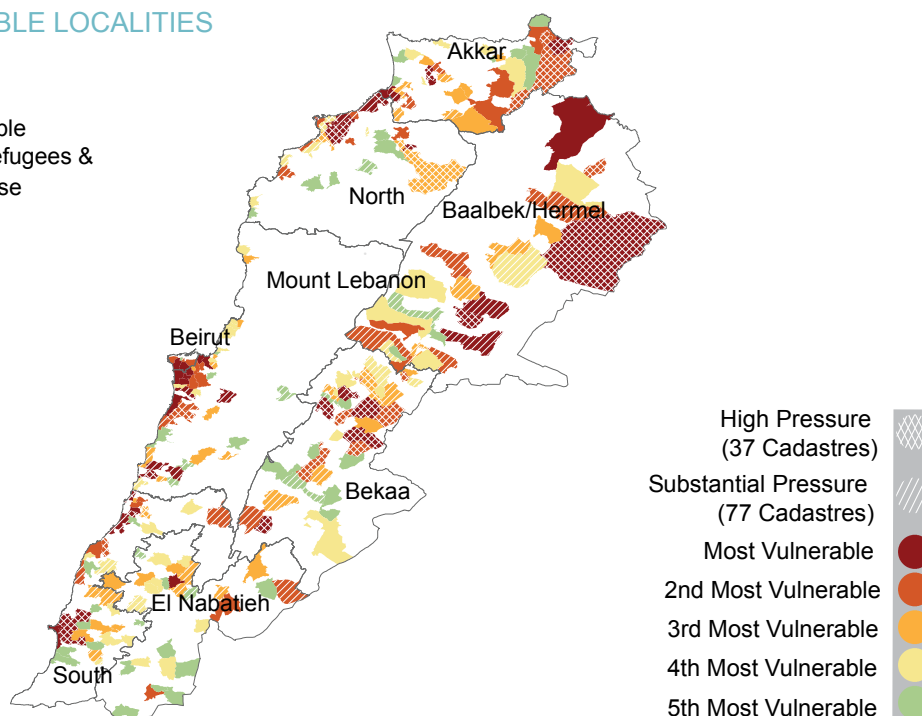
An assessment in 2013 on the impact of Syrian refugees in Lebanon shows that areas with high refugee influx, mostly economically lagging regions, have witnessed a sharp increase in unemployment among young Lebanese men, from 10% in 2010 to 36% in 2015. In addition, 44% of Lebanese host community households cited competition for jobs as the biggest factor driving community tensions. Creating more jobs in the economy is critical for addressing the needs of both Lebanese residents and Syrian refugees.<sup>5</sup>

According to the latest statistics by UNHCR, vulnerable communities hosting Syrian refugees are scattered amongst all Lebanese cadastres, with highest concentrations in the Beqaa, North Lebanon, and Beirut.

Figure 1: Map of the Most Vulnerable Cadastres in Lebanon<sup>6</sup>

### MOST VULNERABLE LOCALITIES IN LEBANON

The 251 most vulnerable cadastres host 87% refugees & 67% deprived Lebanese



4 Creating Economic Opportunities in Support of the Lebanon National Jobs Program, Program for Results, June 6, 2018, World Bank

5 World Bank (2013), Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict

6 Source: 2019 January Statistical Dashboard-UNHCR, Inter-Agency Coordination-Lebanon

Within the framework of the Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme (LHSP), UNDP is implementing the Women's Economic Participation (WEP) project to address the issue of women's limited access to, control of, and ability to benefit from economic opportunities. The overall objective of the four-year project is to contribute to the economic empowerment of Lebanese and Syrian refugee women by improving the conditions for women's integration, progress, and economic empowerment within key value-chains in Lebanon. It also aims to strengthen the capacity of 20 municipalities, unions of municipalities (UoM), and local economic development agencies to support women's economic empowerment and better mainstream gender considerations in local economic development strategies and interventions.

Lebanon ranked 140 out of 149 in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2018. The low ranking of Lebanon in the Gender Gap results primarily from ranking at the bottom in the economic opportunity and participation sub-index (136th) and the political empowerment sub-index (147th).

Despite the capacity of women to play leading roles in civil society organizations and in managerial positions within both the private and public sectors, their presence at this level within the workforce is still shy when compared to men, and very few women reach positions of management or senior posts; according to the fact sheet on women in Lebanon (prepared for the Mashreq Conference in January 2019), firms with women as top managers in Lebanon account for only 4%, while the percentage is 5% in the MENA region and 19% worldwide.<sup>7</sup>

The strong confessional system, patriarchal cultural values, social conservatism, and continuous political conflicts and unrest have hindered women's contribution to development and reform processes in Lebanon. The main reasons for the higher women unemployment rate include the lack of services for women related to childcare and the patriarchal system that assigns this domestic responsibility to women rather than to men. Women face exploitation and discrimination in informal sectors, more specifically in rural areas where women undertake productive tasks without any recognition or even remuneration, as they usually undertake these tasks as part of their natural social roles as wives or daughters (family workers) but not as economic activity. The current economic crisis that impacts both men and women is affecting the latter more, resulting in higher rates of women's unemployment.

The Lebanese Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) 2017-2020 emphasizes the need to focus on vulnerable populations - host and refugee - to improve their self-sufficiency through better access to stable and sustainable livelihood opportunities. This is to be achieved through job creation and business income generation, whilst working in parallel on improving the performance of MSMEs and cooperatives, thus promoting sustainable development.

---

<sup>7</sup> Women in Lebanon-Infograph 2019, World Bank, ILO and UNICEF

## 1.1 OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this gendered value-chains study is to explore opportunities for the creation of value chains with potential growth where women have non-traditional roles and greater potential for economic participation and leadership, while also prioritizing sectors where Syrian refugee women can work. The study is expected to:

- Map existing value chains and assess their potential to advance women's economic empowerment and gender equality
- Identify and analyze three new value chains with potential to promote economic growth and advance women's economic empowerment
- Propose recommendations for specific project strategies and activities to advance women's economic empowerment through value chain development

## 1.2 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Addressing the root causes of gender gaps requires thorough analysis of the current status of women in the country and the possibilities for their integration in economy via different economic sectors and sub-sectors. To better understand the picture, the value chain analysis approach alongside gender analyses have been utilized for the purpose of this study.

### Inclusive Value Chains Approach

A value chain (VC) encompasses the entire network of actors involved in input supply, production, processing, marketing, and consumption (value chain nodes). Value chain upgrading is the process of trading up to allow access to viable value chains or improve positions in existing value chains and maximize benefits. This includes, but is not limited to, horizontal coordination (the process of greater organization within a value chain node, often in the production and processing nodes, with some form of collective structuring, typically for producer groups), vertical coordination (developing relationships among actors between nodes; for example, contract farming where a processor or exporter contract out-grows farmers), product and process upgrading (improving chain efficiency and product quality; for example, the introduction of new technology), and functional upgrading (changing the mix of functions performed by actors in the value chain; for example, adding a processing function to a production function and shortening the chain by removing intermediaries).

While there are many different versions of (general) value chain analysis methodologies, they usually entail an assessment of the economic and commercial viability and an analysis of the regulatory structures in which the value chain operates. The value chain analysis can feed interventions that aim for legal and policy reform (if required) and upgrade strategies with the objective to improve the profitability and efficiency of the value chain.

Value chain development has, for a while, been employed in the development sector as a means of identifying poverty reduction strategies by upgrading along the value chain; this is also referred to as inclusive (or gender-sensitive) value chain development. Inclusive value chain approaches raise new challenges on how to ensure that disadvantaged groups, such as women and youth, benefit from value chain interventions without hindering the competitiveness of the value chains. In order

to avoid generic interventions that will not address gender inequalities, specific gender analysis of value chains is required. The gender analysis helps identify opportunities and barriers for women and men in a value chain, while also taking into account other intersecting elements such as class, age, rural/urban context, education, and ability.

## Gender Analysis

There are numerous ways to undertake gender analysis of value chains. During the last decade, a range of guides and manuals have been developed aimed at assisting practitioners in developing gender responsive value chain interventions. The present methodology has been developed specifically for the WEP project built on well recognized methods developed by Harvard, USAID, Sida, FAO, IFPRI, SNV, GiZ, ILO, Care, KiT, AgriProFocus, and other organizations.

In this report, gender is conceptualized as the “socially constructed difference between women and men and the power relations and dynamics that come about as a result of this.” Understanding the position of women in Lebanon will require giving attention to the diverse notions of masculinity that may support or challenge women’s economic empowerment. However, this study prioritizes issues related to women’s roles, opportunities, and constraints in value chain interventions, because women are more disadvantaged than men with regards to employment opportunities, and are also the target group for the Women’s Economic Participation Project. Consultations, nevertheless, include men to ensure the recommendations entail a “men engaged” approach. Furthermore, the gender analysis systematically considered the specificities of Lebanese and Syrian refugee women in order to capture their needs and situation and also considered other intersecting elements in terms of class, age, rural/urban contexts, education, and ability when possible/applicable.

For this purpose, the gender analysis of the 12 selected value chains was undertaken at the macro, meso and micro levels as follows:

- **Macro level** analysis assesses the “enabling environment” from a gender perspective by investigating the legal and policy framework for gender justice in Lebanon and the machinery for its implementation, with a focus on those pertinent to women’s economic rights, labour, and employment. It also entails identifying potential government commitments to gender equality within value chain development. The macro analysis covers cross-cutting issues along the 12 value chains.
- **Meso level** analysis assesses women’s participation in value chains by analyzing women’s access to, control of, and ability to benefit from chain production factors, and the power disparities in chain management. This entails three main steps: 1) Mapping women’s positioning and roles within different value chain nodes (division of labour within the different segments of the value chain, nature of women’s work, visibility, and value granted to women’s work); 2) Assessing gendered access to resources (how productive resources, natural resources, and services are shared and distributed); and 3) Analyzing gendered control of value chain benefits (power dynamics with regards to women’s voices in value chain management and their entitlements). The meso analysis is collective when applicable to all value chains but is also conducted at the value chain level to identify specificities pertaining to each value chain.
- **Micro level** analysis explores the gender power relations at the household level and examines how it affects women’s inclusion and progression in the value chains. This pertains to assessing intra-household division of labor (formal/informal and paid/unpaid work and use of time)

and intra-household decision-making (management of household incomes and spending). It also includes examining other influencing factors such as gender norms, cultural perceptions, and women’s and men’s opinions and attitudes towards gendered care roles, women’s economic role and capabilities, and violence against women. The micro level analysis covers cross-cutting issues along the 12 value chains.

The study was guided by the following key questions:

- What are the strengths and limitations of women’s economic rights in the Lebanese legal framework? How are the laws, regulations, and procedures influencing women’s and men’s participation, access, and control of economic opportunities different?
- How does the division of labour, decision-making process, services provision, work environment, and benefits distribution affect women’s economic participation within the value chains?
- What are the dynamics, social norms including beliefs, attitudes, and practices influencing women’s economic participation and leadership? How?
- What are the different needs/priorities of women that must be taken into consideration to ensure the integration and progress of women within the value chains?

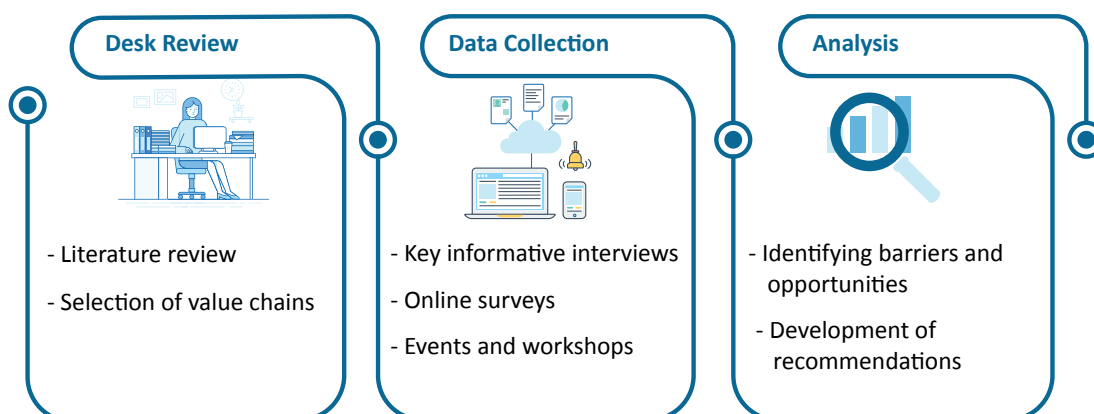
## CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used in this study. It presents the main data collection tools and sources, as well as the correlation between these different activities and key sources for data analysis. It also presents the main limitations of the study and data collected.

### 2.1 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS AND SOURCES

The study consisted of three main phases: 1) desk review or literature review and value chains selection; 2) data collection; and 3) analysis of barriers and opportunities as well as formulation of recommendations.

Figure 2: Overview of the Methodology



## Literature Review

The literature review mainly aimed to select value chains with potential for economic growth and with new opportunities for women inclusion and promotion by reviewing existing studies and reports on value chains in Lebanon and other strategic documents, including the CEDRE Conference and McKinsey reports. It also focused on collecting information on the general economic, legal, and social statuses of women, and on identified barriers and opportunities to women economic empowerment.

Recent studies (post 2014) were selected, but the lack of available updated data at the national level in terms of unemployment rates and percentages of women in economic activities forced the consideration of older studies dating back to 2012.

Additional access to documents was provided via interviews, whereby involved stakeholders shared more studies and documents. Among those shared was the World Bank's study, in partnership with the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs (OMSWA) in Lebanon, on constraints women face in accessing jobs at three levels: institutional, individual, and employer/firm levels. The study was based on 32 focus groups discussions (FGDs) segmented by region, gender, age, and labor market status, that took place between November-December 2017.

In total, 68 studies and documents were revised that encompassed four main categories:

- **15** sources on the general economic situation
- **21** sources on gender-related topics
- **25** studies on value chain and sectors
- **7** sources related to women vulnerable communities and groups

A list of the complete literature is available in the Annexes Section.

## Key Informant Interviews

As for key informant interviews, these focused on confirming data gathered from the literature review regarding women's barriers and opportunities in the value chains, as well as providing an opportunity to interpret literature review findings and further explore and gain insights on differences in experiences, attitudes, and behaviours towards women's economic participation. The interviews also aimed at identifying challenges and opportunities for upgrading the value chains.

Three interview guides were designed for identified informants at the macro, meso, and micro levels and were used to inform semi-structured conversations. At the macro level, the guide included open-ended questions focusing on economic outlook, and the elements affecting participation, access, and control, while addressing the research question for each specific angle. As for the meso or VC level, the interview guide entailed additional and more targeted questions regarding the value chain and its four nodes, when applicable: input, production, processing, and marketing. It also investigated the general state of women in the VC nodes, women promotion along VCs, women's control over assets, benefits and leadership positions, and economic growth potential and opportunities for advancement

A total of **78** interviews were conducted with the following groups:

- Representatives of ministries and governmental institutions
- Representatives of national and international organizations
- UN and bilateral agencies
- Gender and VC experts or actors in selected VCs

## Surveys

A survey, including both specific and open-ended questions, was designed to collect quantitative and qualitative information on women's participation, access, and control at the meso or household level. The survey was administered to representatives of national and international organizations with programs related to women's empowerment and gender justice or organizations working with women within the livelihood sector. A list of potential organizations was provided by UNDP and was further expanded based on results emerging from the Key Informant Interviews. The survey questionnaire was uploaded on the Survey Monkey platform, where responses were recorded.

A total of 32 surveys were completed addressing issues related to the division of labour and responsibilities at the household level, the decision-making process, control over household budgets, and the structural social norms that affect women's economic participation and leadership.

## Champions

Three success stories were also collected describing three individual successful women, considered "champions." Two of them were also interviewed at the VC level, and the third one was identified through interviewee suggestions. Each woman shared her story, focusing on the enabling factors and the barriers she had to overcome during her journey at the household, business, and macro levels. These "champion" stories helped identify key conditions of success, to inspire other women and to secure a favourable environment for women market integration, as leaders who participate, gain control and secure benefits from economic activities.

## Events and Workshops

During the field phase, several attended events provided opportunity to acquire more information on the initiatives and projects targeting women economic empowerment in the country and on economic development trends and projects:

- DAWRIC closing event - British Council
- Arab Private Sector Forum
- Support to Women Cooperatives and Associations in the Agro-food Sector of Lebanon – FAO
- Ring the Bell for Gender Equality by Beirut Stock Exchange
- Targeting Potential Support from the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) for Handicraft Workers in Lebanon-ILO-MoSA-UNICEF
- Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB) General Assembly
- Gender Responsive Rights-based Approach, encompassing all human rights
- Global Entrepreneurship Monitor - Lebanon national report 2018 launch event
- Engaging Women in Environmental Action for Balanced Development



## 2.2 DATA ANALYSIS

The triangulation between the literature review, the interviews, and the surveys resulted in strong qualitative findings. Findings at the macro level were regrouped in two tables:

- Strength and opportunities of women economic empowerment along three variables: participation, access, and control at the macro, meso, and micro levels
- Weakness and threats of women economic empowerment along three variables: participation, access, and control at the macro, meso, and micro levels
- Findings regarding challenges and barriers were further regrouped under major relevant themes, and the analysis was done thematically: 1) Lebanese Enabling Economic Environment, 2) Legal Framework, 3) Cross-cutting Services, 4) Economic Institutions and Structures, 5) Gender Roles and Responsibilities, 6) Women and Vulnerability.

At the VC level, a summary of all responses for each value chain or sector were compiled in 14 tables. The tables provide an overview of the value chain, whereby for each of the four nodes (input, production, processing, and marketing) data is regrouped under: 1) facts, 2) opportunities, 3) barriers, 4) constraints, 5) current and future projects, 6) recommendations, 7) others.

Responses at the level of VC nodes allowed gathering information relevant to the barriers, opportunities, and potential improvement at the level of each node. Non-traditional roles and technology improvements were also addressed and regrouped. Recommendations followed the same approach but were regrouped and presented in accordance to the project objectives and main activities, and the specific recommendations for each value chain or sector.

## 2.3 LIMITATIONS

The data collection process was not void of challenges despite showing cooperation and responsiveness from the different stakeholders. Among the main challenges, or more of limitations faced, were the following:

*Difficulties in scheduling and rescheduling:* Scheduling appointments was a challenge, given the time allocated for primary data collection. Some of the stakeholders had little availability in terms of time, and others had to reschedule at the last minute due to unforeseen reasons. This was a challenge that the team managed to overcome by having a diversified list of stakeholders to interview, as alternatives in cases where cancellations occur.

*Lack of recent data:* Some data was not recently updated, especially at the national level, regarding women economic activity, unemployment rates, percentage of women in different economic activities, and equal pay.

*Limited availability of women to interview for the value chain levels:* Given that a majority of women were either working or at home attending to their families, it was difficult to get ahold of them for interviews. This was overcome by interviewing the ones who were available and asking them for contacts and recommendations that might be available, a kind of snowball effect.

*Varied response rate in online survey:* There were variations in the response rate of the survey, since some had trouble accessing the link, and others took longer time to respond. However, this was overcome with other organizations working with women to fill out the survey during the project launch event.

*The short timeframe of the study:* The short timeframe of the study was challenging, from four months extended to five months.

## CHAPTER 3: VALUE CHAINS SELECTION

This chapter describes the selection process of value chains involved in this study. It starts by defining selection criteria, following an explanation of the mapping and prioritization processes, ending with the final selection of existing and new value chains and their geographical coverage.

### 3.1 DEFINING SELECTION CRITERIA

To select the most promising key value chains that allow improved conditions for women's integration and progression while also supporting economic growth, value chains were prioritized based on the following criteria:

**Economic Growth Potential Criteria (20%):** This pertains to the current economic environment (foundation) and the potential for upgrading to achieve economic growth. It includes: 1) existing gaps between market demand and supply; 2) available wholesale and retail distribution channels, with substantial client numbers willing to purchase the products; 3) opportunity to improve and expand production; 4) competitive prices when compared to other suppliers; 5) potential of upgrading and innovation enabled by technological and managerial support; and 6) availability of raw material and existence of adequate infrastructure.

**Gender Empowerment Criteria (50%):** This pertains to the current status of women within the value chain and potential for advancing the roles of women. It includes: 1) existing roles for women in the value chain; 2) substantial numbers of women employed or working in the sector; 3) opportunities for women to acquire new skills to upgrade processing and diversify products; 4) women integration and potential access to income, assets, and equipment; 5) low entry barriers for poor entrepreneurs and small-scale producers; 6) innovative sectors opening new opportunities for women; 7) compatibility with women's time and mobility constraints; 8) adherence to women safety standards and basic rights; 9) minimal barriers for women's participation in leadership positions; and 10) potential promotion for women along the value chain nodes.

**Programmatic Criteria (30%):** This is related to programme design, specifically the relevance to national strategies and governmental planning in economic and social policies, potential synergies with other organizations, actors and investors, and geographic benefits and availability of resources to upgrade the value chains.

### 3.2 MAPPING AND PRIORITIZATION PROCESSES

As discussed above, the mapping process of existing value chains was based on a thorough desk review of various value chains and economic reports, studies, and assessments previously produced by national and international actors.

Table 1: Shortlisting of 12 Value Chains for Consideration

	VC NAME	NAME OF THE STUDY
VC1	Leafy vegetables	Potatoes and Leafy Vegetables Value Chain Assessment, ILO, 2015
VC2	Renewable Energy	Assessment and Prioritization of Value Chains within Renewable Energy Sector, UNDP, 2018
VC3	Handicraft	The Handicraft Sector in Lebanon, ILO and UNICEF, June 2018
VC4	Vegetables	Increasing Competitiveness of Vegetables Value Chains in Akkar: the Case of Tomatoes, Peppers, Lettuce, Pumpkins, and Jute Mallow ( <i>mulukhiyyeh</i> ) Fair Trade and Expertise, France, 2017
VC5	Potatoes	Jobs for North Lebanon Potatoes and Waste Management Value Chain, World Bank, 2017
VC6	Waste Management	
VC7	Honey	Honey Value Chain Assessment, DAI, 2014
VC8	Small Ruminant	Small Ruminant Dairy Value Chain Analysis, Mercy Corps, 2014
VC9	Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Export	Export Value Chain Analysis Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, Lebanon CBI, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016
VC10	Oregano	Zaatar in Lebanon: Value Chain Assessment and Analysis, UNDP, 2018
VC11	Freekeh	Freekeh in Lebanon: Value Chain Assessment and Analysis, UNDP, 2018
VC12	Rural Tourism	Rural Tourism Value Chain Assessment, DAI, 2014

Additionally, new value chains were suggested based on the current Lebanese economy, government strategies for economic growth described within the CEDRE and McKinsey reports, market trends, as well as the situation of Lebanese and Syrian woman.

Table 2: List of the New Value Chains Identified

New Value Chains
Cross-Cutting Value Chain - Logistics and Supply Chain
Medicinal and Aromatic Plants - Essential Oils
Information Communication Technology with focus on Digital Marketing
Construction with focus on Restoration

The research team has assessed the degree to which the shortlisted existing and new value chains

have potential for economic growth and promoting women’s economic empowerment as per the above defined selection criteria. It’s worth noting that a desk review report was prepared during the inception phase that contains detailed value chains selection processes and results. For more information, please refer to the detailed matrix tables available in the Annexes Section. The charts below summarize the main results:

Figure 3: Scores of the shortlisted existing value chains

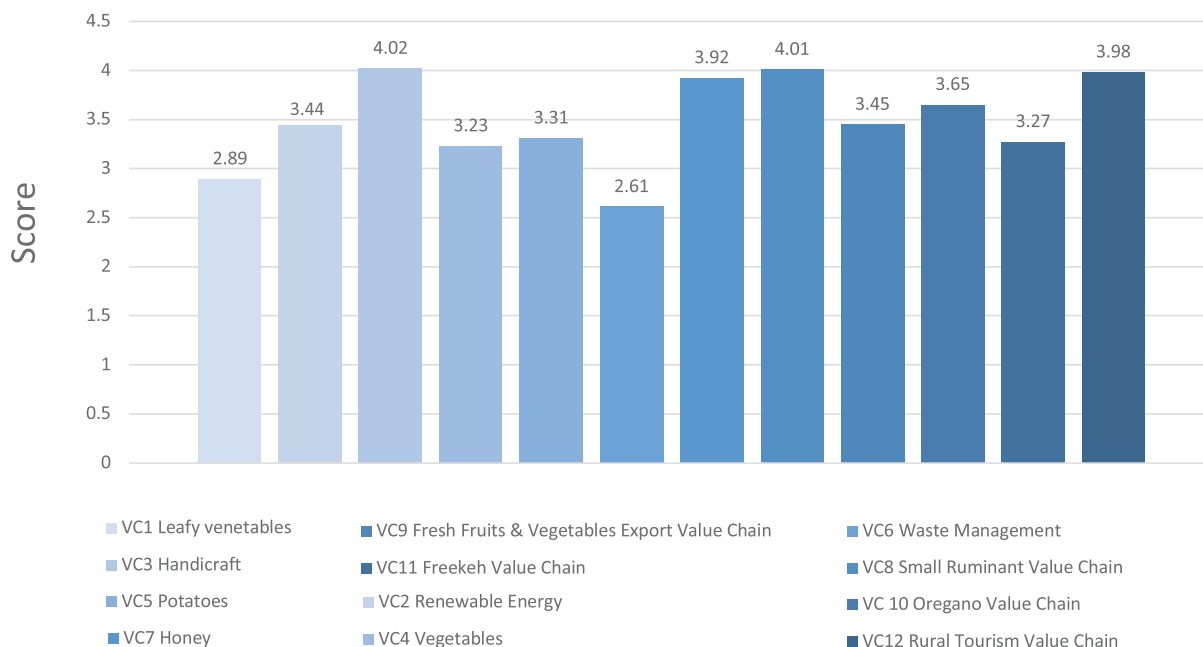
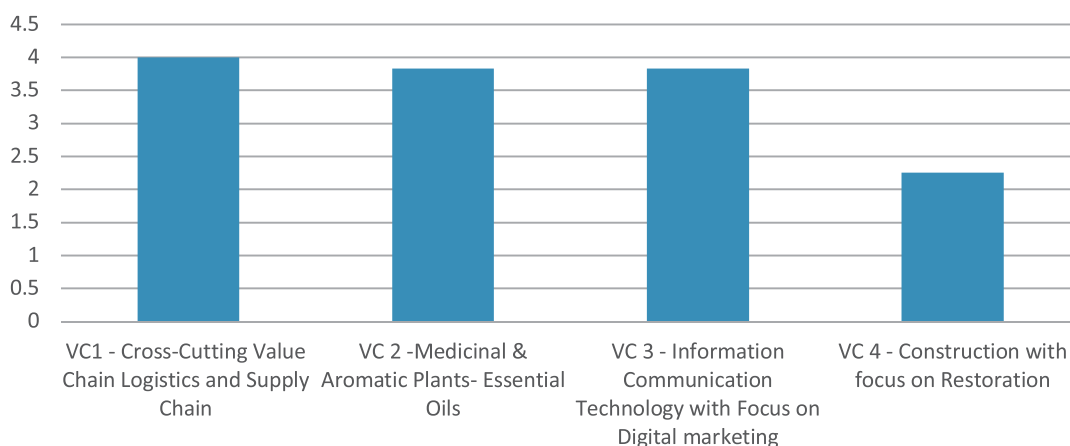


Figure 4: Scores of the new value chains



### 3.3 SELECTED VALUE CHAINS AND GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

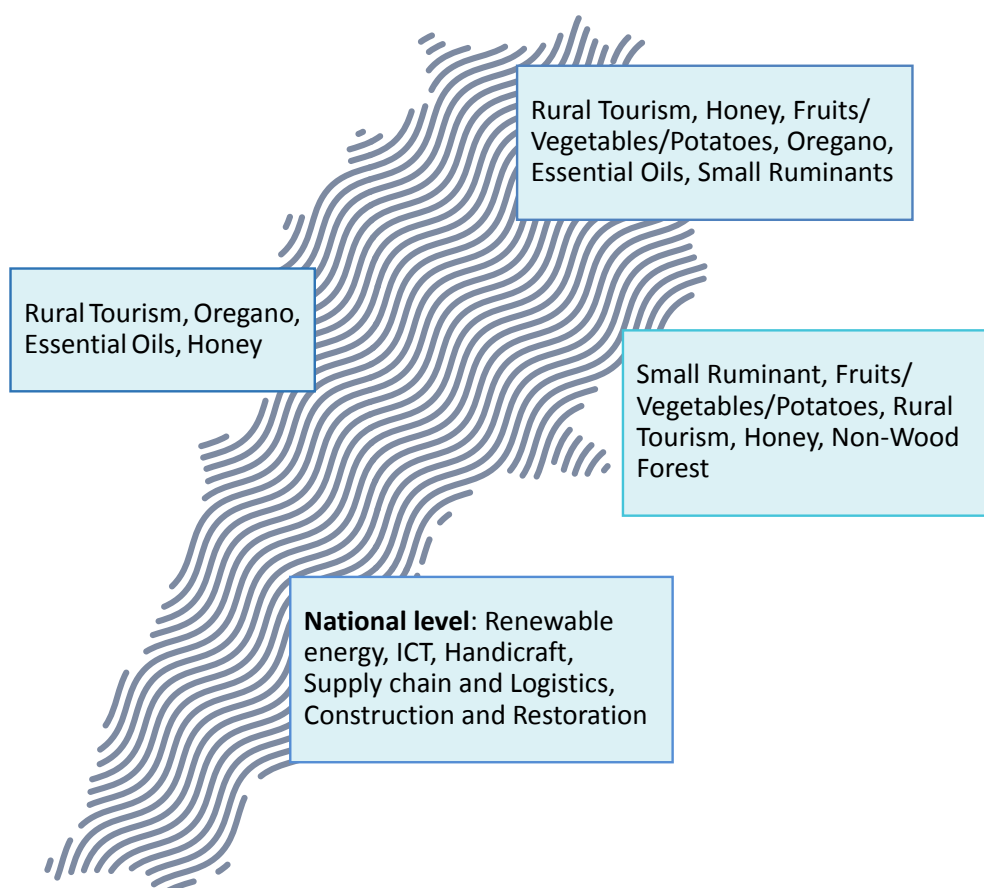
Based on the above results, 12 value chains were selected for further investigation and analysis. While all of the new value chains were selected, only existing value chains with scores above three were prioritized. It’s important to note that Potatoes, Vegetables, and Fruits were merged into one value chain, taking into consideration similarities in economic growth and gender sensitivities.

Selected value chains are presented below as agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, and also by geographical coverage.

Table 3: List of selected value chains by sectors

AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS	NON-AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS
Fresh Fruits and Vegetables + Potatoes	Handicraft
Oregano	Rural Tourism
Freekeh	Renewable Energy
Honey	Information Communication Technology – Digital Marketing
Small Ruminant	Logistics and Supply Chain
Medicinal & Aromatic Plants- Essential Oils	Construction – Restoration

Figure 4 : Mapping of the selected value chains as per geographic regions



## CHAPTER 4: MAIN FINDINGS

Findings are presented as the barriers and opportunities for women's access to, participation in, control of, and benefits from economic opportunities. The first section summarizes the overall barriers and opportunities across the 12 value chains at the national level. The study continues to illustrate the findings per each value chain: an overview of the set of relevant activities, women's positioning within the value chain, and barriers hindering women's economic participation and opportunities for economic growth where women have non-traditional roles and greater potential for economic participation and leadership.

### 4.1 OVERALL BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### 4.1.1 OVERALL BARRIERS

Women's economic empowerment faces many intertwined and complex challenges at the economic, legal, cultural, and social levels. The sections below provides an overview of the current situation and how different factors influence the access and participation of women in the Lebanese economy.

##### A. Lebanon's Economic Environment

Overall, the Lebanese economy has been significantly affected by regional crises, political instability, and tension in the country since 2011 resulting in slow growth and excess challenges to recover from difficult situations. The World Bank economic outlook in April 2018 estimated a growth rate of only 2% a year in Lebanon, which remained unchanged for the past two years. This slow economic growth coupled with a decrease in investment as a result of insecurity has made enterprises unable to absorb more employment given the financial hardship they are facing. This resulted in reduced job opportunities and decreased salaries across different sectors for a large number of people, regardless of age or gender. As a result, informal employment started to spread and became a main feature of the economic instability in some sectors more than others.

*The low participation of women in the labour market hinders their control over benefits and their promotion to leadership positions.*

While the prevailing economic situation affects both genders in Lebanon, women in Lebanon are twice as likely to be unemployed, earn lower returns from work in terms of wages and profit, and suffer from inadequate working conditions compared to men<sup>8</sup>. In fact, even more recently, **women economic participation in Lebanon is still low**: only 22% of working-age women are active (employed or looking for jobs), making them more than three times less likely to participate in the labour force compared to men.<sup>9</sup> Despite the high level of educational among women,

8 World Bank and Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs (OMSWA) in Lebanon, "Understanding Women's Constraints and Barriers to Jobs in Lebanon", November-December 2017

9 Ibid

their participation in economic and political life remains very low.<sup>10</sup> According to the Central Administration of Statistics (CAS), the general unemployment rate was 6% in 2009, and in 2012 the World Bank estimated it at 11%, while the Lebanese Ministry of Labour estimated it at 20%. Unemployment is particularly high among youth (34%), and the unemployment rate for women (18%) is estimated to be more than double that of men (9%).<sup>11</sup> Among the main reasons for the higher unemployment rate of women are the absence of services related to childcare and the patriarchal system that assigns this domestic responsibility solely to women rather than shared duty with men.

The low participation of women in the labour market hinders their control over benefits and their promotion to leadership positions. In terms of self-employment, the entrepreneurial scene is well developed in Lebanon and self-employment is very common. As per the latest census conducted by the CAS in 2009, 30.7% of all employed individuals were self-employed. However, women tend to occupy more wage-employee type of jobs rather than being entrepreneurs or self-employed. For example, according to the World Bank report, Jobs for North Lebanon (2017), the surveys indicate that 80% of working women in the North are wage-employed while only 15% are self-employed or employers. However, for men, the percentages are 60% and 40% respectively.<sup>12</sup> In 2016, the level of female early stage entrepreneurship (16% of the population) was lower than that of males (26% of the population); at the same time, 37% of female and 41% of male early stage entrepreneurs reported to have started their business out of necessity rather than opportunity.<sup>13</sup> Women also usually occupy lower paid jobs, often at contract-based levels rather than in established posts, and more in the public than in the private sector. This is evident in the fact that 63% of women work in the service sector in banking, trade, tourism, health, education, and social work compared to 33% of men.<sup>14</sup> Also, women find it easier to secure jobs in the public sector; for example, over 70% of teachers in Lebanese public schools are female. In addition, women face exploitation and discrimination in the informal sectors, precisely in rural areas where women undertake productive tasks as part of their natural social roles as wives or daughters (family workers) not as economic activity and without recognition or remuneration.

*Women also usually occupy lower paid jobs, often at contract-based levels rather than in established posts, and more in the public than in the private sector.*

Not only do women have low participation rates but also experience discrepancies in wages and salaries across all different sectors. This was further confirmed by findings from the online surveys with NGOs' representatives, with 75% of participants believed that women's income was less by at least 21% to 30%, and half of these believed the difference was more than 30% between men and women income, as shown in the graph below:

Not only do women have low participation rates but also experience discrepancies in wages and salaries across all different sectors. This was further confirmed by findings from the online surveys with NGOs' representatives, with 75% of participants believed that women's income was less by at least 21% to 30%, and half of these believed the difference was more than 30% between men and women income, as shown in the graph below:

10 Carreras, E. (2017). Gender Analysis in Lebanon, Situation analysis report- European Union under the Contract n° 2017/388231.

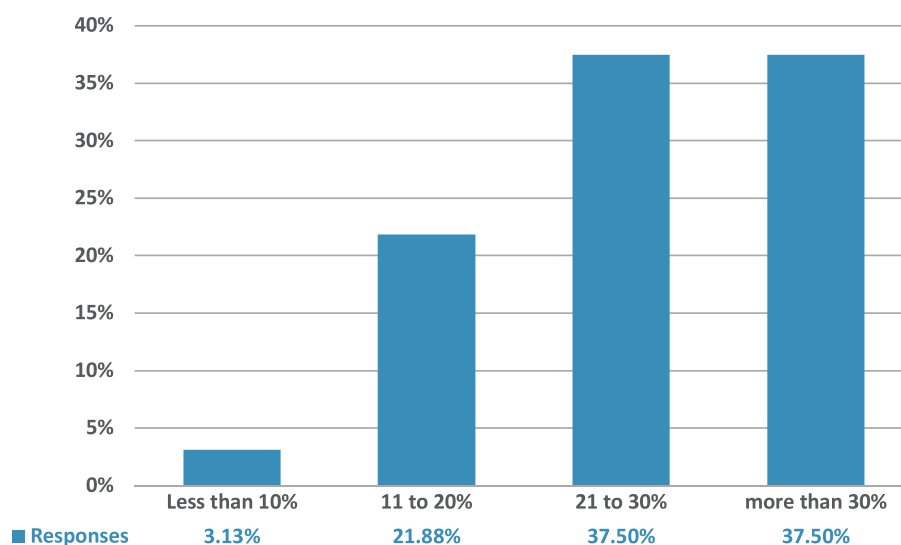
11 Leaders for sustainable livelihoods, "Skills gaps analysis for improved livelihood sustainability in Lebanon". 2017

12 There has been a shift in the employment structure with the labor force shifting away from productive activities such as manufacturing or agriculture towards trade, services and construction. The latest estimates published on IDAL's website indicate that services, financial intermediation and insurance sectors employ 39% of the labor force, with trade employing 27%, manufacturing 12%, construction 9%, and Transport and Agriculture accounting for 7% & 6% respectively.

13 Gender Analysis in Lebanon, Situation Analysis Report, November 2017, EU Delegation to Lebanon

14 Women's work in Lebanon: making the invisible visible, CRTD.A, January 2013

Figure 5: Perceived difference in income between men and women



The survey results were aligned with other findings from different organizations. For example, the director of the Lebanese Association for Development, Al Majmoua<sup>15</sup> confirmed that unequal pay is a reality within most VCs, with a difference of at least 40% in the private sector and within SMEs.

In 2014, during her intervention at the Grand Serail (the headquarters of the Lebanese Prime Minister) director of CAS estimated the difference in pay between genders to be at 6% in favor of men. However, she stated that this difference can reach 24% and 36% in some sectors, such as transportation and industry. In Lebanon, as per the international statistics, women “earn as little as one third of male earnings because of their low status in the job market and the poor rates of pay.”<sup>16</sup>

The discrimination is not only confined to participation and wages but is also present in recruitment practices. Access to employment in Lebanon is commonly based on the applicant’s religious and political background rather than merit, due to the interference of local political powers.

In parallel, different interviews with various participants reiterated that the Lebanese ecosystem doesn’t promote or facilitate women participation in economic sectors in terms of regulations for enterprise creation, access to finances, and support services. In addition, interviewees highlighted the two main general internal issues in Lebanon affecting the business environment as a whole: the confessional system and corruption.

## B. Legal Framework

The lack of implementation of ratified conventions is hindering women economic participation, equal access to resources, control over benefits, and promotion to leadership positions. Lebanese discriminative laws reinforce the patriarchal social and cultural system resulting in poor opportunities for women in the market.

Legally speaking, the Lebanese Constitution does not distinguish between Lebanese citizens: “all Lebanese are equal before the law: they equally enjoy civil and political rights and assume obligations and public duties without any distinction among them.” This is how local authorities

15 Mrs. Alia Farhat, Majmoua Director

16 Women’s work in Lebanon: making the invisible visible, CRTD.A, January 2013



affirm, in principle, the country's non-discriminatory position under the Article 7 of the Lebanese constitution. In addition, Article 12 asserts that "every Lebanese has the right to hold public office with no preferences except based on merits and competences". However, the personal status laws stands out as an exception against this, delegating the enforcement and final judgment to religious communities. This law, which applies to the jurisdiction of 18 religious authorities in Lebanon, entails gender discrimination and inequality on many levels, especially when combined with patriarchal Lebanese societies.

*Lebanese  
discriminative  
laws reinforce the  
patriarchal social  
and cultural system  
resulting in poor  
opportunities for  
women in the market.*

Some progress has been achieved at the legal level, with Lebanon having ratified 50 ILO conventions, including seven of the eight fundamental conventions that address key human rights issues including: forced labour, child labour, freedom of association, equal opportunity, and treatment at work. Additionally, the country is a signatory of different international conventions and treaties related to women.<sup>17</sup> However, such ratifications remain "on paper" and are not really enforced or implemented, especially when considering the current situation of Lebanese women, and the status of gender equality and elimination of gender discrimination. One example of this failure is the decision to set a female quota for women representation in decision-making positions, which was supposed to encourage the involvement and active participation of women in the political field. Yet the reality is different since women's participation in the political decision-making system remains limited, with women absent from high-level positions, such as governors. Only two women were appointed to the position of *Quaemaqam*, or head of districts.

The same trend is followed in terms of participation within political parties with severe social and political marginalization of women at the decision-making level. In fact, since 2004 (the first time a woman served in any Lebanese government), there has never been more than two women in government, until now. In the 2019 Ministerial Cabinet, four women were appointed for the ministries of Interior, Energy, Administrative Reform, and Women's Affairs.

## Discriminatory Personal Status Law

According to various interviews, inheritance laws, religious institutions, and traditional culture hinder women's decisions and control over rights and access to assets.

The personal status law regulates women's access to assets through inheritance regulations dictated by the different religious authorities, the control women have over their family's destiny, and social ties in terms of marriage and family organizations. The lack of access to assets hinders

17 • Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW (accession 1996) with reservations on Article 9, Paragraph 2, and Article 16, Paragraphs 1(c, d, f, g) and 3, related to personal status laws and nationality rights of women citizens.

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (accession 1972)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (accession 1972)
- International convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (accession 1971)
- Convention against discrimination in Education (ratified 1964)
- Lebanon joined as well, the Arab Charter for Human Rights in 2008 and adopted the Cairo Declaration for Arab Women in 2013; which addresses the following aspects: political, economic, health, social, violence against Women and specifically during war and crisis.

further access to finances for women; loans require the same collaterals from both men and women, without taking into consideration women's limited access to assets.

At the social level, the inability of women to grant their children the Lebanese nationality hinders their involvement in economic activities, and the involvement of their children as well. Although this has an impact on both young boys and girls, it comes from negative discrimination against women, said National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) board member.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, the lack of a minimum legal age for marriage affects women to a great extent, depriving them of the chance to complete their education or develop skills and professional careers before getting married and giving birth to children. By the time the children of young women are more independent, it is often too late for mothers to enter the job market. Also, a previous study conducted by IECD indicated that after giving birth to a second child, the majority of women leave their jobs.<sup>19</sup> However, regarding minimum age for marriage, interviewees agreed that changes in laws will also require a change in mentalities as a pre-requisite. The protection of the law is not enough - cultural habits and behaviours are more difficult to change.

The religious communities' power over personal laws is affecting the correct application of all other laws and greatly influencing women's control over their rights; at the household level, it gives men in the family the bargaining power and decision-making prerogative. This was further confirmed through the different interviews where participants indicated that such laws are the most direct and indirect causes of women's submission to men's authority. Men in the family even have the power to stop women from working.

## Labor Code

The Lebanese labour law, within its different texts, states equal participation and pay between women and men. The law also grants equal opportunities for engagement in income-generating activities and promotion. While there are no legal restrictions for women's economic participation, certain articles exist that are viewed as restrictive and discriminatory. Article 27 of chapter two prohibits women and juveniles to undertake specific types of work considered hard and hazardous like mining, welding, etc. (listed under Annex 1 of the law). In addition, the labour law excludes domestic workers, as well as women and men working in the agriculture sector, which prevents them from basic social insurance and protection. In fact, there is no specific legislation pertaining to rural women in the Lebanese Labour Law; agriculture workers are eligible for the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) only if they are permanent agricultural employees, which is rarely the case.

*Personal Status Laws are widely seen to be among the primary sources of discrimination against women in the economic sphere. The lack of access to assets hinders further access to finances for women; loans require the same collaterals from both men and women, without taking into consideration women's limited access to assets.*

<sup>18</sup> Mrs. Hania Hammoud, Member of executive board-Treasurer- Member of Steering, Economic and Legal Committees

<sup>19</sup> Delphine Compain, Mada

As almost 75% of female workers in the agriculture sector are hired on a seasonal or temporary basis, they are not eligible for benefits. Job security is also an issue, and many require agents to find work within the sector. Basically, working in agriculture in Lebanon means no safety net, a lack of decent work conditions, and no sustainable remuneration for both men and women. With a lack of recognition of women's productive work in agriculture, their social positions in the family and in society with regards to decision making, income benefits, and spending remains weak. In parallel, Lebanon lacks statistical data on women's land ownership, and transfer of real estate in rural areas is more likely to go for men than women.

Aside from the exclusion of female agriculture workers, women also face discrimination in the private sector, especially when it comes to equal payment, maternity leaves, and social security services. In 2014, maternity leave was extended from 49 to 79 days. As maternity leaves are covered by the employer and not by the NSSF, employers tend to avoid hiring young married women and, in some cases, may even "lay-off" some women. In that regard, the Ministry of State for Women's Affairs (OMSWA) has presented a draft law for paternity leave which has already been approved by the council of ministers and is awaiting parliament endorsement. If approved, the paternity leave would facilitate women's integration in the economic cycle and give them more equal chances of being hired and/or promoted.

Regarding the equal pay right, on average, women are paid 71% of what men earn, despite their higher level of education.<sup>20</sup> The income inequity gap is less but not eliminated with higher education. This discrimination in salaries is within the private sector as it does not exist in the public sector. However, an unbalanced promotion between men and women, favouring the former, leads to underpaid qualified women in the public sector.

Some efforts have been made by different local public and private organizations to advocate and raise awareness on the rights of women in the economic life. Shedding light on the unequal pay among gender, OMSWA and the Business and Professional Women Lebanon association conducted a national campaign in 2018 for equal pay. The aim was to lift injustice against women by raising women's awareness about their rights to equal pay for equal work, and to mobilize the Lebanese state, trade unions, and companies to reduce the gender gap in salaries. Along the same lines, NCLW is currently working with other NGOs on amending the paternity leave laws, along with the child marriage minimum age law, and bankruptcy laws. Also, they are trying to include agriculture workers and household workers within labour law coverage.

*Though equal economic participation is, in theory, guaranteed by the labour law, it is in reality restricted by several articles. The exclusion of domestic and agriculture workers, inadequate maternity protection, and the restriction in practice to regulate equal pay for equal work fuel bias against women.*

## Social Security Law

There are several discriminations in the right to social security between women and men: Article 3 of the labour law and Article 46 of the social security law allow men to receive family allowance in case

20 Dah, A., Abosedra, S., & Dahbourah, F. (2014). Gender Pay Discrimination In Lebanon, Assessment Of Recent Data. Oxford Journal: An International Journal of Business & Economics, 5(1).

his wife is not working; whereas a woman can only receive family allowance if she is widowed or if her husband has occupation disability. Thus, a social investigation is conducted each time a woman applies to the CNSS to benefit from its services, involving long procedures with no guarantee of approval, and it is mandatory to renew every claim each year. In addition, Clause 2 of Article 16 stipulates that for an insured woman to get the maternity benefits, she should be registered in the NSSF for at least 10 months before the delivery due date. Paradoxically, the wife of an insured man is entitled to the maternity benefits three months after her husband starts work.

OMSWA is currently working on amending the following articles of the social security law for more gender equality in terms benefiting from social security services and allowances: 14 (regarding beneficiaries of the social security), 26 (regarding Maternity Allowances), 47 and 48 (regarding Family and Education Allowances). The draft law was approved by the council of ministers in 2017 and was referred to the parliament in 2018 for endorsement.

### **Tax, Commerce, and Bankruptcy Codes**

Discrimination still prevails between men and women in the subject of tax cuts and deductions. Article 31 of the Lebanese tax law states that married men with children benefit from tax deductions, while a woman can only benefit if she is widowed or in case that her husband has occupation disability.

Another discrepancy is highlighted in Articles 625 and 629 of the trade laws related to women properties in case where husbands become bankrupt: the law imposes restrictions on women's properties owned after marriage, because these are considered properties acquired with husbands' money.

The National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) developed the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon (2011-2020) and the National Action Plan in 2012 in close collaboration with line ministries and feminist organizations and with the support of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Through the joint efforts towards gender mainstreaming at the policy level, gender focal points have been appointed within the different ministries and public institutions. However, according to a USAID study, the abilities of Gender Focal Points are limited by the absence of an overarching commitment to women's empowerment across sectors and the continuous lack of effective policies to prioritize gender equality<sup>21</sup>. Most ministries and public agencies, up until 2018, overlooked gender dimensions in their work (IWSAW, 2016).

There has been advancement in efforts towards ratifying the laws, and there are continuous efforts to improve the participation of women in the economic, financial, social, and political areas. However, Lebanese authorities still need to invest enormously to improve gender equality through incorporating conventions in the national legislation, withdrawing reservations on specific protocols (especially the ones related to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW), implementing the general assembly recommendations, monitoring, reporting, and producing more gender evidence-based data, improving synergies, and coordinating with concerned stakeholders.

---

21 Gender Assessment for Lebanon, USAID, 2012

## Labor legislation and Syrian Refugees

In January 2015, restrictions on the influx of Syrian refugees made the required legal papers for immigration an impossible and costly mission for most refugees. Different discriminatory categories were established for new entrants and for people renewing their papers, favouring people with financial resources, and restricting entry or continued stay of the poorest. Also, the decrees require Syrians seeking work to have a Lebanese sponsor, often an employer, who needs to sign a “pledge of responsibility.” It is estimated that approximately 70% of the total refugee population lost their valid legal permit to stay due to these measures.<sup>22</sup>

As per the Lebanese law, any foreign worker requires a work permit within ten days of entry into the country in order to be granted the same rights under the Lebanese labour law in terms of wages and social security. Alas, this is currently not the case when it comes to displaced Syrians. Prior to the Syria crisis, there was a set of bilateral agreements organizing the work of Syrians in Lebanon. After the Syria conflict and the influx of Syrian refugees (more commonly termed “displaced persons” in Lebanon)<sup>23</sup> the government stopped applying many policies related to Syrian labour policies and regulations.

In 2014, a circular allowed Syrian to work in a various set of occupations. Nowadays, the sectors where non-Lebanese can work are limited to: the construction sector, agriculture sector, the cleaning sector, and environment sector (added in 2017).

Additionally, as of 2017, any displaced person who starts work loses the humanitarian refugee status. This indirectly deprives Syrians of the right to work or forces them to continue working illegally, but in worse working conditions (short-term jobs, minimal remuneration, employer abuse, etc.) especially since they cannot request any legal protection or social security.

### C. Cross-cutting Services and Infrastructure

The sense of safety and protection needed to encourage and support women economic involvement is lacking in most cases, be it in terms of social and medical insurance, daycare services, and reliable and safe transportation. These represent the main challenges for women’s participation and access to services and to market and employment opportunities.

There is still no social and medical insurance for agriculture workers, household servicers, free-lancers, and workers in informal sectors. Even if the standardized health care card is amended, results are not guaranteed in terms of accessibility and quality, as stated by the LLWB president, citing the example of social security for elderly citizens. CNSS doesn’t deliver proper services even if women benefit from the registration. Private insurance coverage is required for most people in Lebanon but it is costly and unavailable for most of the workforce, especially for seasonal workers. Thus, they are left with low quality medical services in governmental hospitals or in underequipped dispensaries and medical centers.

According to the Manager of the Family Unit at MoSA,<sup>24</sup> women in vulnerable communities make up the higher percentage of beneficiaries in MoSA Health Centers. They are usually caregivers bringing family members and children to dispensaries to benefit from medical services and affordable medical advice, even if the quality of such medical services is not always up to standards.

22 Drivers of Despair-Refugee Protection Failures in Jordan and Lebanon- Norwegian Refugee Council

23 Janmyr, M. (2016). The Legal Status of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, Lebanon. AUB policy Institute

24 Mrs. Fernande Abou Haidar, MoSA مصلحة الشؤون الأسرية من ضمن دائرة المرأة MoSA

According to FAO Lebanon Office representative,<sup>25</sup> the lack of support services for women, namely meal preparation the availability of nurseries to leave their children while they work, are real challenges towards women economic participation. There aren't enough nurseries in rural areas and, in most of cases, the opening hours and working mode of the nurseries are challenging.

*Key informants interviewed during fieldwork confirmed that the limited access to safe transportation and availability of daycare services hinder women's economic participation.*

MoSA has 53 daycare facilities within their Social Development Centers (SDCs), and 50 in partnership with other local NGOs, but the quality of care, working hours, and accessibility don't cover the needs of mothers for this service; daycare capacities are very limited with unqualified staff to care for the children, rendering them unacceptable and compelling people to divert to private daycares that are expensive and inaccessible to all. In Tripoli, for example, a study conducted in 22 daycare centres revealed very bad quality of services and hygiene.<sup>26</sup>

In terms of basic infrastructure, Lebanon still falls behind in the fields of acceptable, reliable, and accessible transportation, communication, and clean water provision.

Transportation and safe transportation are real issues to be considered in terms of women's access to different value chains, as most of interviewees stated. In remote and rural areas, barriers regarding distance and transportation to gain services and or seek work opportunities limit women's mobility and access to resources and markets.

Internet and communication availability, quality, and cost are other challenges for women especially, since they have limited access to finances. While this issue affects all sectors, it has a greater impact on creative and knowledge economies, and on access to input and marketing linkages.<sup>27</sup>

Access to clear clean water is another barrier within all agricultural sectors, especially since safety and quality norms for export must be applied and respected.

#### **D. Bank loans, Financial Resources, and Assets**

Women are less likely than men to have access to financial institutions, bank loans, and financial resources as they have fewer assets and possibilities for land ownership due to the Personal Status law in Lebanon and because of the dominant culture.

Only a few years ago, in 1994, women were legally allowed to start their own business. Culturally, however, they are still susceptible to the control and final say of men in the family, especially in terms of providing financial resources, or eligibility for bank loans or collateral coverage.

*"Our NGO has a women livelihood center in the North where we realized that access to funds is the most difficult thing for women to achieve in order to start their businesses"*

*~Women Supporting Organization in North Lebanon*

25 Mr. Maurice Saade, FAO, Lebanon Office Representative

26 Mrs. Delphine Compain, Mada, Director

27 Mrs. Joanna Abi Abdallah, Berytech, Business Development Manager

As previously stated, the need for collaterals for bank loans is hindering women’s access to finance, since they don’t have access to assets; land ownership is culturally considered a man’s responsibility since he is the head of the family and “holds the family name,” as expressed by most interviewees, including representatives of the private banks. In fact, according to the International Finance Corporation (IFC), only 3% of bank loans provided by Lebanese banks go to female entrepreneurs.<sup>28</sup>

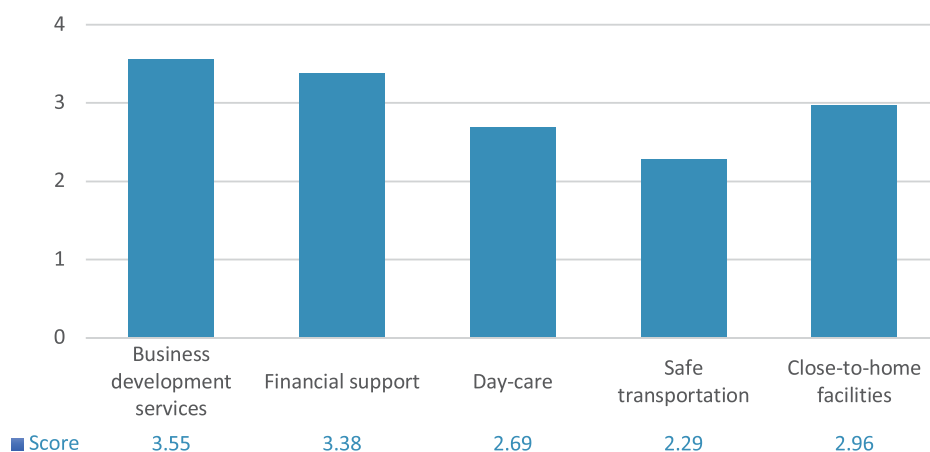
Regarding access to other resources, even within development projects, training are delivered to both men and women, but machines and equipment are given to men, as noted by a USAID program manager.<sup>29</sup>

### E. Business Development Services

BDS providers are not sufficiently gender-focused, with little awareness of the constraints women face. There is not enough attention given to the needs of women’s enterprises at different levels, nor to the geographical distribution of such services. BDS are mainly geared for micro enterprises and SMEs. The main services offered help grow a business by making it more competitive, expanding products or services, and/or focusing on specific markets. When describing the role of BDS, IFC<sup>30</sup> states that not only can they assist entrepreneurs in running their business more effectively but can also, if appropriately applied, act as enhancers of access to finance, especially when collaterals may impede small producers and entrepreneurs from accessing financial resources.

The need for BDS was strongly highlighted in the surveys, with 29 participants out of 32 considering it the most relevant factor for enhancing women’s economic participation, followed by the need of financial support, as per the figure below. Other important factors include work location, safe transportation, and availability of day care centers.

Figure 6: Additional resources/services required by women to acquire non-traditional roles



The inconsistency in the provision of BDS also presents challenges for women, especially in rural areas and in the agriculture sector. The quality of BDS and other services, according to an ILO

28 [https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics\\_ext\\_content/ifc\\_external\\_corporate\\_site/sustainability-at-ifc/publications/sba-proj-blc-lebanon](https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/sustainability-at-ifc/publications/sba-proj-blc-lebanon)

29 Mr. Charbel Hanna, USAID, Program Manager and Technical Specialist, Agro-Business and Rural Development.

30 The Role of Business Development Services (BDS), IFC.org <https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/f75ca3004885532cade4ff6a6515bb18/IFCGEM%2BBro>

representative,<sup>31</sup> is important to consider but is currently not satisfying for most of BDS providers themselves, especially at the local levels.

In addition, unreliable transportation services, as stated before, aggravate women access to long distant BDS, mainly present in main urban areas, specifically Beirut and Mount Lebanon.

## F. Economic Institutions and Structures

The prevalence of the informal sector in the Lebanese economy, the lack of special regulations to simplify SMEs procedures, and the actual presence of the family business model pose more challenges to women economic empowerment. The cooperative structure, in its current state, is not a successful alternative to follow for women entrepreneurs.

In the informal sector, women are more subject to exploitation and abuse. In case of sexual abuse, women leave their jobs and struggle with the fear of enrolling in the job market again, believing they will never be able to find another job. In family businesses, women are not considered equals since they are not the family bread winners. Often, they are not paid equally and their productive work is barely recognized or seen as another natural “household” responsibility where they don’t need to be paid, according to an NCLW board member.<sup>32</sup>

Also, there is a lack of knowledge of the benefits of being registered as a business, according to the president of LLWB.<sup>33</sup> and the Lebanese negative attitude towards everything institutionalized and transparent is pushing more entrepreneurs to remain in the informal sector. Also, as the director of Majmoua stated,<sup>34</sup> women need support to enter the market because of their lack of options, networks, and professional relationships.

Laws and procedures do not facilitate enterprise creation and start-ups: long, complicated, and costly procedures dominate the process of establishing or registering an enterprise. The Ministry of Economy is currently working on creating a one-stop shop to facilitate enterprise establishment.<sup>35</sup> It is also working on legislations to ease the entry and exit of SMEs. This will positively impact and encourage women entrepreneurship and increase women control over benefits.

In addition to restrictive laws, society’s judgment has an even higher negative impact on women in case of failure, more than men in that same situation.<sup>36</sup> Lowering the cost and facilitating the exit of SMEs in case of failure can reduce the stress on women, leading to better access to resources and women economic participation.

Regarding cooperatives, the cooperative laws present a democratic approach where all members are equal; even 10% of them can call for a general assembly and vote out corrupt members, if necessary. However, these measures are not applied nor followed. According to the Directorate General of Cooperatives, no more than 20% of the 1,243 registered cooperatives are active, led by either women or men. While there is a lack of statistics on active women-led cooperatives, 31 coops took loans from KAFALAT, a Lebanese financial company that assists SMEs to access

---

31 Mrs. Rania Hokayem, ILO, National TVET Programme Coordinator

32 Mrs. Hania Hammoud, Member of executive board-Treasurer- Member of Steering, Economic and Legal Committees

33 Mrs. Asma El Zein, LLWB, President

34 Mrs. Alia Farhat, Majmoua Director

35 Mrs. Rafif Berro, International relations team, project manager

36 Mrs. Hania Hammoud, Member of executive board-Treasurer- Member of Steering, Economic and Legal Committees



commercial bank funding, and repaid them, according to the Deputy General Manager of Kafalat,<sup>37</sup> with around 80% of these being women agri-food processing cooperatives. The cooperative structure is not currently implemented as per its principle to join efforts of community members willing to be productive in specific sectors and share responsibilities and profits.

The impact of all of the above-mentioned challenges and barriers women face in Lebanon is mainly translated through a lack of self-confidence, low self-image, and the need for protection and safety within the economic realm.

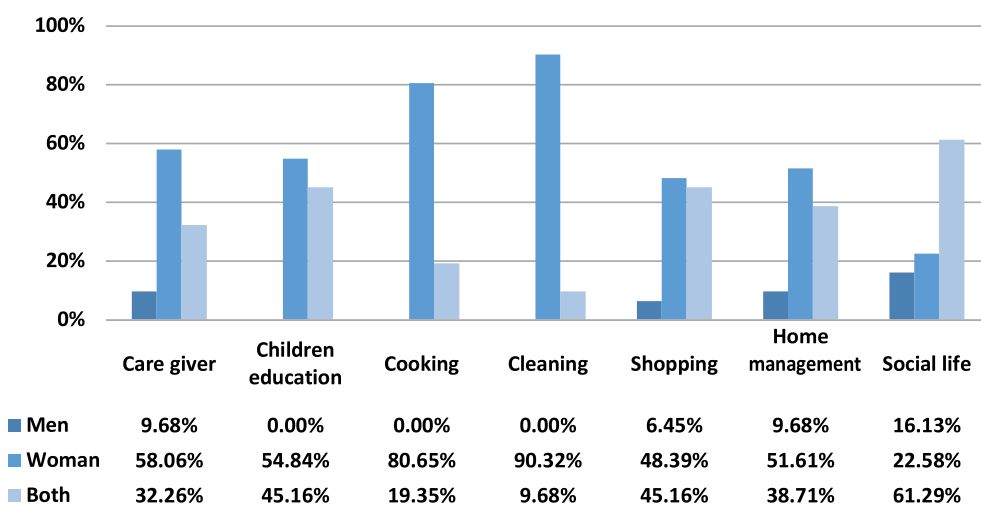
## G. Social Norms and Gendered Roles and Responsibilities

The root causes of women limited economic participation and leadership can be traced to the social norms that dictate the expected roles of women and men. As is the case across the world, women’s economic participation in Lebanon is further limited by an uneven distribution of household and childcare work, limited awareness of women’s rights, social restrictions on mobility, lower skillsets and confidence, and specific risks such as gender-based violence.

*Social and patriarchal norms weigh women down in their pursuit of economic participation and leadership reinforcing gendered care role against the economic role of women and also the uneven distribution of care work.*

The historical gender-based division of labour is reinforcing attitudes that assign women primary responsibility for care and domestic work. The latter is rarely perceived as skilled and valuable. As such, women in Lebanon carry out the majority of unpaid care work. This is confirmed by survey participants who consider that completing domestic services, such as cleaning and cooking, and the provision of care services, like childcare, are mainly the responsibility of women. Moreover, survey participants perceived that men are more engaged in social activities, including social visits and entertainment. This heavy and unequal division of unpaid domestic and care work limits women’s control over time and mobility, and thus undermines opportunities for accessing and progressing in productive work, leadership, and training as seen in the figure below.

Figure 7: Division of responsibilities between men and women in the same household



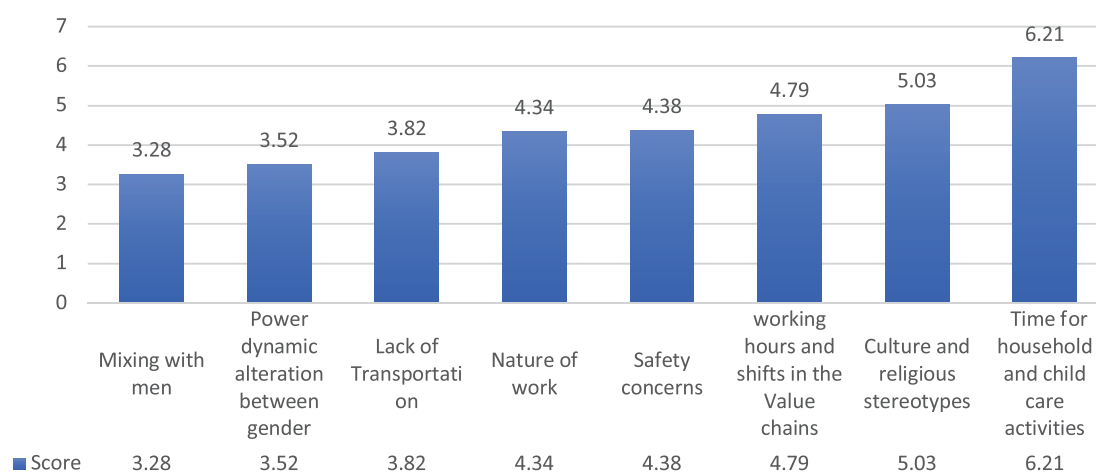
37 Mrs. Yolla Saireddine, Kafalat, Deputy General Manager

According to data collected by the World Bank and OMSWA,<sup>38</sup> women and men have different perceptions and attitudes towards women’s economic participation. In general, men are less supportive of women’s employment, mainly due to concerns about long working hours outside the house, less power and control over them, and potential backaches attributed to neglecting household care responsibilities. In contrast, women had positive perceptions of women’s employment, emphasizing improved independence and autonomy of women, increased family financial wellbeing, shift in power dynamics allowing an equal relationship between spouses, and a better chance of women being positive role models for their children.

This observation was also confirmed by informants during fieldwork. The interviewed NCLW board member<sup>39</sup> found that the adopted cultural approach of both men and women does not encourage women’s work. Culture and traditional beliefs are hindering women access and economic participation because of predefined roles of women set by the society, as well as the culture, attitude, and gaps of the Lebanese laws and the patriarchal society.

Furthermore, the need for security, provided by the family and by the patriarchal model, confines women to their traditional roles and lowers their self-image, self-esteem, and self-confidence, as confirmed by most of the interviewees.<sup>40</sup> In addition to culture and religious stereotypes, the time it takes to for household work and childcare represents the main challenge hindering women economic empowerment and advancement, as seen in the figure below.

Figure 8: Factors that limit the advancement of women in economic roles



In parallel, according to informants, many job seekers express preferences for male workers on the grounds that women are seen to be less committed to the labour market, with higher levels of absenteeism and a need for additional supporting costs of maternity leaves. Additionally, employers believe women are unable to ensure balance between their work and household activities. This belief is based on the assumption that women usually prioritize traditional roles

38 World Bank and Office of the Minister of State for Women’s Affairs (OMSWA) in Lebanon, November-December 2017

39 Mrs Hania Hammoud, Member of executive board-Treasurer- Member of Steering, Economic and Legal Committees

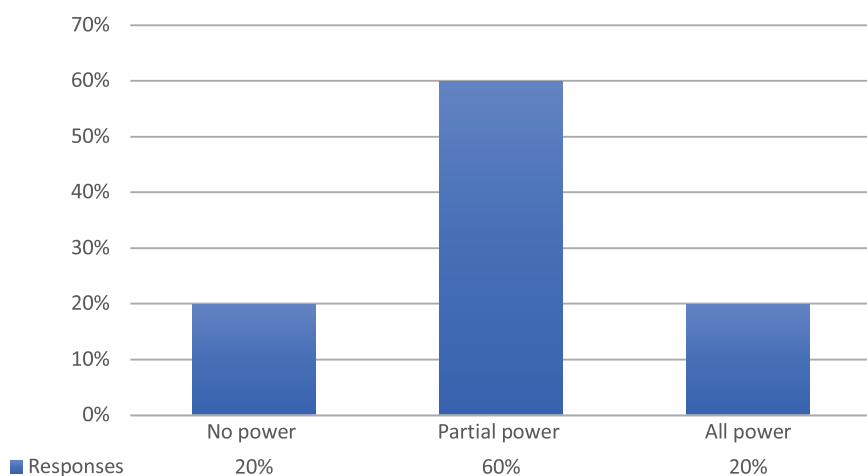
40 Injaz, Mada, ILO, NCLW, Kafa and others

and responsibilities. In fact, the Head of Climate Change Unit at the MoE<sup>41</sup> stated: “women take care of the children and home, and the man works. This is how the society is oriented. Even if the woman is getting more involved in the work than the man, her role is now acknowledged but remains secondary to her house role.”

However, social norms, gender roles distribution, tradition, and people’s perception of women economic engagement are changing, even if at a low pace. The current economic crisis is pushing more men, women, and society in general to embrace changes. An ILO representative<sup>42</sup> stated that such changes are taking place but vary according to the different regions. For example, in Nabatieh, South Lebanon, women cooperative members drive a van to Beirut to participate in exhibitions and return home late. Nevertheless, women and the society at large still rely on men in the family to provide income and meet financial needs, as indicated by a board member of Namlieh,<sup>43</sup> a marketing cooperative formed in 2012 by nine mainly women-run cooperatives.

This is further evident in the surveys, where participants representing women-supporting organizations indicated that women's decision-making with regards to the family income is limited, even including the one the woman might earn herself, as shown in the below graph:

Figure 9: Woman’s control over her own income



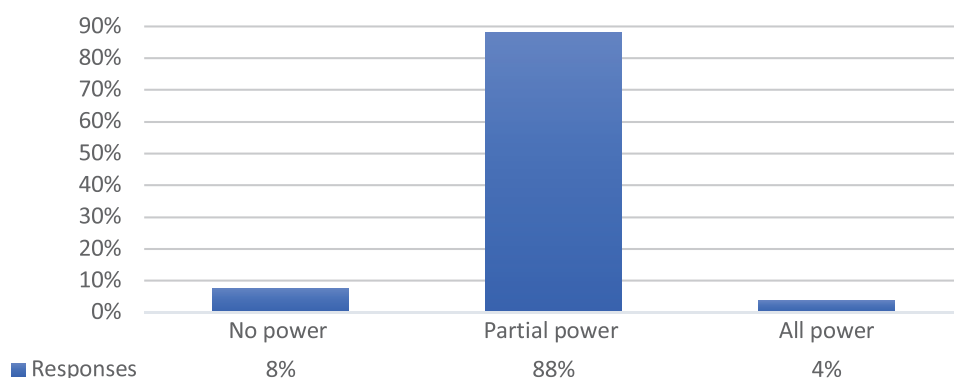
Women have very limited power to decide over the use of family income, even if she is contributing through her work: 48.9% of participants think that part of the general household income is controlled by the woman’s decision, and 26.7% think that only a portion of her own income is under her control, while the rest contributes to the overall family income controlled by the man.

Additionally, 8.9% of the 31 participants stated that women do not have power to allocate their

41 Mrs Lea Kai, MoE, Head of Climate Change Unit  
 42 Mrs Rania Hokayem, IIO, National TVET Programme Coordinator  
 43 Mrs. Nathalie Chemaly, Namlieh Board Member

own income expenditures compared to 2.2% stating they have all the power over household income. The level of education and the rural/urban context factors play the most drastic roles in the power over income, as was stated in survey responses as per the figure below.

Figure 10: Woman’s power to decide on household income expenditure



Although, in terms of income allocation, women’s access to benefits and revenues go directly to cover family needs. Also, there is a serious concern, as stated by a USAID program manager,<sup>44</sup>, regarding the current mentality where a woman’s income can be used as another way to exploit her if she has to hand it in to the men in the family.

Needless to say, people with special needs, vulnerable groups, such as GBV survivors, and refugees are more impacted by such barriers and even more marginalized economically. Also, women tend to work in traditional sectors, where opportunities are limited in terms of jobs and promotion.

## H. Women and Vulnerability

In Lebanon, women face several types of vulnerabilities: poverty, refugee status, violence and sexual harassment, and disablement. Vulnerable women face additional barriers to women’s economic participation.

Some of these challenges are also faced by men refugees and physically challenged men, but the findings reveal more discrimination against women falling under the same categories:

- Women Syrian Refugees:** Women Syrian refugees suffer from a combination of refugee status-based, gender-based, and socio-economic discrimination, which left them living in vulnerable conditions. The Lebanese government does not recognize Syrians as refugees, but considers them displaced persons, which deprives them of many key rights, including the right to work. As such, Syrian refugee women face more challenges in terms of market entry and promotion amid greater restrictions on employment opportunities. According to a circular issued by the Ministry of Labor in 2014, sectors open to Syrian refugees include only construction, agriculture, environment, and cleaning. Such severe conditions imposed on Syrian refugees oblige them to accept insecure and low-paying jobs, which also put them at risk of abuse and exploitation. Additionally, Syrian refugees are not covered by social security

44 Mr. Charbel Hanna, USAID, Program Manager and Technical Specialist, Agro-Business and Rural Development

laws and regulations. Although Syrian workers can be registered in CNSS, they are not entitled to any benefit or service. While 19% of refugee households are female-headed households, employed females represent only 7.6%, which thereby increases their vulnerability. Other vulnerabilities faced by Syrian refugee women include lack of legal papers, lack of mobility, risk of violence and sexual harassment, and the perceived feeling of insecurity.

- **Women Survivors of Violence:** In Lebanon, most women still live under a patriarchal system and suffer from multiple forms of violence. Although a much-anticipated law that protects women from domestic violence law was ratified by the Lebanese parliament in 2014, the economic obstacles faced by abused women prevent them from relying on Law 293. According to a policy brief by the Issam Fares Institute, an independent, research-based, policy oriented institute at the American University of Beirut: “filing a case against an abusive/violent husband would require economic empowerment that is absent among most abused women. Most of them lack an alternative economic resource other than their husbands or outside the marital house.<sup>45</sup> In such cases, women do not prefer a legal solution, since them and their children are economically dependent on the husband”. On the other hand, women who are able to earn an income often have more options to claim their legal rights. Therefore, women’s economic empowerment and independence through income generation can lead to decreasing cases of vulnerability and violence.

Regarding penalties for abuse, Lebanon adopted law 164: Punishment for the Crime of Trafficking Persons (including sexual exploitation and prostitution). The establishment of a trust fund for victims by MoSA is not yet secured. More coordination among different stakeholders is also needed. However, there is yet to be a sexual harassment law to protect women, be it in the workplace or outside. The absence of a sexual harassment law and the overall lack of policies and regulations on safeguarding at the workplace puts women at a higher risk, not only in terms of being subjected to violence, but also regarding the lack of power or tools to fight against it and report such harassment. In an article published in Executive Magazine in 2019, women subjected to verbal or sexual harassment in the workplace find it difficult to gather courage to speak and if they do, more often than not, they are unable to fight a lawsuit against the perpetrator. As such, they either resign or relocate to another division without reporting the real reason for the change.<sup>46</sup>

- **Physically Disabled Women:** People with disabilities are perceived as being incapable of working or as burdens who are unskilled and unfit for work. Women with disabilities are more marginalized because of the perception that they are incapable of protecting themselves. Families and parents usually react by either being overprotective or further isolating to the point of neglect, and the result is the same in terms of isolation.

In addition, the unfriendly environment in terms of accessibility and the social perception of people with disabilities worsen the situation. Infrastructures such as roads, sidewalks, public transportation, buildings, toilets, among others, are not well designed and executed to be inclusive

---

45 DISSECTING LEBANESE LAW 293 ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: ARE WOMEN PROTECTED? Fatima Moussawi and Nasser Yassin, AUB Policy Institute, 2017

46 Nammour K., Fighting Harassment at Work in Lebanon: End the Legal Vacuum, Executive Magazine, April 2019. Mrs. Sylvana Lakkis, General Director, Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union

for disabled people. A study was presented to the Ministry of Transportation to be included in the transportation strategy of the ministry; hopes are high for the upcoming bus project. In the Lebanese law, a quota of 3% of people with physical disabilities must be employed in each company. Still, the greater gap is in the public sector; according to the civil service council, 269 of people with physical disabilities are working in the public sector out of 17,044 employees. All disabled people employed in the public sector are from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> category of employees with no chances for promotion. In addition, men with disabilities get promoted more than women. According to the World Bank census, 15% of the Lebanese population suffers from disabilities, but there are only 107,000 cards for people with physical disabilities. Also, in terms of law, there is remuneration for people if they lose their job due to their disability, or if the office of employment couldn't find them another job. This was never applied, but the Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union revived this law with the State Consultative Council. Also, it has been noted that women with physical disabilities are subject to sexual harassment more than other women.

## 4.1.2 OVERALL OPPORTUNITIES

Despite the substantial challenges highlighted above, initiatives and efforts across the country have presented an opportunity for women and men to redefine traditional roles and question existing power relations, especially in terms of women's economic participation and leadership.

### A. Increasing Interest in Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment

Gender equality, and particularly women's economic empowerment, have been pushed to the forefront within the agenda of state governance actors, donors, and civil society organizations. Most recently, this interest has been manifested through joint efforts by the World Bank, International Finance Cooperation, Government of Canada and Norway to support the efforts of the governments of Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan towards enhancing women's economic participation, through the establishment of the World Bank's Mashreq Regional Gender Facility. In the Mashreq conference for Women Economic Empowerment in January 2019, former Prime Minister Saad Hariri stated: "Lebanon's commitment to a national action program aims to empower Lebanese women economically and increase women's participation in the labour market by at least 5% in the next five years." Additionally, the Government of Lebanon committed to improving the legal framework by: amending and issuing laws that impact women's economic participation in public and private sectors; mainstreaming gender in policies and budgets; closing the gender data gap; increasing female employment and retention in the private sector; facilitating women's access to entrepreneurship space; and implementing a comprehensive advocacy campaign to address the issue of gender stereotyping.

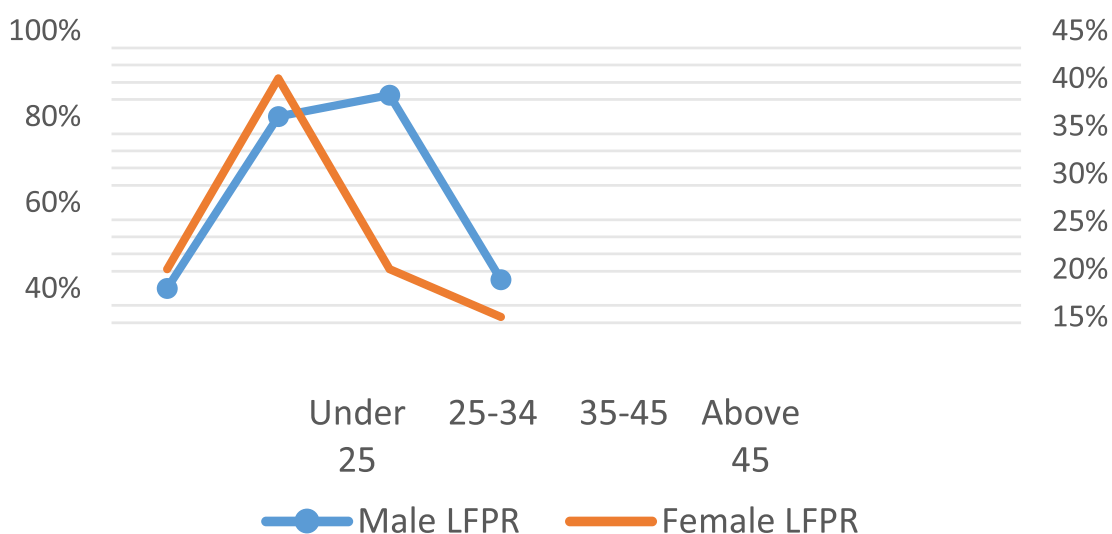
*In the Masreq Conference, the Government of Lebanon has committed to increase the Female Labour Force Participation Rate by 5 percentage points in the next 5 years, and to improve the legal framework by amending and issuing laws that impact women's economic participation in public and private sectors.*

The expectation as an outcome of various joint efforts is for the percentage of women economic participation to increase from 22% to 27% in the coming five years. The numbers may not seem

substantial but the process towards achieving such an increase is extremely important as it can promote a shift in the social perception of women’s role, responsibilities, and abilities if conducted in a comprehensive way.

While still extremely low compared to international levels, female labour force participation in Lebanon is increasing, especially for women aged 20 to 34-years-old,<sup>47</sup> as shown in the graph below.

Figure 11: Female Labour Force Participation in Lebanon-2010



Source: World Bank 2010. Employer Survey

This trend is directly linked to substantial progress with regards to gender equality in education which, in turn, is likely to improve female labour force participation. The profile of the labour market is that of an educated workforce: one fifth of Lebanese men have a university degree. The corresponding figure for women is even higher, with 40% of working women holding a university degree.<sup>48</sup>

## B. Political and Systemic Commitments to Reforms

For the first time in Lebanon, the ministerial policy statement of the newly formed ministerial cabinet represented a strategic plan with specific goals and measures towards women economic empowerment. It stated that the government is committed to fast and effective implementation of an economic, reformist, investment and service-based, and social program which relies on the basic foundations of the Lebanese government’s vision for women economic empowerment presented at the CEDRE conference, and on the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). CEDRE. Under the title of Sectoral Reforms, and in regards to an economic strategy, the ministerial speech focused mainly on productive sectors: cabinet will adopt a strategy to diversify the production and services sectors in order to expand resources for growth through specific initiatives in the sectors

47 The gender diagnostic “Understanding Women’s Constraints and Barriers to Jobs in Lebanon”, World bank, 2017

48 Towards Decent Work in Lebanon: Issues and Challenges in Light of the Syrian Refugee Crisis - ILO

of agriculture, industry, as well as environmental, religious, and medical tourism, financial services, and knowledge economies. As such, the choice for the selected value chains for this study is aligned with the government's economic strategy.

The prioritization of productive sectors and increasing exports and quality of Lebanese products per sector will have a significant positive impact on the value chains growth. This will also address the main bottleneck across all value chains, which is marketing and access to new markets.

The commitment to reforms regarding health care, social security, and education to ensure both quality and coverage will have a direct impact on improving access for citizens in general, and women in particular, to services and resources. This will support women with their economic responsibilities, and improve the condition of women's daily lives with the needed sense of security.

The government also committed to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by integrating them within the national plans and programs, as well as adopting an approach linked to the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of the SDG 2030 plan. This promising move represents an opportunity to work with governmental institutions and ministries with a clear roadmap to refer to, at least. Additionally, the development of different economic sectors and the adoption of the SDG plan pave the way to gender economic equality.

The mission statement for the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2017 stated: "Gender equality is one of the highest priorities of this government, as set out in the ministerial statement on December 28, 2016, which was passed with a vote of confidence in parliament. The key purpose of this strategy is to eliminate inequalities and promote gender equality between women and men in Lebanon".<sup>49</sup>

The strategy, published in 2017, is aimed at creating changes in the political, economic, legal, social, cultural, and health spheres. It includes 14 specific economic objectives addressing different aspects related to women's access, work terms and conditions, equal access to employment, protection from exploitation and abuse, equal pay, fighting gender-based work discrimination, and equal opportunities for promotion. They also tackle promoting equal parenting roles, expanding and promoting women's entrepreneurship, and facilitating equal access to resources.

### C. Shift in Perceptions of Women's Roles and Capacities

In recent years, there have been many improvements in shifting the public opinion towards women's roles. The recent examples of increased representation of women in high political positions and in ministries have contributed to improving the communities' perceptions and attitudes towards women's roles and capabilities, as stated by the Funding Division Director of the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR).<sup>50</sup> This has also slowly influenced others to challenge the social barriers and gender stereotypes as confirmed by informants. Women's recent progression in political participation has additionally enabled women to increase their self-confidence and aspirations for higher levels of control and leadership positions within the economic sectors.

Gender mainstreaming in public institutions and ministries and the application of gender-sensitive monitoring of new projects (ILO and USAID, for example) will further facilitate the introduction to corrective actions at the policy level to secure better success in terms of women empowerment,

49 Office of Ministry of State for Women Affairs National Strategy for Gender equality 2017-2030

50 Mrs. Wafaa Charafeddine, CDR, Funding Division Director

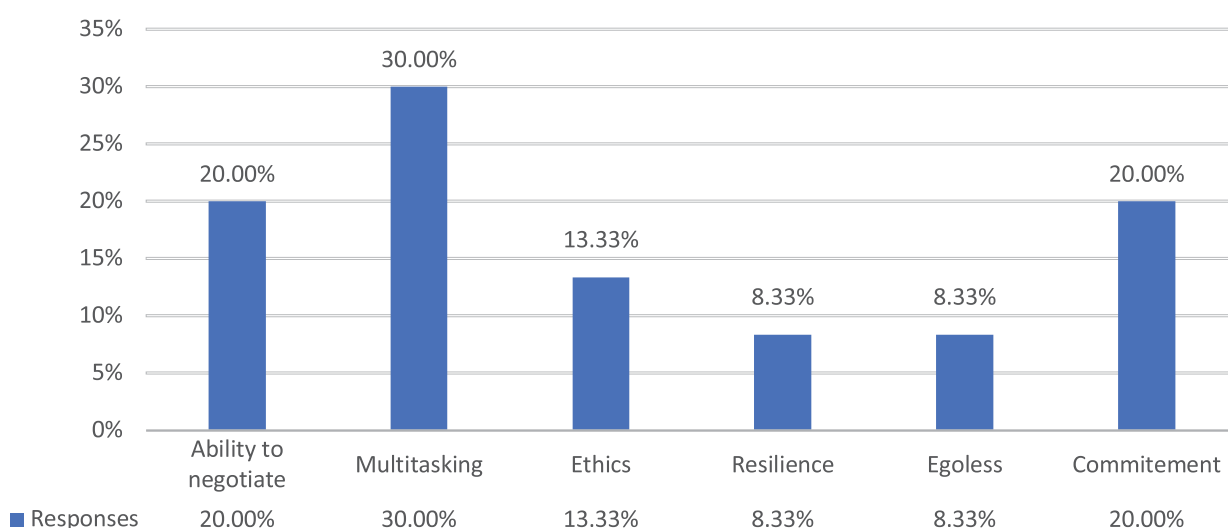


development, and economic projects.

The social and business perception of women in leadership positions as being less corrupted and less politically biased, in addition to the high educational levels of young women, can be used to women's advantage in encouraging them to apply for jobs at managerial levels and other types of jobs they feel qualified for. This is further confirmed through the surveys where 30% of participants stated that women are culturally perceived to have strong abilities for multitasking and negotiating, and are known to be more committed, as displayed in the figure below.

*Key informants during fieldwork reported improvement in communities' perceptions and attitudes towards women's roles in capabilities.*

Figure 12: General personal characteristics specific to women which give them an added value in economic roles



#### D. Women's Success in Loan Repayment and Leading Businesses

The high return rates of loans by women and the percentage of success in women-led businesses are also encouraging factors to build upon and are promising in terms of women's better access to resources and control over benefits.

Failure rates in return on bank loans for women is significantly less than men, at least 50% less, as stated by Banque Libanaise pour le Commerce (BLC)<sup>51</sup> and KAFALAT deputy general manager.<sup>52</sup> In the experience of BLC, men take out loans with amounts four times higher than women, but the ratio of non-performing is 12% for men against 5% for non-performing women.

The new ways of doing business, whether related to the type of proposed structures (micro and SMEs, cooperatives, social enterprises...), or means of working from home, or seizing new opportunities in outsourcing services (delivering or making use of them), or interconnectivity and technological

51 Mrs. Carine Fersan, BLC bank, Head of Brand Management

52 Ms. Yolla Saireddine, Kafalat, Deputy General Manager

advancement are all positive factors facilitating women economic empowerment.

The structures of businesses present different opportunities for women. For example, the lack of some women's access to social coverage can be overcome by becoming members of cooperatives and benefiting from the Mutual Fund, supported by the Directorate of Cooperatives at the Ministry of Agriculture. Another opportunity could be through setting up social enterprises - as inclusive business models, which can alleviate social barriers and needs for high investment - by addressing key issues within communities and solving them while engaging in income-generating opportunities.

## 4.2 ANALYSIS AT THE VALUE CHAIN LEVEL

While the previous section presented overall barriers and opportunities affecting women's economic participation at the country level, this section provides an analysis of main barriers and opportunities for women's integration, participation, and progression at the value chain level.

It begins with an overview of the selected value chains, highlighting the current status and role of women in these value chains, and lists the main barriers women face and the opportunities available that can be exploited in order to overcome barriers and improve livelihoods.

It is important to mention that while the discussed challenges influence both men and women across the value chains, the impact of these challenges on women is higher given their statuses and the different factors influencing their positions and participation in the value chains.

### 4.2.1 AGRICULTURE VALUE CHAINS

The selected agricultural value chains account for 25% of the overall value chains considered, and include fruits and vegetables, Freekeh, and small ruminants.

#### 1) *Fruits and Vegetables*

The total agriculture land area in Lebanon is estimated at 332,000 hectares (ha), based on the 2010 census, of which 231,000 ha are cultivated with an average land holding size of 1.36 ha. The exploitation of these lands varies between basic food secured crops, such as cereals, and higher added value crops such as fruits and vegetables. This variety grants Lebanon a comparative advantage over its neighboring countries.

Vegetables constitute 48% of total Lebanese Agricultural production with potatoes and tomatoes among the main vegetable crops produced, while fruits account for 26% of total production, namely apples, oranges, bananas, and grapes. Within the fruit production sector, apples constitute the highest share, 23% of total fruit production, followed by bananas (17%), citrus fruits (17%), and grapes (14%).

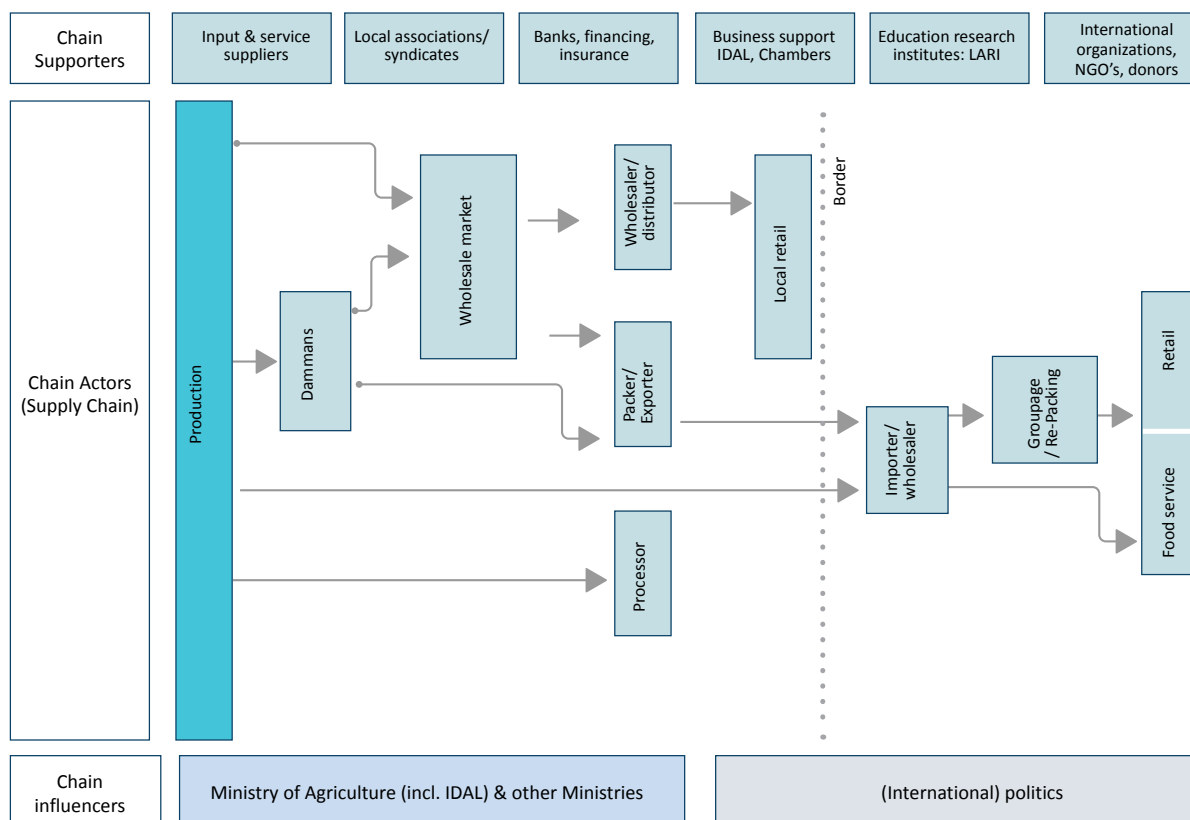
In terms of trade, the total Lebanese exports of fruit and vegetables, according to Trade Map (trade statistics for international business development), amounted to €107 million in 2014,<sup>4</sup> with an average increase of about 9% per year since 2011. Fruit exports account for about 58%, while vegetables represent the remaining 42%. On the other hand, Lebanon is a net importer, importing 80% of its food demand, with agricultural and food imports occupying the highest share of the total imports with a value almost three times that of exported products.<sup>53</sup>

---

53 Agro Industry Fact Book, Sectors in Focus, Investment and Development authority of Lebanon, [www.idal.gov.lb](http://www.idal.gov.lb)

For all the different fruits and vegetables value chains, the actors are more or less the same, including input suppliers, producers, distributors, wholesale market actors, packers or exporters, and local retailers, as per the figure below.

Figure 13: Value Chain Map for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables ( CBI, 2016)



The farmers or producers grow the products and sell them either through middlemen (damman), or to exporters, or directly to wholesale markets. The middlemen usually either buy the product directly from the farmers or act as contractors who guarantee the whole purchase of the products at an agreed upon price, and in turn, sell produce to wholesale markets or exporters. In fact, when it comes to power and roles, the exporters and retailers usually have greater roles and more power in terms of fetching the largest share of the profits, leaving farmers with weak negotiation powers and low returns. Processors, both factories or processing cooperatives, play important roles in purchasing products that are not suitable for export and adding value through processing, although the tendency has usually been to purchase from wholesale markets rather than from farmers themselves.

When it comes to gender presence and roles, a study published in 2015 indicates that women participation accounts for about 35% of the total agricultural; labour force, mainly an informal role as part of the family-related labour.<sup>54</sup> Women have good presence and participation in different fruits and vegetables value chains, taking on roles in planting, harvesting, packing, as well as processing (which is the base of agriculture value chains) , though at varying levels. In the mid-term evaluation conducted for the USAID-LIVCD project, the findings indicated that the field of processed foods was the most gender balanced in terms of women participation,

54 Information International, Women of Lebanon in Statistics, Beirut, 2015: [https://monthlymagazine.com/article-desc\\_1722\\_](https://monthlymagazine.com/article-desc_1722_)

with 49.6% women beneficiaries, followed by the field of rural tourism, with 44%.<sup>55</sup> Women are active participants in olive oil, rural basket, and honey production, but low participation was recorded for some fruits, grapes, avocados, and other stone fruits. Interviews with different stakeholders indicated that women, whether Lebanese (as part of family labour) or Syrian refugees, are heavily involved in cultivation related activities such as pruning, weeding, planting, as well as post-harvest tasks such as sorting, handling, and packaging. Men are involved in ploughing, spraying, pruning, harvesting, and transporting goods in truck to packing houses or wholesale markets, as well as sales and marketing. Women are also highly involved in processing and adding value to the fresh products by processing into jams, sun-dried foods, molasses, syrups, or other products.

When it comes to marketing fresh fruits and vegetable products, women's roles are marginal, if not absent. It is usually the middlemen or traders who negotiate, sell the produce, and negotiate the final price. Women often sell their produce through such traders as well, since it is seen as a "man's tasks."<sup>56</sup> There are some exceptions, however, with regards to processed foods produced by women cooperatives and women-owned businesses, whereby they sell directly to consumers through fairs and farmers' markets, or to middlemen who sell to specialty shops or other retailers. According to farmers interviewed, women, are perceived to have weak negotiation powers and often fail to incorporate their own work into the overall selling price, thus making profit margins lower than expected. For Syrian women refugees, while their roles vary along the value chain, they are rarely seen working in marketing since they are not allowed to be part of a cooperative or own their own businesses, which further marginalizes their roles.

## 2) *Freekeh*

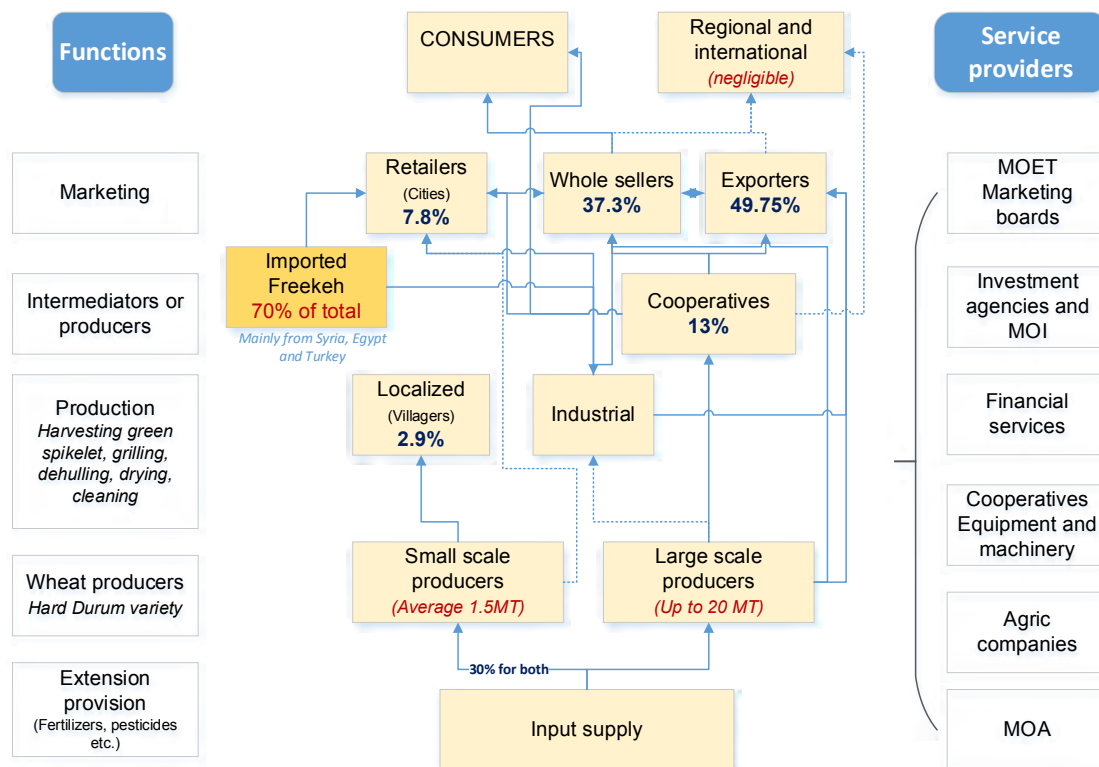
Freekeh production and marketing is, to some extent, concentrated mainly in the Southern region of Lebanon. It is mostly produced by farmers but also engages other sectors and women cooperatives. The average production for farmers ranges between 0.5 - 1.5 metric tons (Mt), whereas production for cooperatives ranges between 0.5 – 10 Mt. About 31%, equal to about 100 Mt, is produced locally by individual farmers and/or organizations such as agro-food cooperatives dominated by housewife women. The estimated production of an individual does not exceed 25 Mt tons on annual basis. The following graph provides an overview of the Freekeh Value Chain in terms of activities and service providers.

---

55 Social Impact, Resource Guide for Gender Integration in Value Chain Development in Lebanon, USAID, Lebanon, August 2016.

56 ICU, Freekeh Value Chain Assessment and Mapping, United Nations Development Program, UNDP, Lebanon, 2018.

Figure 14: Freekeh Value chain (Source: ICU 2018)



In terms of processing, women are heavily engaged in Freekeh processing activities, mainly in roasting, threshing, drying, and cooling of the Freekeh. Such operations are usually carried out within cooperative processes but manually. Freekeh production and processing is labour intensive but, at the same time, results in limited production which often results in compromised quality due to a lack of mechanization, or due to microbiological and physical contaminants.

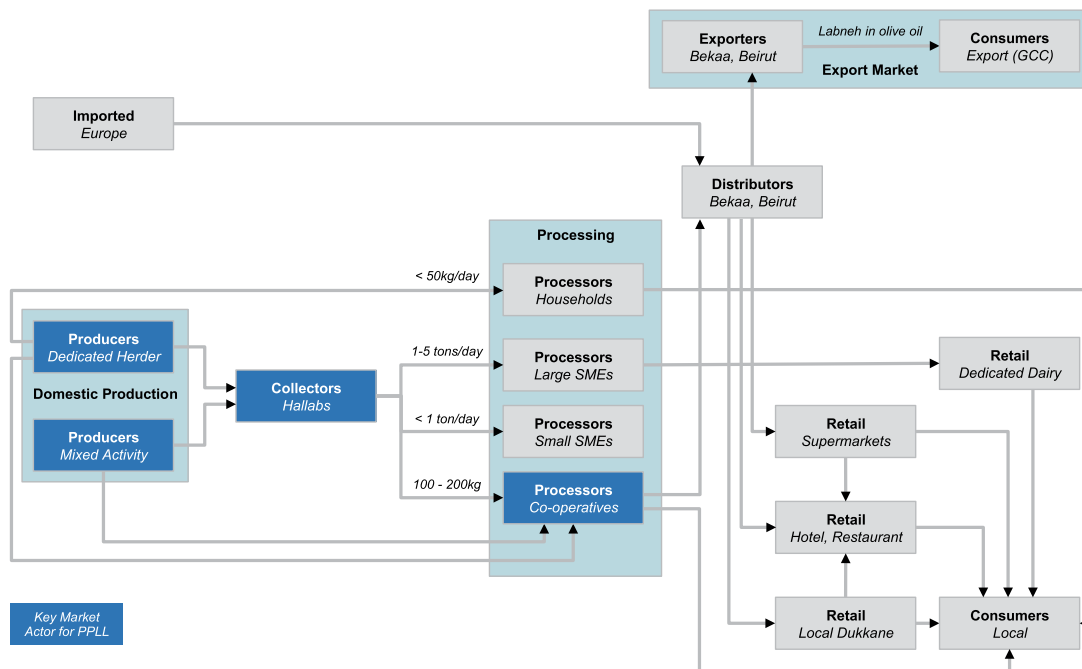
In terms of marketing, the total volume of Freekeh available in the market is about 300 Mt, with around 67% imported, namely from Syria, Egypt, and Turkey. Most of the Freekeh is sold and controlled by exporters and wholesalers, which accounts for about 97% of the market and only 3% is sold within same village. According to the mapping done by ICU, the marketing system for Freekeh in Lebanon is not well defined and channels are hidden away from small producers. However, the same study indicates an increased demand for Freekeh, given its nutritious benefits, its traditional presence in the Levantine cuisine, and profitability in terms of returns on investment. The demand is much more than supply and, which means there is room for increasing production but with higher quality so as to improve competitiveness in the local market vis-à-vis local competitors.

### 3) Small Ruminants

The small ruminant dairy production sector is an important constituent of the agriculture sector in Lebanon and a main livelihood source for vulnerable communities in rural areas. Small ruminant herding is mostly concentrated in the Beqaa region around Hermel, West Beqaa, and Zahle. West Beqaa has the largest number of sheep and goat among the three regions based on the 2010 Agriculture Census with 88,930 ruminants, followed by Zahle with 69,675 ruminants. The war in neighboring Syria has led security risks in the region which has significantly impacted this sector in terms of reduced access to grazing land, increased smuggling of goods across the border, and increased production costs.

The main actors in the value chain are the herders, collectors, small and large processors, and local retailers, as seen in the figure below that provides a map of value chain activities and actors in the small ruminant sector.

Figure 15: Small ruminant value chain (Source: Mercy Corps, 2014)



The producers are the herders who work during the milking season from March to August (but can extend to October) for goats, and from March until late June for sheep. Among those producers, 7,771 own small ruminants (sheep and goat) whereby large scale herders (130-170 animals/herd) are located in the West Beqaa, and small scale herders (60 /herd) are mostly in Baalbeck.<sup>57</sup> Grazing is the most common form of feeding, at 90%, while 10% involves semi-intensive feeding in farms. However, land available for grazing is becoming limited due to climate change and overgrazing which resulted in land degradation, so herders have to complement this change by purchasing feed which further increases their cost of production. This limited access resulted in a 30% decline in milk production due to poor nutrition of the sheep and goat and vulnerability to diseases.

Herders lack expertise when it comes to herd management and nutrition, and usually use the same feed mix, which is often inadequate and doesn't provide the maximum yield per animal. They also are unaware of the quality standards of feed and in trying to minimize costs, herders reduce the quality of animal nutrition, which is directly correlated to lower milk quality and volume. The majority of producers are active in all parts of the value chain as they produce, process, and sell. Women do not participate in herding as it is mostly viewed as the man's responsibility to feed the animals, since it requires mobility and flexibility in timing both of which are not easy to control for women.

57 Mercy Corps, Small Ruminant Dairy Value Chain Assessment, Protect and Provide Livelihoods in Lebanon, Beirut, June 2014.

The collectors, also known as *hallabs*, are the link between the producer and the processor and range from an individual with a truck of six-ton capacity, to a collector in charge of a whole fleet. Some women are involved, especially in Northern Beqaa, in the milking of the sheep and goat whereby the husbands transfer the milk directly to the *hallabs* who, in turn, sell them to processors. Some women cooperatives focus on the collection process as well and sell directly to retailers. The processors are usually large and small SMEs, cooperatives, or households. The large SMEs capture about 75% of the dairy milk supply market and the production of processed products can range from 1-5 tons of milk per day. However, most of the small ruminant sector produced milk is processed through the semi-artisanal small scale processing sector, cooperatives, and households. There is considerable involvement of women, through cooperatives, at the processing level, either within the cooperative premises or in-house, but mostly the latter is unhygienic and the product is of poor quality.

The retailers are the producers, supermarkets, grocery stores, hotels, and restaurants. Ruminant dairy products are sold in large supermarkets but the major outlets for the products are the many small grocery stores scattered all over Lebanon.

The dairy market is diverse and consumer-demanding in terms of taste, quality, and price. The upper niche is filled with imports from Europe, namely France. So, there are many opportunities for satisfying market demand and developing new products. There is great potential for household products, such as *Ambriss Labneh*, a traditional product from the rural population of North and East Beqaa, and people generally back to favouring artisanal products. But currently, poor hygiene does not help increase the shelf life of such products and thus remains limited in terms of market access.

Access to new markets is a main challenge for processing cooperatives. In an interview with Ain Areesh Processing cooperative, Mrs. Gharib pointed out that only 25% of production is sold, mainly under a private label for Atayeb Rif or Fairtrade, and 10% are sold to individuals. While they have the capacity to produce, they need access to markets, diversified markets for these traditional products in the first phase, and new techniques to engage in new product development to match the demand and increase access to new markets, such as wine leaves stuffed with goat labneh, or labneh stuffed with jam. There is currently one project implemented by UNIDO targeting dairy producers in an aim to support the development of new products, but these are made from cow's milk rather than sheep or goat milk. Similar paths can be undertaken for sheep and goat, provided that demand is identified for such markets.

It is important to mention that the small ruminant sector involves roles for both Syrian and Lebanese women within value chain. There is higher potential for upgrading the roles of women and women assuming leadership roles through cooperatives, especially since international organizations have provided initial support to the sector; there is more of an interest, on behalf of national and international organizations, to further develop sector-linkages with other sectors such as rural tourism, forest management, and sustainable land management. Currently, grazing for small ruminants is done either on public land, such as forests with grazing permits provided by the MoA, in collaboration with municipality, and on private lands through agreements with farmers. In fact, interviews with two small ruminant farmers indicated that municipalities lease land for grazing in the summer, with a cost varying between 9 million Lebanese pounds and 19 million Lebanese pounds per herd of 400 heads, depending on the region and the quality of the land. Moreover, for private lands, access to grazing is facilitated via a gentlemen's agreement with the landowner who allows animals to graze the land after harvest. In both cases, this is a

win-win situation, as grazing (when guided and organized) helps reduce risks of forest fires and preserves the biodiversity of the forest. For private lands, goats help in weeding and in grazing and fertilizing the land, thus improving its quality.

Whether it's fresh fruits and vegetables, or Freekeh, or small ruminants, the challenges hindering further growth of these value chains are more or less the same, starting with limited access to markets, low integration of technology that can help improve productivity and efficiency in further processing, limited management and business capacities resulting in low growth, and finally, limited technical and financial support that could potentially help further develop these value chains. Additionally, the main barriers facing women's economic empowerment are:

**Limited Access of Women to Markets and Technology:** Women in different agriculture value chains are highly involved at the production and processing levels, with very marginal roles in marketing through the women cooperatives. They have limited access to technology mainly because they carry out activities as dictated by superiors, such as planting or harvesting manually, in a traditional way, without the use of technology. Any equipment introduced to the farms, such as mechanical harvesters for Freekeh or tractors, are managed by male workers, either due to the perception that women don't have the skills to operate the equipment, or that new uncommon machines are too difficult to operate. When it comes to markets, the situation isn't any different, particularly regarding fresh fruits and vegetables, as wholesale markets are the main outlets for such commodities and male dominance in such markets is significant, rendering females at the weak end of the bargain. For women involved in processing, they are in a better position in terms of direct access to markets, but their weak marketing and negotiation skills weaken their position, and they often end up with limited access to markets.

**Limited Support for Business Management in Rural Areas:** The Chambers of Commerce in the different regions outside the capital provide different business development services, within the framework of sporadic projects, such as trainings and market information for some sectors. However, the services are not offered on a permanent basis nor accessible to all people, given their coverage and reach. Additionally, women intending to start their own businesses in the areas cannot access any of the required business management since no rural incubators can serve the communities and encourage women to establish businesses with access to finances based on sound business models.

**High Cost of Energy and Land:** Inheritance law is particularly influential in the agriculture sector, where women usually do not have access to land. With the current boom in real estate expansions at the expense of agriculture, land became less available and more costly to rent, on top of the high cost of energy. This is particularly challenging for women engaged in processing activities, whether fruits or milk, as they need to ensure consistent supply to manufacture their products; so, high costs of energy and land adds to their expenses, influences their market access, and limits their existing market opportunities.

**Mobility and Availability for Small Ruminant Milking and Processing:** Women working in the small ruminant value chains are mostly involved in milking the animals as well as processing the milk into cheeses and yogurt. Milking has to be done early in morning, at the same time when women send their children off to school; this is challenging in terms of availability, and commuting to where the animals are kept also takes up time and affects women's mobility.

In addition, a common feature of the small ruminant and agricultural value chains is that women have limited knowledge of the safety and quality standards regarding the different products, which



affects market access and linkages with potential buyers who require assurance of quality before attempting to purchase. The processing methods are still traditional, artisanal, and do not always respond to the market demand.

However, there are window opportunities for women economic empowerment in the above-mentioned value chains. The agricultural sector has traditionally integrated women in different sub-sectors acquiring different roles, and some success stories enticed other women to join. This type of approach provides a favourable environment for women as they see role models that make it happen and are encouraged to follow the same path. In general, the agricultural environment has become more enabling, with improved access to export markets, availability of testing facilities to ensure quality, compliance with international standards, and potential for integrating technology to increase productivity in the sector. This positively impacts access of women to resources, namely knowledge and technology, to improve their position and help them explore new opportunities by adding value to their agricultural products.



## Georgette Kafrouni- Beino, Akkar

### Dairy Product Enterprise- Mazraet El Dayaa

After living in Beirut with my family, we moved to the village in 2006. My father-in-law owned two cows. My husband and I decided to learn how to work in the farm. We bought eight more cows and began with a total of 10 cows. It took us two years to make a product we can sell, but the price of milk was very low, especially in Akkar where demand was less than supply. The advantage of cows is their continuous milk production, unlike goats and sheep.

So, I began learning from the elderly ladies of my village how to produce Chanklish! I also began with yoghurt and labneh production. We also bought a small ordinary van. My parents didn't approve of this work but my husband supported me.

Every evening, to avoid the heat, we went to Beirut, my husband and I, to sell the products to our previous neighbors, and to a nearby supermarket where we used to live. Marketing was the difficult part, because there was fierce competition from lower quality products. I still believed people would take the time to tell the difference and to opt for the better quality product, even if it's more expensive.

I couldn't take a bank loan because of the collaterals, and I was afraid I wouldn't live up to it...

Instead, at the beginning of my current career, I opened a small bakery to provide for my family and to cover the expenses of my new business.

After 12 years, we were visited by a FAO project manager; he was impressed by the organization and by the cleanness of our small farm. He offered me to join a workshop in the Beqaa for 15 days.

I went and because of my experience I had an edge over the other trainees. I was then given a grant to buy a machine that boils the milk professionally, and a van with a cooling system. Now, I can produce up to two tons of milk. My products are mainly sold in Beirut, and to visitors coming to Beino.

My determination, faith, and the support of my husband were key for my success. I'm now teaching my children the work so they can take over later on in life.

I dream of processing all the milk of the region, and reaching 30 tons per day, if I can buy land and build a big factory!

The above mentioned opportunities provide an enabling environment for women economic empowerment, but the first step is really breaking stereotypes and cultural and social barriers. Only this will pave the way for more women integration in sectors where they have shy participation and will help them take on new non-traditional roles in sectors where they had good participation but marginal access and control over resources.



## Breaking Stereotypes

For agriculture, breaking stereotypes entails women taking on new roles that are more at the higher end of the value chain, such as managing cold storage facilities, or maintaining outlets or access within wholesale markets, as well as engaging in more marketing and trade for export. This could be a starting point for more women economic empowerment through increased access and control, along with the adequate technical and business support required for these women to succeed.

### 4) Honey

Beekeeping is a valued activity in Lebanon that is practiced by part-time farmers and non-farmers (amateurs), accounting for a significant secondary source of income for beekeepers. According to the Ministry of Agriculture's census, there are around 6,200 Lebanese, mostly part-time, beekeepers producing approximately 1,620 tons of honey in 2013, amounting to a value of \$32 million, of which 55% comes from the value of forest and shrub land honey.<sup>58</sup>

There are two main types of honey in Lebanon: the forest and shrub honey, and the Orange Blossom or spring honey. The latter accounts for one third of the total honey production in Lebanon. The production of both types of honey is still not close to reaching the country's potential; international organizations such as UNDP and the LIVCD-USAID project on value chain development (including honey) are working to help increase production, improve the quality of honey, and diversify the honey product range.

The Ministry of Agriculture is the main governing body for honey production, but according to experts, there is no clear vision for how the ministry aims to develop and grow the sector further. There is a higher technical committee for beekeeping and regulating the use of pesticides, encouraging the use of ones with minimum adverse effects on bees and pollination, but the committee is not effective anymore. There are, however, good testing facilities and laboratories for testing the quality of honey and ensuring compliance with standards, such as the Lebanese Agriculture Research Institute (LARI) and Industrial Research Institute (IRI).

Overall, there's been an increase in demand for honey in the local market, according to the stakeholders interviewed, but the current supply cannot meet the demand due to reduced size of the green areas necessary for production and the misuse of pesticides by farmers working near beehives, which thereby affects pollination and has a harmful effects on the bees. Moreover, there is limited technical knowledge on honey production in Lebanon, due to the fact that its representatives are amateurs.

Women's participation in this sector is very low; according to LARI, there are only 20 women out of a sample of 2000 beekeepers, accounting for only 1%. Women are mostly involved in honey production on an individual basis mostly, but do not have a big role in marketing. Though honey production does not require high investment costs, women are not engaged enough, mainly due to the mobility required in terms of transferring beehives from one region to another, sometimes at night, thus being perceived as a process that requires the support of husbands or family members.

<sup>58</sup> Hamade K., Non-Wood Forest Value Chains in Lebanon, Food and Agriculture Organization, Lebanon, 2016.

The honey is mostly sold door-to-door or directly to the consumer, since most people prefers to buy directly from the beekeepers they trust. Given this trend, women are viewed as more trust-worthy, and this could be a additional selling point to increase sales.

There is definite potential for increased production to meet local market as well as export demands as we, but this requires high quality production and certification processes to ensure good quality honey. UNDP is providing technical support in terms of building capacities of beekeepers on modern beekeeping techniques and principles to improve production volume and quality. Technology integration is required to help map plant densities and enable beekeepers to become aware of the plants in the region that can be used for bee pollination, or aware of the need to relocate when necessary. Stone fruit farmers can benefit from beekeepers (since increased pollination can increase production).

In terms of market diversification, opportunities exist for promoting Bee Tourism as one form of agri-tourism, as it has high potential for job creation and increased involvement of women in non-traditional roles.

Additional barriers that are specific to the honey value chain are:

**Reduced Access for Honey Production:** Green areas have diminished in size, having been taken over by urbanization, which results in reduced access to areas for pollination and honey production. Beekeepers have to relocate their beehives to different regions in search for more green areas. For women, this poses a challenge in terms of mobility, since they have to drive to transfer their beehives, often at night during summer, which also raises the risk factor and prompts them to seek support from their male fellows.

**Limited Technical Knowledge of Modern Beekeeping:** This is a challenge for both genders, but more for women in terms of participation and access, as the value chain has low participation of women. More efforts are required to engage more people in the sector, and sustain it with better access to resources, such as finances and technology. Beekeepers in Lebanon are predominantly amateurs and have limited knowledge when it comes to professional beekeeping and modernization of the honey production process. For women, the limited knowledge acts against further engagement and access to the technology that can modernize the production. For access, land is required, and this is, again, a challenge for women since loans are not common for this sector.

**Intense Competition:** There is no clear government strategy to regulate and promote the sector and there is little control in regulating the quality of honey. In the absence of such standards, competition is intense, and is more often based on price, which makes it more challenging given the limited consumer knowledge regarding the quality of honey. This poses a further challenge for women as they have to invest more time in marketing to gain an advantage and access market shares.

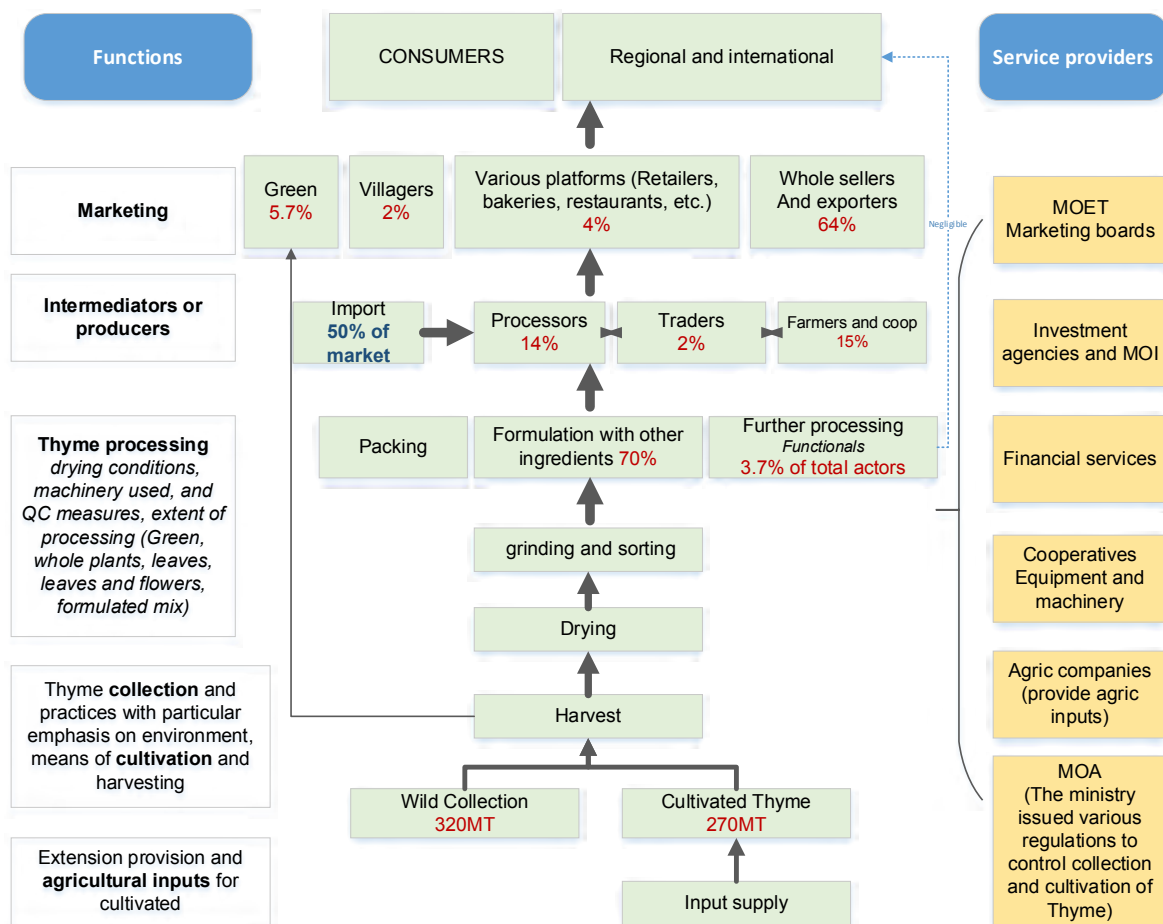
## 5) *Oregano*

The production of Oregano is mainly concentrated in South Lebanon (cultivation), North-Lebanon, particularly Akkar (Collection), and to a lesser extent, Mount-Lebanon. Whereas in the Beqaa, productivity of Zaatar is limited for both the cultivated kind (newly introduced in the region) and the collected (present in the wild).

The cultivated areas for Zaatar are mostly grown by small farmers and cooperatives, while women

are in charge of collecting and processing the wildly grown Zaatar. When it comes to farmers, over 60% are retired employees, whether from the public or private sector, and are more involved in production rather than in collection and harvesting. The cultivated lands range between 1000 – 5000 m<sup>2</sup>, and only 7% have holdings above 5000 m<sup>2</sup>. The figure below provides an overview of the value chain for oregano, including the main functions and the service providers.

Figure 16: Oregano Value Chain (Source: ICU, 2018).



Women, especially widows, both Lebanese and Syrian refugees, contribute with about 12% of the market share by relying mainly on the collection of wild Zaatar. However, the production and processing of Zaatar is still done in a traditional way, mostly manually, carried out by at least 43% of the women involved in Zaatar production.

In terms of volume, the annual production of Zaatar is estimated at 1000 tons of dry weight, where every 100 kg of fresh zaatar makes approximately 25 kg of dried zaatar sold in the market. The production of locally produced Zaatar covers only 50% of the market share and is produced by cooperatives and farmers that account for 30% of local production, while the rest is imported from Syria, Jordan, and Turkey.

It is considered in the industry to be a staple crop as the essential oil profile of cultivated Zaatar could be better stabilized over the years. The production process of Zaatar is still carried out manually in most of Zaatar producing regions (43%). Producers are still facing various technical problems along

the chain of production. Equipment is still modest except for the very few (9%) who own a full mechanized line.

Potential opportunities exist in upgrading the production process to increase the supply given the existing market demand and the ability to carry out import substitution, given that Lebanese Zaatar is favoured to the Syrian or Jordanian product. There is also potential for more women engagement, as many are already involved in the sector and can be further integrated, especially in terms of developing new product mixes and cultivating Zaatar to increase supply.

Other potential opportunities exist in Oregano essential oil extraction, as it has a high market demand and can be linked to the pharmaceutical and cosmetics industry. The current oil extraction processes are very limited and make use of only about 4% of total production. This line can be further developed through a thorough investigation of the Zaatar oil profile and its beneficial advantages in various fields of application.

Additional Barriers that are specific to the Oregano value chain include:

**Weak Motivation of Women to Engage in the Sector:** Women do not feel motivated to participate more in this sector, as they perceive that forest-related activities require physical strength, which they feel they do not have. Moreover, such activities require mobility which is a commonly perceived as a challenge for women in general, especially that they have to commute long distances to the forest and are often accompanied by guardians (in conservative communities) during planting or collecting. Mobility and physical strength requirement are main reasons that act against further participation of women in forest-related activities.

**Limited Access to Land:** Addressing the demand in the honey and oregano markets requires not only reliance on collection activities in forests but also cultivation for increased production volumes, as well as for planting varieties suitable for honey production, and allocating space for beehives and beekeeping. This means that investment in private lands for cultivation is needed, which is a challenge for women in rural areas along with accessing lands as assets or accessing finances for acquiring such lands.

**Basic Awareness on the Type of Activities to Engage in within the Forestry Sector:** This is the overarching challenge that is behind the low participation of women in the forest-related value chains. Women are not really aware of the activities they can perform that can generate income. They are under the impression that forest work is only related to reforestation, which is not income generating, or the collection of wild herbs, which is seasonal and doesn't provide a sustainable income. Thus, they look to other sectors that can generate a more stable income over the year. For the younger generation, they are also not aware of income-generating activities in forests so they divert their attention away. What they see currently are weak commercial activities in forests that do not generate income. The link between forests, essential oils, and honey is not clearly visible to the women and so they prefer to focus on other activities.

Looking at the bright side, there are some opportunities that, if built upon, can further grow these value chains and provide more space for women participation and leadership. Interests of the local authorities to further support and promote rural tourism and forestry provides more opportunities for women: this includes support in terms of mobility, such as securing transportation, or in terms of income-generating activities, such as licenses for the collection of wild herbs, or in connecting different regions to each other. For forestry, there is increased awareness on behalf of communities on the importance of forests and the potential they have, which thereby facilitates access of women

to forests for honey production or oregano collection, or even engagement in essential oil production.

Market wise, there is demand for non-wood products such as honey, oregano, and aromatic plants, which is the main opportunity presented to women.

## 6) *Essential Oils*



### **Breaking Stereotypes**

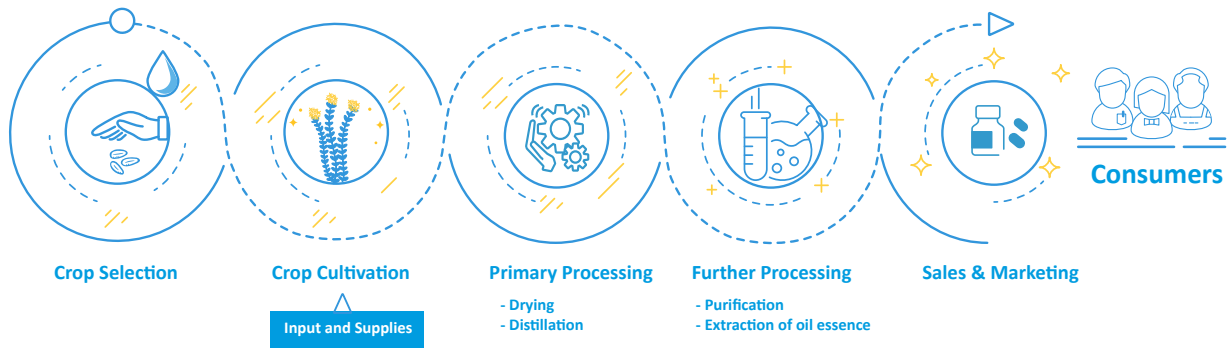
When it comes to promoting non-traditional roles for women, opportunities for further women integration in the honey value chain exist through linking honey to rural tourism. Women can even diversify the rural tourism sector to engage in bee tourism, explaining to the tourists the honey production process, enticing them to engage in beekeeping activities, and guiding them to the different places where they transfer the beehives or produce the honey. This, according to experts, is a growing form of rural tourism that provides more flexibility for women, in terms of the number of visitors they can handle, based on their schedules.

Women can also act as security guards for natural parks and projects existing in rural areas that require guards for ensuring the safety of visitors. Because of the protective instincts of women, this often enables them to be at a higher advantage than men in taking roles that require ensuring safety and protection, such as security guarding or forest guarding. In fact, among the new calls for recruitment within the, there are female candidates who applied for such jobs, indicating a change in their perceptions and confidence in their abilities to take on new roles.

Lebanon has a rich biodiversity of aromatic and medical plants, found in forests and other wooded lands. While not all are exploited, a group of them are most commonly collected by women and distilled to be used either in food preparations or soap making. In general, essential oils are used in perfumes, cosmetics, soaps and other products, or as flavouring for food and drink, or for adding scents to incense and household cleaning products. The most commonly produced essential oils in Lebanon are laurel and sage, with laurel production accounting for about 7 tons in 2015.<sup>59</sup> Laurel oil production is most common in the Southern region and in some parts of Akkar where it is labour intensive and run by women in home-based production units. Women are involved in collecting/harvesting laurel and other aromatic herbs, as well as distilling them, while men are generally involved in the production activities. The distillation is done manually, without the use of any technology. The value chain activities for essential oils in general consist of cultivation primary processing which includes drying, fermentation, distillation, and further processing which includes separation, extraction of oil essence, and marketing in terms of packing and sales, as per the figure below.

<sup>59</sup> Hamadeh K., Non-Wood Forest Value Chains in Lebanon, Food and Agriculture Organization, Lebanon 2016.

Figure 17: Essential oils value chain



Laurel and Oregano are grown wild or cultivated on private lands. For oregano, around 54% is wildy grown and 46% is cultivated, while for laurel, it is mostly found in forests or public lands that are inaccessible in Akkar and Southern regions. The collection of the oregano and laurel is carried out during production season on a continuous daily basis. For laurel, it extends from October till December.

For Oregano, there are permits issued by the MoA for collection. While for laurel, collection is done through agreement with landlords on private lands, either through fees or equivalent shares of oil or soap. The same holds true for sage. Once collected, the aromatic plant is left to dry, and then the dried leaves are put into water and heated, using an apparatus where evaporated flavours and oil rise and flow to a condenser where oil is collected and flows on top. After that, further processing for purification and extracting oil by separating oil from the distilled water takes place, and then it is packaged in small glass tubes for direct sales.

The type of processing differs based on the level of technical knowledge and type of aromatic plant used. In Lebanon, women cooperatives engaged in laurel oil production still utilize the same traditional methods, while the newly involved small businesses and entrepreneurs use a little bit more advanced methods in terms of the apparatus and extraction using solvents such as petroleum, hexane, or others.

In terms of marketing, laurel oil is sold at around \$16 per kg and is destined mostly for soap production, and it is sold either directly in the villages or through fairs and exhibitions. For sage and oregano, they are targeted mostly for export, but on a small scale to Africa or the Gulf. Globally, the market is growing for essential oils with increased demand for certain types such as lemongrass oil, lavender, oregano, and others.

Essential oil production may have been traditionally common in different regions, but its presence is limited nowadays, as it is still considered a rather new sector but with potential for growth. Farmers, women cooperatives, individual processors, exporters, laboratories, and ministries are main stakeholders involved in the sector. The MoA regulates the process by issuing permits for collection/harvesting of wild thyme/sage/laurel from forests or even private farms, especially if targeted for export. In some cases, collectors have to obtain licenses from municipality through a bidding process, in order to collect wild herbs from their properties. At the same time, women cooperatives further process the wild herbs by extracting oil and distillates, or by selling sage or oregano water to further processors. For compliance with the standards and norms, the LIBNOR (Lebanese Institution for Norms and Standards) worked on developing norms for essential oil types, indicating the chemical composition of the oils that should be maintained to be labelled



as oregano/sage oil. Testing samples on produces prior to export takes place mostly in private laboratories at universities or chambers of commerce.

In fact, when it comes to Business Development Services, producers face challenges in terms of limited access to testing facilities for ensuring compliance and quality of their products. According to the producers interviewed, only the laboratories at the American University of Beirut carry out such tests but they can cost as high as \$5000. Though there is also a laboratory at the Chamber of Commerce of Tripoli, it is not easily accessible for all. In terms of access to technical knowledge, the majority of production carried out by women cooperatives is done in a traditional way, using the apparatus, based on experience rather than scientific knowledge. According to the interviewed producers, such processes require technical knowledge in chemistry and pharmacy, which not everyone possesses; if they do, it is insufficient, which eventually leads to limited access to local markets for soap or perfume production. The University of Balamand has engaged in a pilot project to upgrade the production process to a more industrial level, but the change has not yet occurred. Essential Oil production does not require high investment nor large space for operation, and thus can be home-based or produced in the backyard. This has been the main driver for women engagement in the sector, among others: raw material is available, and the production process requires less time and commitment, the process is condensed in a certain season rather than spread across the year, and sales cover the production costs.

The main challenges hindering further growth of the sector are mostly related to the lack of technical knowledge for upgrading production, limited testing facilities for ensuring quality of essential oil, and higher investment costs in the case of increasing production to control yield and processing.

While the process is still basic or traditional, upgrading requires investment in terms of technology as well as land for cultivating the plants. In fact, among the interviewed producers, one indicated that achieving economies of scale requires acquisition of more land for cultivation of aromatic plants, like lavender, and that may be costly as well as limiting since agriculture land is not widely available and reclamation requires a lengthy process as well as added costs.

There is room for improvement to upgrade the production process by integrating technology and building technical capacities to achieve higher quality production and more market access.

When it comes to participation, women are involved mainly in the collection of raw material, collecting leaves and flowers. Men are mostly engaged in cultivation, if on private lands, of oregano or lavender or laurel. Women are also involved, individually or through women cooperatives, in the post-harvest steps such as drying and preparing the material for further processing. A majority of the women cooperatives are involved in all the nodes: they collect, dry, and process the leaves to extract the oil. This has traditionally been the case, as it is flexible in terms of time: collection time is between three to five hours per day and processing time ranges between three to five months (on a daily or weekly basis). Recently, men entrepreneurs have acquired more interest in the production of essential oils given the potential for export, market demand, and higher returns, but not in high numbers.

For the essential oils value chain, the main barriers facing women's economic empowerment include:

**Vulnerability to Extreme Weather Conditions:** The aromatic plants in general are vulnerable to extreme weather conditions, and this affects the production volumes required for oil extraction.

For women, this affects their access to resources or raw material, as they have to secure different sources of supply for sufficient oil extraction.

**Lack of Scalability - Industrial Operations:** This is perceived to be a major challenge hindering further advancement of the value chain: the inability to scale up from traditional oil extraction to industrial level procedures. It requires investment, technical knowledge, and business support, all of which are not easily accessible for women. The production is still carried out by women in a traditional way, mostly in their backyards using the traditional distiller, often requiring more raw material and longer production hours. Moreover, the lack of business support further hinders access to markets as women are not fully aware of the market potential for the different product nor the requirements in terms of quality assurance. Tests are available but not within easy reach as they are expensive to run and are not often carried out by accredited labs. All of this further hinders the advancement of women along the value chain.

On the other hand, there are factors that can be considered as **opportunities** for promoting more women participation as well as advancement in the essential oil sector. In fact, the opportunities in terms of increased interest of local authorities in forest protection and increased income values from derived activities, as well as existing demand in local and export markets for essential oils are main opportunities that also apply to essential oil value chain investment and promotion. For women accessing essential oil value chains, there is market demand for oregano, laurel, and lavender, but also opportunity to explore potential linkages with pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries for essential oils, as well as the food industry, whereby research recently conducted by Notre Dame University revealed the potential for the use of essential oils as disinfectants for food utensils as well as preservative for extending shelf life of different products including meat.

## 7) *Rural Tourism*

As per the European Union's standard definition, rural tourism is simply tourism occurring in rural areas, in the pursuit of experiencing a rural way of life and getting in touch with nature, away urban settings. The latest Rural Tourism Strategy adopted by the Ministry of Tourism takes into account the elements of cultural and natural resources in its official definition, and the preservation of such resources in rural communities through sustainable development of economic opportunities.<sup>60</sup> While the contribution of overall rural development is not yet estimated, rural tourism provides employment and income generation opportunities, whilst reducing the negative impact of rural urban migration. Agriculture, forestry, and natural sceneries provide the basis of natural and cultural heritage in different regions. Income-generating opportunities include accommodations, mainly hotels, guesthouses, camping areas, and food and drink establishments, mainly local restaurants operated by women cooking traditional meals specific to their regions. Activities include camping, hiking, fruit picking, wine touring, sports such as rafting and rappelling, and nature parks.

Women, as mentioned above, are involved at different levels of the sector, be it in managing guesthouses, or catering traditional meals typical of the regions, or selling handmade food and artisanal products.

The sector has gained more attention from national and international organizations implementing various projects that improved infrastructure and increased cooperation with local communities for economic development. Such organizations include, but are not limited to, the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association (LMT-A), mostly focused on eco-tourism, Shouf Cedar Society, focused on preserving Lebanese biospheres, and Food Heritage Foundation, focused on promoting the food

---

60 Ministry of Tourism, Rural Tourism Strategy, USAID Lebanon Industry Value Chain Development Project (LIVCD), Lebanon, February 2014.

cultural heritage of the West Beqaa and surrounding regions. There is also growing interest of local authorities to further support and promote the sector given its economic potential and its ability to facilitate local economic development by creating more income-generating activities in restaurants, and more importantly, involving women in the workplace, especially for guest houses and local rural restaurants.

For the rural tourism value chain, the main barriers facing women's economic empowerment include:

**Prevailing Discriminatory Culture Among Women:** The traditions and prevailing culture in rural areas have a strong influence on women in rural tourism, especially women who are either head of households or single and under the control of their parents. Women in such categories are faced with difficulty running their own business, especially guesthouses, as culture norms hinder them from receiving guests, or strangers from outside the area, and allowing them to stay in their own homes.

**Weak Public Transport Facilities and Road Infrastructure:** While considered a macro-challenge affecting different rural areas, women are at a particular disadvantage, as weak public transport facilities and road infrastructure influences their mobility and access to additional resources required to grow their businesses. The conditions of roads and public transport make commuting long distances, in some cases, makes it a challenge to source their supply of food and other requirements, and access to the guesthouses becomes a challenges in cases where they are not well connected to the main roads and thus accessible to guests aiming for short stays, or making stop before continuing to other sites. This may require investment in placing signs or arranging for private buses, adding costs and limiting access to financial resources.

**Weak Control Over Income and Business Management:** The majority of guesthouses that exist in rural areas are run by families, with women working in overall management, attending to cooking meals and ensuring guests requests are met. Yet the women have little control over the income, where men take over and have the final decision in the distribution of such income among the family. Additionally, women who become interested in setting-up guesthouses often have to gain the approval of their husbands or brothers or fathers, which if not granted, affects the woman's access to finances or loans, due to a lack of collaterals or guarantees, such as land or assets, to acquire such loans.

Despite such challenges, there are significant **opportunities** for women advancement in rural tourism. Overall, there is, as with other sectors, the interest of the local authorities in rural tourism, to promote the diversity and richness of their regions, and to invest in linking different regions together. For women, start-up opportunities also exist in rural tourism, where women can run their own business, be it in managing guesthouses or catering businesses, and most of the time, this involves other family members as part of the management. There is also potential for more control for women as they can choose the location of the business/guesthouses next to their homes and overcome the challenge of mobility or time allocation. There is richness and diversity in the different rural regions, which adds to the potential for women to make more use of their areas terms of activities, be it in the operation of processing facilities, or managing guesthouses, or even establishing networks to link to other guesthouses within the same region.



## Breaking Stereotypes

More often than not, hiking clubs and organized tours in rural areas rely on local male guides to show hikers around, as the tradition goes, since men are perceived to have more freedom in mobility and interaction with tourists. Technically, there is no barrier for women to take on similar roles, provided they get support in building their capacity when it comes to languages and communication skills. Women can also act as security guards for natural parks and projects existing in rural areas that require guards for ensuring the safety of visitors.



## Motivation- Elissa Zeidan

The story behind us founders is all about when parenthood increased our environmental concern, and the treasured heritage received from our ancestors made us want to leave our children with an improved legacy, by investing more of our resources. It was not only about preserving and passing on heritage, but especially about having a cultural and environmental impact on young minds.

### Inspiration?

I am a native of Qsaibe, and I inherited a land watered with fountainheads. Our well preserved village inspired us to build a traditional farmhouse and create a local community of working ladies and youth who have much of their innate hospitality habits to offer and traditional way of life to share.

With a family-driven spirit, and an empathic team spirit, we started building a Little Reed team. After performing a SWOT analysis together that helped raise the awareness of participants in the little team, we carried on with the necessary food and safety trainings to be up to the standards, always keeping in mind that we want to make a meaningful, insightful social impact around us through the farmhouse.

### Challenges and opportunities

On the personal level:

How can I do all this while juggling between being a mother, an architect, and an aspiring entrepreneur? Handling house matters, professional matters, and enterprise team building at the same time made the journey more challenging on a personal level. All this took place with the constant awareness that the more one gives time for his/her start up, the more it will flourish, yet we are also torn between resetting priorities and time planning, and eagerness. Our belief in the idea helped us through personal difficulties, and the project saw the light, and those who lived the Little Reed experience saw it too!

On the financial level:

Finding the right balance between our ambition and the available, physical, legal and financial resources was another uncertainty. Searching constantly for the right opportunity that responds to our quest, applying to available programs, and participating in trainings and workshops helped us draw a Little Reed path, pairing good will with endeavor, curiosity with courage, creativity with flexibility, yet having a constant forwardness to take the lead.

Kitchen equipment funding was hard to find, but our participation in the Arc program allowed us to be selected as HIVOS partners. Besides financing, we got their support through a process of training, coaching, and networking. Kitchen procurement allowed Little Reed to start, and constant programmatic support will lead our enterprise towards more and more growth!

### Where to?

Little Reed wants to be the symbolic grandfather's house where love resides and is shared through interaction with nature, animals, traditions, each other, with us...

We hope to receive as many persons as possible so that they experiment with our little haven.

Even though our journey on this planet is temporary, may we leave a long-lasting heart-printed memory in every visitor's mind ...

## 8) *Handicrafts*

The handicrafts sector in Lebanon is considered one of the historically existing sectors that accompanied the growth of the country throughout history. Industrial development, however, reduced the demand for artisanal crafts that have become more expensive than new products produced in mass quantities, but on the other hand, it paved the way to access new global markets through online market places, social media, and e-commerce.<sup>61</sup> The handicrafts sector in Lebanon encompasses different sub-sectors and products relating to blown glass, copper, weaving, pottery, woodwork, jewellery, embroidery, and others. It is strongly linked to tourism as well as livelihoods and cultural heritage in rural regions of the country and has received different support from international organizations such as UNIDO, with their creative cluster projects, and local organizations like L'artisan du Liban that actively supports artisans to keep the sector alive.

The economic stagnation negatively influenced the sector with increasing trends towards importing cheaper products from China and forcing artisans to compete based on price, which they cannot match. This is mostly visible in the blown glass sector, where there were a large number of glassblowers in Lebanon operating for the last 10 years but today only one remains operational in the Sarafand area. The same applies to other sub-sectors where cheaper imports are considered the main challenge hindering the competitiveness of the sector.

Regardless of the competition, there are opportunities for further growth of the sector, given the recent global trend towards digital markets, and the reputation Lebanon enjoys in terms of creativity and fine quality of its handicrafts, two important elements to build on to promote more growth in the future.

Women have actively participated and continue to participate in this sector, undertaking different activities along the value chains, be it in the design or production or even marketing, with some taking leadership positions and taking on the global scenes, such as international designer brands like Sara's bags, Nada Debs, and others.

In fact, the design scene in Lebanon is taking more and more interest in handicrafts production. Many initiatives, such as Fantasmeeem (Goethe Institute), Minjara (Expertise France), Yad (UNIDO), among others, are linking small craft producers with designers to bring value to both parties: interesting techniques and material to designers, on the one hand, and new designs for traditional products to maximize selling potential in the market, on the other hand. Beirut Design Week and the Beirut Design Fair are also examples hosting many of these collaborations; they shed the light on young designers engaged in the revival of traditional crafts through trendy products. In addition, the awareness on responsible social engagement is used as a good marketing tool to advertise the work of designers, giving them more incentives to develop such collaborations.

Competition with cheaper imports is one main challenge hindering the growth of the sector, but before to dwelling further on the challenges facing women in this sector, it is important to provide a definition of the handicrafts that have been adopted for the purpose of this study. "Handicraft" mostly refers to an activity involving the making of decorative, domestic, or other objects by hand, relevant to the traditional and cultural heritage of a particular region. Four features are considered as indicators of a "handicraft" product: the country of origin and the identity, the raw material, the know-how, and the nature of the product and its traditional use. The more these features are

---

61 The Executive Magazine, Traditional Handicrafts in Lebanon: something old, something new, Lebanon, April 2019: <http://www.executive-magazine.com/special-report/traditional-handicrafts-in-lebanon>

respected in a product, the more the product is closer to the having a value of a handicraft.

For the handicrafts value chain, the main barriers facing women's economic empowerment are:

**High Cost of Achieving Competitive Advantage:** Different factors contribute to gaining competitive advantage, be it through access to continuous supply of raw material of good quality, perfecting the craft with high finishing, and integrating some form of technology to achieve some economies of scale. Currently, the market is flooded with cheap imports from China and Turkey, competing with Lebanese products based on price, which influences sales and thus challenges women who have to search for other competitive factors such as sourcing of good quality raw material. This is another challenge, especially for women residing in areas outside Beirut, since main suppliers of raw material are located in Beirut; not only does this add to the production costs, it also has an influence on access in terms of consistency of supply, especially when there is difficulty commuting to the capital to acquire such materials. Last but not least, technology is not well integrated in handicrafts production and marketing. While some indicated that this affects the manual, authentically-produced nature of these products, it is nevertheless required, especially in terms of scaling up and producing the quantities demanded. Majority of the women, according to the stakeholders interviewed, do not have knowledge of the technology suitable for their production and, thus, are at greater disadvantage in terms of scaling up, combined with their nature of risk aversion, which leads them to end up working in traditional ways that are time consuming, effort requiring, and more often acquire less of a return due to weak marketability of such products and intense competition with cheaper imported products.

**Weak Business Management Skills and Perception of Profession:** Due to the prevalence of the risk aversion culture among women, more often than not, their businesses fall short of strong management, as indicated by 70% of the stakeholders interviewed. Women, in this sector, are walking on thin ice: they want to grow their business and seek support to do so and continue to move on, but also are afraid that having such businesses would drag them away from other priorities, i.e. family and child upbringing. For this reason, women maintain a status quo. In rural areas, the case applies in addition to other cultural challenges, which limit enough motivation for women to proceed with their business ideas, or will to learn the business and grow it. In urban areas, a large percentage of women participate in the sector as a hobby, but this reaches a point where scalability and transformation into a business is required. With weak management skills, accessing additional resources, such as finance and technology, becomes a challenge. Overall, this challenge has a strong influence on access and control over the resources, as well as on the potential to take on leadership positions in the sector.

There is a need to achieve economies of scale within this sector so as to be able to overcome competition as well as diversify into new markets. Scaling up the production to address substantial market demand, in existing markets or new export markets, can have a positive effect on the economic survival of the sector. While some may argue that technology integration would remove main features of a "handicraft" product, the utilization of new equipment and technological advancements will enable producers to scale up the production in terms of efficiency and quality, without harming the hand-made aspect of the production, which is still required in any craft product.

The above mentioned barriers hinder further integration and growth of women in the sector but there are also other factors that favor more participation for women in the sectors. For example, Handicrafts and ICT-Digital Marketing (DM) sectors provide flexibility, in that women can work from home without the need to commute to the workplace. As long as they have the equipment and raw

material for the handicrafts, they can work from home and produce the required product or service. Additionally, for handicrafts, as with ICT-DM and essential oils, requirements for investment costs are not high and can be attained via access to loans or grants, which enable women to start-up their own businesses. Raw material is readily available, from copper, textile, and silver, which encourages women to take a step forward in that aspect. Other opportunities lie in exploring new markets, through e-commerce, thus cutting on costs of marketing. This not only encourages more women to integrate in the sector but also improves access through knowledge of new markets that can absorb their products and services, as well as control, through integrating technology to advance and grow.



### **Champion Fatima Tartoussy**

I work in copper. I chose this profession because I love it and grew up watching other people doing it. My father and my uncle were partners and my cousins worked with them. I used to ask my father to teach me how to work with copper when I was around seven or eight-years-old. He agreed, and I learned it over two summers.

After a while, my father and my uncle each went their own way. My uncle took all his boys with him, so my father had no one to work with anymore.

They used to say to my father, “you won't be able to work since you don't have sons.” But I told him, “you don't have sons, but you have four daughters; I am the youngest and I will work with you.” And that was it!

If you like your job, you can overcome all obstacles. There are always new things you can learn and who does not want to learn, does not want to grow and will eventually fail.

Copper is a traditional metal which has always been trendy. There is always demand on copper items, and I am constantly innovating. I work on new designs, on the painting and the coating, and even on new products. I'm a member of the Craftsmen Syndicate, and I travel to take part of exhibitions whenever possible.

I've been working for 30 years now. Everything is possible and we as women can do it all!

## **9) Supply Chain Management**

Supply chain management is about managing the flow of goods and services until they reach their final destination. It involves different activities such as storage of raw material, inventory management, and transporting finished goods from one point to the other, be it through air, sea, or land. The supply chain includes logistics management as well as quality management to ensure the goods arrive in optimal condition. For quality assurance, interventions focus on managing quality processes (such as ISO, HACCP) and managing product quality in terms of safety, testing, and certification for compliance with set standards. This sector is considered cross-cutting and transversal across all economic sectors, including agriculture and industry. It has a positive spill-over aspect in that any growth or development within this sector will have a positive impact on other related economic sectors.

Usually, supply chain and logistics are interchangeably used to mean the same thing; but they are different in that the supply chain encompasses different activities along the value chain while logistics has more to do with transferring goods from one point to another. One expert framed it as such: “Supply chain comprises all aspects of a product cycle from origin to end user, for example, from farm to fork. Logistics relate to one component of the supply chain, addressing efficient product

movement, such as from manufacturer to retail store.” – Peter Reed from KOM International.

Simply put, logistics is only one component of supply chain management. This is better illustrated in the figure below, which outlines the different nodes or components of the supply chain.

Figure 18: Supply Chain Management Overview



The activities are divided between field and office support, where **Inbound Logistics** has to do with daily activities related to receiving goods, such as raw material for manufacturing or handling and storing them in warehouses. **Operations** are more customer-oriented and include the delivery of raw materials at the manufacturing point, managing inventory systems, and transferring the goods or products to the end user either within the same premise or in different premises such as from warehouse to processing facilities. The latter would usually take place through **Outbound Logistics**, which include activities related to transferring the products to the end-user and collecting from different places and storing. Finally, **marketing and sales**, which mostly has to do with customer service and management, includes the delivery of the final product, distribution, and addressing any problems through installation and repair. Most of the field work involves transportation in trucks either to warehouses or to end users, warehousing in terms of material handling and storage, and repairing in case of any problems once the product is with the client. The office-based component of the work is more related to overall management and marketing, along with customer order processing and servicing.

For the logistics sector, activities are more divided between the back-office and field activities.



The back-office includes account management, administrative activities, and ensuring all schedules are respected, while field activities include transport, custom clearance, loading and unloading, packing, handling, and warehouse management. Freight forwarding and clearance is more about transporting from the country of origin to warehouses in other countries. Accompanying all these activities is the process of demand planning and forecasting at the warehouse: how much of each item needs to be ordered, how much of each item needs to be replenished, and where each item is going to be delivered, in terms of points of sales.

The main workforce encompasses different types of occupations depending on the location, whether in the field or back-office. For the field office, prevailing occupations mostly include drivers, handlers, packers, warehouse managers, while occupations in the back office range between administrators, supervisors, operation managers, and customer service and account management. Other occupations related to clearance (customs clearance) mostly include packing and unpacking, and distribution. Additionally, for the freight business, occupations vary between export and import, as well as per the type of transportation needed, whether air freight, ocean freight, or land freight.

Looking at the sector as a whole, the main existing roles are mostly occupied by men, especially those that are field-based: clearing the goods from customs, loading at port and unloading at the end-customer point, driving trucks to deliver the goods, managing warehouses, inventory and procurement management, material handling including packing, as well as supervising the different operations. Women participation, according to one freight forwarder interviewed, accounts for less than 20% of the workforce, and their roles are mostly in the back office, from administrators or account managers, to customer services and after sales servicing reps. This was further confirmed by other interviewed stakeholders, when one indicated that their head of freight forwarding department is a woman.

Overall, the main stakeholders involved in the sector are: Customs Directorate, Ministry of Transport and Public Works, different port and airport authorities, as well as private sector companies such as printing and packing companies, airline companies, banks, trucks, warehouses, insurance companies, and the syndicate of Transport and Freight Forwarders in Lebanon.

Overall, the logistics sector in Lebanon, including transport, has been witnessing growth, contributing to 4% of the GDP in 2016 and employing around 110,000 (as of 2016) people nationwide.<sup>62</sup> However, despite this growth, the logistics infrastructure is weak when compared to other countries in the region such as the United Arab Emirates or Jordan. This is mostly due to the fact that 85% of Lebanon's road network is in poor condition. According to Lebanon's Economic Vision report, the poor infrastructure is negatively impacting economic growth due to its impact on increasing transportation costs for exporters and industrialists, and on regional migration. Additionally, Lebanon has three functional airports but only one is active with demand exceeding its capacity, alongside inefficient integration and networks among the different maritime ports and roads. The main port, Beirut port, functions with long waiting periods that can reach up to 13 days.<sup>63</sup>

---

62 Mc. Kenzie, Lebanon's Economic Vision, Ministry of Economy & Trade: <https://www.economy.gov.lb/media/11893/20181022-1228full-report-en.pdf>

63 Ibid

This was further confirmed through the different stakeholder interviews where it was highlighted that the main challenge lies in the *actual clearance process*, which is full of ambiguity and corruption, as well as the lack of compliance with standards and procedures for the sector. In fact, the **main challenge, in essence, is the informality of operations and clearance procedures; more often than not, companies operating in the logistics and supply chain management sector find themselves competing with non-formal businesses** that do not declare taxes or pay any formal fees, but have the ability to cut down on costs and attract more business. Additionally, the lack of compliance with standards is mainly related to the absence of operating standards set by the government for this sector, which leads to more chaos and a lack of willingness to comply amidst an absence of accountability. An equally important challenge is the **increasing cost of energy**, which hinders companies in the sector to operate at full capacity, which is for 24 hours for warehouses, thus prompting them to operate over two or three shifts.

The poor logistics infrastructure, informality in businesses and processes, as well as the high cost of energy all negatively impact the competitiveness of the sector and further hinders its growth.

In terms of gender within supply chain management, the main barriers facing women's economic empowerment include:

**Male Dominance in Different Activities:** Supply Chain management, similar to other sectors such as renewable energy or construction, have high male dominance which makes it difficult for women to breakthrough and gain support to further integrate in these sectors. With supply chain management, men carry out the handling, loading, unloading, transporting to port or airport, and managing the procurement and warehouse. Women, though more organized, find it challenging to perform such tasks as they perceive they require more skills and confidence in their capacities to take on such roles. However, this creates a snowball effect since men choose to hand over such roles to their peers rather than to a woman for the same reasons, a lack of confidence in their abilities.

**Unfavourable Work Environment:** The working conditions within this sector ranges between fair for both genders in the back office and management aspect of the job, to harsh/tough in the field where work requires early presence in the field, heavy commuting, transporting the goods from one place to another, and handling heavy weight material. While such conditions are unfavourable for both genders, the impact is higher on women, in terms of mobility and safety, who are in turn discouraged by such conditions and do not feel they can withstand jobs of that kind.

However, the picture is not all that gloomy. There is potential for the growth of the sector with expected investments in infrastructure projects, as part of the CEDRE conference, for roads, optimization of transport systems, and for the free economic zones, such as the Tripoli Economic Zone, which will focus on transport and logistics for the country, as well as future investment in the reconstruction of Syria.

There is also a growing demand for supply chain management as a means of improving efficiency and further developing the value chains, especially in relation to logistics. There is interest from the private sector to take on initiatives to further support the sector, given the positive spillover effect it can have on other value chains such as agriculture, rural tourism, ICT, and handicrafts. There is demand for specialization in handling, depending on the type of goods, which can act as an incentive to increase participation of women in the sector, given the capacity of women to perfect and pay attention to details in packing and handling.



## Breaking the Stereotypes

Increasing women's participation in the supply chain management sector requires supporting women to take on different non-traditional roles. For example, women in the supply chain management sector can be trained to specialize in the different types of handling processes, based on the targeted goods. For example, some can specialize in art good handling, others in perishable goods, or hazardous material, or other types of goods.

### 10) Renewable Energy

The Lebanese Electricity Sector is highly dependent on imported fossil fuels. Fuel expenses for power generation and thermal use account for a significant portion of the national GDP. With electricity tariffs heavily subsidized, these expenses substantially contribute to the country's national debt through the financial deficit of the state-owned power utility Electricité Du Liban (EDL). This situation has been exacerbated with the continuous influx of refugees in the wake of the Syrian crisis, which has increased the pressure to the already deteriorated power infrastructure.<sup>64</sup>

Renewable energy (RE) can contribute to a potential solution to overcome some of these challenges. The government of Lebanon has been active in setting targets for the improvement of the country's energy efficiency and the increase of the RE capacity through the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP), and the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) respectively. Moreover, RE is expected to provide employment opportunities for people at all levels of qualification.

For Lebanon, there are advantages in utilizing the following three value chains: Solar Photovoltaic (PV), Wind Energy, and Bioenergy. PV energy is already an established sector in Lebanon with a decent number of competitive private companies (around 100). The Lebanese government's intention to upscale the installed capacity of this technology was confirmed by the recent processes to sign Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) for the installation of large solar farms. Additionally, it is considered that solar PV can contribute towards the decentralization of power supply, and market trends show an increasing interest in the installation of this kind of facilities. For all these reasons, solar PV as a value chain offers good opportunities for job creation in the future, in large solar farms or within the field of well distributed solar plants with and without batteries.

The Wind Energy sector is new in Lebanon. However, the government is currently in the final stages of negotiation to sign PPAs with private developers for the installation of the first 200 Megawatt (MW) wind farm in the northern and mountainous district of Akkar. This process has been followed by an additional bidding process currently under evaluation to install additional capacities between 200 and 400 MW.

Bioenergy is a valuable component of the chain and offers very good potential synergies with

<sup>64</sup> United Nations Development Program, UNDP, Prioritization and assessment of value chains within the Renewable Energy Sector in Lebanon, April 2018

other sectors such as forestry, water treatment, or waste management. However, it has not been developed extensively in the past in Lebanon nor is it mentioned in the government's long term plans. The value chain of bioenergy links raw material, after it is collected, with the final energy use. This chain contains multiple options combining feedstock, processing technologies (possibly with several steps) and marketable end products such as other bioenergy carriers, liquid, and gaseous biofuels, power, and heat. Additionally, co-products that have multiple applications (e.g. glycerin from biodiesel production) can be produced in many of the bioenergy value chains. Moreover, the activities comprised in this area can foster job opportunities development both for skilled and non-skilled workers, which is an interesting prospect within a context of high unemployment rates or migrant (or refugee) workers.

Women have very limited presence in the RE value chain, mostly taking on jobs in the head-office of the company, be it though administrative work or customer services. They are not present in the field, and very few are involved in the design of the photovoltaic installation systems.

In terms of value chain mapping, there are opportunities for strengthening the RE value chain. The Lebanese economy is strong in services. Therefore, the service components of all renewable energy technologies exhibit opportunities for domestic provision. In terms of manufacturing, the metal industry can contribute to renewable energy because even though the industry is small, it exists and is functional. In the case of wind, it is assumed that wind turbines will be imported. This is due to the fact that the size of the projected wind farms is still small and would not justify the investments needed to set a local manufacturing industry. For economic potential, blades could complement the existing chemicals and plastic fiber industry if the regional market is large enough. Growth is expected to come from growing production and installation. Given the electricity supply deficit in Lebanon, PV plus battery systems could be an environmentally friendly way of providing back up power supply, relieving the system of stress and mitigating power blackouts.

In particular, the PV manufacturing value chain is twofold, because the wafer, cell, and module production often includes the raw material process from sand to silicon, whereas assembling the electrical system is part of a second process, followed by installation and operation.

For the Renewable Energy, the main barriers facing women's economic empowerment include:

**Cultural Male Dominance within the Sector:** The whole sector, especially for solar and photo-voltaic energy sources, is controlled by men, with limited presence of women mainly in the back-office carrying out administrative work. The design, procurement, installation, and maintenance processes are fully run by men in the sector, mainly due to the prevailing perception that they have the technical knowledge and expertise, as well as the physical capacity to take on such work. The high presence of men in the sector is in itself a challenge for women who find it difficult to participate or possess the right skills to access resources, namely finances, for starting a business within this sector.

**Lack of STEM Education for Women - Awareness on the Potential for the Sector:** This is an issue worldwide and also in Lebanon in terms of lack of sufficient women integration in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education. In Lebanon, women are not oriented to pursue education in such fields but usually prefer arts, social sciences, and business. There is not enough counselling and orientation to motivate more women to pursue such specialties which could increase their opportunities for integration in different emerging sectors, be it renewable energy, supply chain management, or logistics. This mainly affects the participation of women in the renewable energy value chains, limiting their role and knowledge when it comes to the potential for this sector.

### **Lack of Mobility and Flexibility - Requirement for Transportation and Working During Peak Hours:**

Taking on roles in this sector requires women to have more flexibility in terms of working hours required, and mobility to travel to different locations for installation and maintenance. Both factors are challenging for women, as they cannot shift their working hours or address any emerging issue when they arise due to engagement with family. They also cannot readily reach different locations as transportation requires a driving license, or support from husbands or fathers, especially during peak hours when such services are required.

On the positive side, there are opportunities to improve the status of women in the renewable energy sector and further promote their participation and involvement. In fact, the real opportunity is the potential for linkages between the different sectors that can create an even more favourable environment for women economic empowerment. The renewable energy technologies can be applied to the agriculture sector to improve energy efficiency and reduce hazards on the environment in terms of energy sources. The prioritization of the renewable energy sector within the government's economic growth strategy, the compatibility with the prioritized sectors of the CEDRE conference (in addition to public infrastructure and ICT), and the presence of financing schemes to increase its application all act as catalysts for increasing women participation and access to resources (financial, natural), either to explore employment opportunities or to establish their own businesses in the sector. Additionally, the sector can also provide opportunities for the integration of women refugees as it is one of the sectors that can employ refugees. Composting can also be another potential activity, as well as installation and maintenance of the solar PV systems within homes, or even the collection of forest residues for biomass energy.



### **Breaking the Stereotypes**

Riding the wave of renewable energy production and promotion, women need increased participation in the sector through different activities and roles, be it in service provision for solar energy, especially for women-headed households or even in areas where large suppliers do not access because they are deemed too far. Women can also actually take part in setting-up windmill energy projects, by driving special trucks that transport heavy loads, such as parts of the windmills for installation. They can also invest in start-ups that can explore better opportunities for biomass energy production, using forest wood and non-wood material.

### **11) Information, communication and Technology with focus on Digital Marketing**

The Information Technology (ICT) sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in Lebanon, with a market size that was expected to reach value of USD 530 million by 2017 at an annual growth rate of 7.24%.<sup>65</sup> The growth is mostly attributed to the government's investment in telecom and broadband infrastructure, in addition to private sector investments evident in the rising number of enterprises operating in the sectors of e-commerce, cloud computing, and Software Products and Services. There are over 200 enterprises operating in the sector, 48% of which focus on software development, 38% on web-based application development, and 14% engage in mobile-based application development.<sup>66</sup>

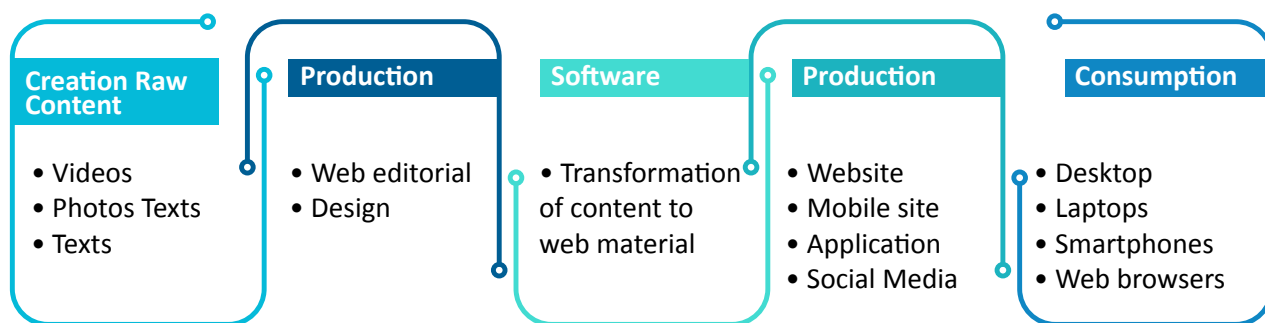
65 Investment & Development Authority of Lebanon, Sectors in Focus: Information & Communication Technology: [https://investinlebanon.gov.lb/en/sectors\\_in\\_focus/information\\_technology/experts\\_views\\_on\\_the\\_sector](https://investinlebanon.gov.lb/en/sectors_in_focus/information_technology/experts_views_on_the_sector)

66 BankMed, Analysis of Lebanon ICT Sector, Market & Economic Research Division, Lebanon, June 2015.

The different ICT sub-sectors employ a total of 5000 high-skilled individuals, with figures expected to rise due to increasing demand for ICT skills. Most of the operating enterprises are small to medium sized and are involved in Software Development, Web Solutions, Digital Marketing, and Mobile Services and Applications.

The digital marketing sector involves different activities related to creation of the content, production, presentation or publication, and consumption or making use of the content, as seen in the figure below.

Figure 19: Digital Marketing Value Chain



Creation of the raw content, referred to as the input, has to do with creating material that could be used in publishing, whether online or in print. These would include taking videos or photos with cameras or phones, as well as working on texts for publishing. The production has more to do with developing the design using inputs and transforming the content in a way that can be published online or as web material. For that to happen, account registration is needed for different sites utilized for digital marketing such as Google Analytics, hosting services, app markets, etc. Once the content has been developed as web material, it is published using different channels, whether on a website, mobile site, as an application, or via different social media tools. The online material can then be seen as posts by end-users whether on websites or browsers or mobile.

Regarding stakeholders or actors, the know-how is mostly generated through academic institutions either through the fields of Research and Development or human resources/ other related specialties. The Ministries of Finance, and Economy and Trade govern the chain in terms of business registration for start-ups as well as protecting patents through Intellectual Property Rights provided by the MoET. For Business Development Services, the sector has witnessed growth in support, be it through access to finance or technical knowledge. For the latter, the rise of incubators and accelerators pushed the sector forward through flourishing start-up businesses engaged in the knowledge economy, while access to finance has been made available through the Central Bank's Circular 331 that incentives banks to invest in start-ups, and to provide more venture capital funds available for start-ups at different stages. In fact, Lebanon's Economic Vision report by Mc. Kenzie indicates that the ecosystem today consists of eight accelerators and incubators, and six Venture Capital Funds. It has been growing in recent years to reach second place in the Arab world regarding number of start-ups rising and value of business deals established.<sup>67</sup>

While such growth is expected to continue, the path is not void of challenges. In fact, the weak infrastructure prevailing in Lebanon and the disparities in the provision and access to business development services are the main factors negatively influencing the development of the sector. The weak broadband infrastructure has resulted in slow unreliable internet access that is more

67 Lebanon's Economic Vision: <https://www.economy.gov.lb/media/11893/20181022-1228full-report-en.pdf>

aggravated in rural areas such as Akkar and Beqaa. Furthermore, the power cuts in these areas have further intensified the problem, adding to investment costs. Additionally, at the policy level, the lack of regulations adds to the ambiguity and complexity of the situation negatively impacting the enabling environment. For example, the lack of proper bankruptcy laws, completion law, IP protection laws, and the complicated business registration procedures demotivate youth to join the ecosystem and scale up their businesses. This has been further confirmed through interviews with the different stakeholders who emphasized the high internet costs, coupled with slow access and absence of regulatory laws that limit the growth and attractiveness of the sector to youth and entrepreneurs. Additionally, Lebanon's Economic Assessment cited access to digital talent as a main challenge despite Lebanon's strong human capital base, namely the lack of Lebanese talent with needed technical skills as a main bottleneck.

With the Capital Investment Plan submitted at the CEDRE Conference in Paris, more investment is expected to occur in telecommunication infrastructure, including the implementation of eight investment projects in the telecoms sector for a total of \$700 million, including the modernization of the broadband and digital platform infrastructure.<sup>68</sup> This is a main opportunity as it will help overcome the challenge, provided there is equal access among the different geographic regions.

Other opportunities also exist, given the relatively low investment cost required to start-up business in the digital marketing sector. Additionally, projects supported by international donors, such as Social Innovation Labs implemented by UNICEF, or the different start-up competitions organized by the different incubators, provide opportunities for different youth to come forth with their ideas and help them transform such ideas to successful businesses, thus generating more income. But above all, the importance of the sector lies in its potential to benefit other economic sectors, supporting them to become more automated and gain higher access to the global marketplace to improve access to markets and opportunities. This is especially highlighted in the ability of Digital Marketing to support local artisans, designers, and food processors in "going global" and accessing e-commerce.

Regarding gender roles, interviews with stakeholders such as Berytech and digital marketing experts, men are more involved in software development and are present in higher numbers, while women are more involved in digital marketing, where some even claim that this field is dominated by women.

But as with other sectors, there are different barriers that limit the growth and further empowerment of women in the digital marketing sector, including:

**Weak Broadband Infrastructure:** The weak public infrastructure transcends to the internet, broadband sector in general and particularly in rural areas where internet is slow, unreliable, and experiences long hours of power outage. This affects the access of women to internet, adding to the high running cost of businesses, which not many can afford. Additionally, the power outage poses some restrictions in terms of timing, forcing women to work within the time frame when electricity is available, or going to nearby places where power is continuous, which is again, not practical for all.

**Knowledge of Foreign Languages:** While this is a general challenge across different sectors, it

---

68 World Bank, Strategic Assessment : A Capital Investment Plan for Lebanon, Beirut, April 2018:  
<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/935141522688031167/pdf/124819-REVISED-CIP-Assessment-Final.pdf>

has a higher impact on digital marketing, as the main activities and working languages are English or French. Not many possess knowledge of such languages and this can be restrictive, particularly in terms of access to resources, whether software/programs encrypted in English, or account registration on different sites that provide services for digital marketing (Google analytics, hosting services, app markets, etc.) requiring English language comprehension.

**The Need to Be Up-To-Date:** Gaining a competitive advantage, women in this sector have to be up-to-date with the latest technology and trends shaping the sector. This is costly, as it requires registration to new sites, or renewing memberships, or buying new material and equipment, all of which increase operation costs for women, and take up additional time, thereby influencing her time and availability.

When it comes to opportunities for women, the sector has potential as experts claim women have intrinsic factors that make them more successfully able to integrate: patience, creativity, and attention to details. There is also requirement for women to acquire foreign languages and technical IT and computer skills. There is also potential for further growth as more companies in Lebanon and the region require digital marketing services to further promote their business online, specifically those operating in creative industries. Other opportunities exist in the potential linkages between digital marketing and supply chain management, where both are inter-related, especially regarding e-commerce: ensuring the products sold online arrive in the right form at the right time and place.

The sector also provides flexibility, in that women can work from home without the need to commute to the workplace. As long as they have enough equipment, laptops, and cameras, they can work from home and produce the required product or service. Additionally, requirements for investment costs are not high and can be attained via access to specific loans or grants that enable women to start-up their own businesses.

ICT-Digital Marketing, as previously mentioned, has positive spill-over effects and cross-cutting implications across different sectors. From agriculture, to handicrafts, to essential oils or rural tourism, new activities may require more visibility and communication to introduce their products and services to export markets and that's where digital marketing comes in; young women can specialize in digital marketing to support the expansion of export activities, either via increased presence on social media or via call centers for customer service, or even via managing the supply chain and procurement for ensuring consistency in supply as well as safety and quality of the product in export markets.

## 12) *Construction with focus on Restoration*

The construction sector has witnessed a boom in its performance due to foreign private investment in the sector, and possession of know-how and expertise. The boom slowed down over the last couple of years, in both construction and transactions, with some construction projects put on hold due to sluggish economic growth and the freezing of housing loans subsidized by the Central Bank. In total, the volume of construction in Lebanon amounted to more than \$9 billion in 2013.<sup>69</sup>

Despite the slowdown and the turmoil, the construction sector remains an important point of attraction for local and foreign investors, and one with a promising future, especially for development companies, as Lebanon will become the gateway for the reconstruction of Syria once the crisis recedes. The UN's Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) estimated that the demand for reconstruction material in Syria would rise to around 30 million tons per year, benefiting

---

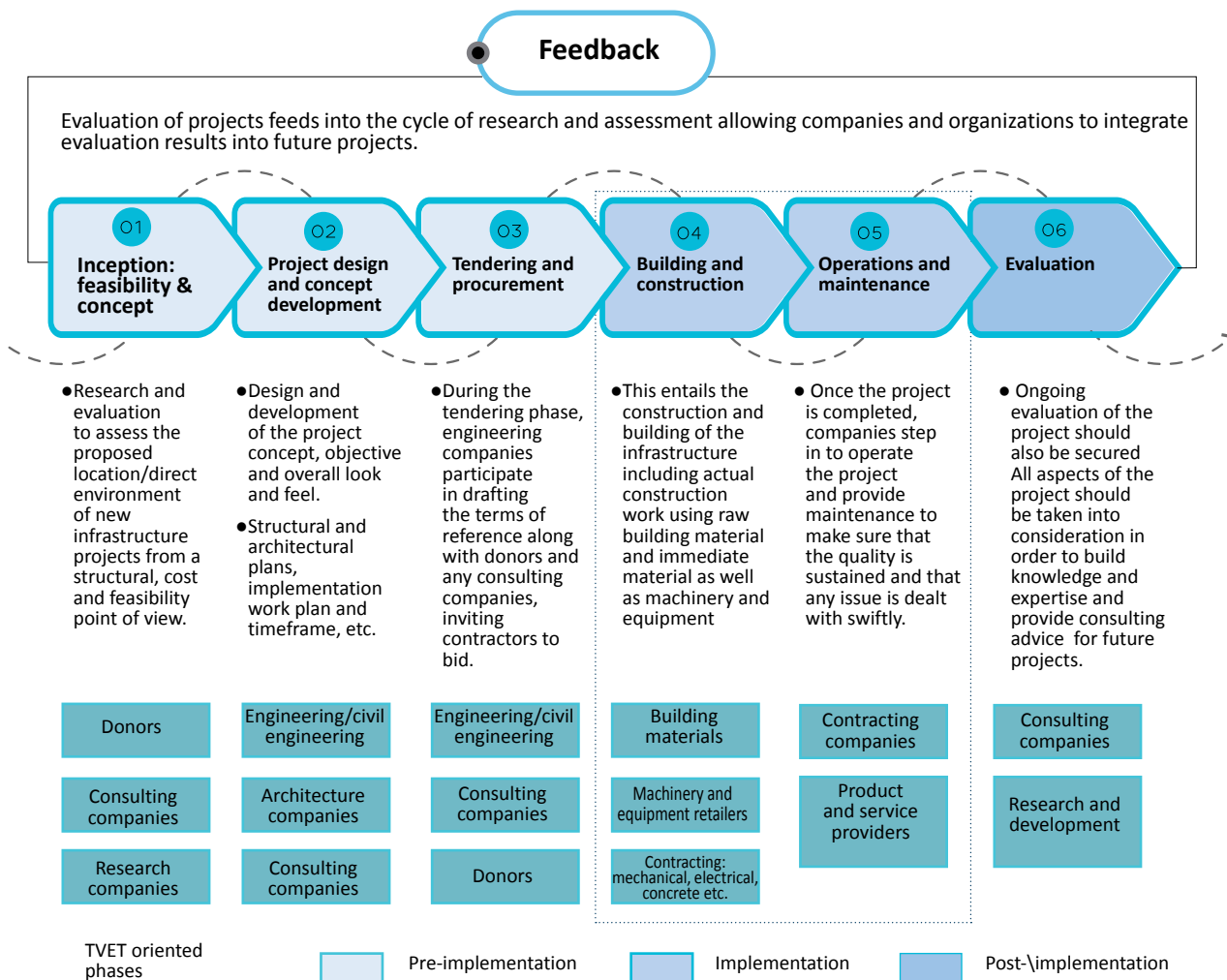
69 <http://www.ifpinfo.com/Real%20Estate-NewsArticle-4685#.WEKL8hR5XFI>



the Lebanese building materials industry.<sup>70</sup>

The value chain for public infrastructure construction starts with conception and design, on to procurement, on to actual implementation, and then maintenance, as per the figure below.

Figure 20: Public Infrastructure Chain of Activities



Other than public infrastructure, the other sub-sectors that follow the same path are those related to the rehabilitation and restoration of homes and houses. The activities are, of course, on a smaller scale, but nevertheless go along the same lines:

- Inception - survey of the site and diagnosis: This includes research on the location or site to assess the impact of the project on the environment and people residing in the area, and the extent to which they might benefit as result of the project. The assessment also includes diagnosis and identification of the problems to be addressed through the project.
- Project Design including feasibility and concept development: This has to do with the development of the overall project concept, design, including the implementation process, work plan, and time-frame. It also includes feasibility studies to evaluate the overall budget and allocate financial

70 Ibid

resources accordingly. This is mostly the work of the architects and engineers, at this stage, who are involved in the concept design and feasibility study.

- Tendering and procurement of the raw material required: This involves developing the terms of reference for the contracting company or engineers that will be involved in implementing the project along with the material required.
- Actual implementation including the rehabilitation and restoration work: The company that wins the bid is involved in the construction and rehabilitation works, including the utilization of the equipment and building material and supervising the construction/rehabilitation work.
- Operations and Maintenance: This is to ensure the current work is implemented according to the concept proposed and with the quality level required. This also entails providing the necessary maintenance services to ensure the quality of the work after the project is finished.

The Ministry of Public work is the main stakeholder involved in the governance of the sector, along with the municipalities that provide permits or licenses to build within their territories. However, in cases of restoration, the Ministry of Culture is additionally involved, to ensure that the restoration works, especially on historic buildings, does not contradict with heritage preservation regulations, and also to ensure that the building or house to be rehabilitated is not classified as historic, which in that case, makes it the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Culture through the Directorate of Antiquities for the preservation of such buildings.

When it comes to business development services, the sector enjoys favourable services that allow it to flourish, be it in terms of access to finance through bank loans, or technical support provided through the Orders of Engineers and consulting companies available, or other services. However, today, with the current economic conditions prevailing, the sector continues to face challenges in maintaining its status quo without seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, unless reforms occur and CEDRE Conference money is disbursed, shifting the focus to public infrastructure.

Additionally, the increase in prices of raw materials and energy, along with absence of qualified national labour, has reduced the competitiveness of the Lebanese companies, as they are not able to keep up with such increases, with some favouring foreign workers over Lebanese nationals, specially Syrian refugees, since they have been historically present in the sector, prior to the crisis, and are allowed to continue working in the sector even after the crisis, as per the Ministry of Labor's regulations.<sup>71</sup> In fact, around 33%<sup>72</sup> of the Syrian Labour and 34% of the Palestinian labour are employed in the construction sector, more often low-skilled. They operate along the different levels of the value chain. It is perceived as a male dominant sector where women are rarely found working, unless as engineers or architects involved in the design and concept development, i.e. head-office work, with some exceptions where women are also involved in implementation of the project in the field. Women are also involved in specific roles in the head-office, dealing with clients or involved in planning, accounting, or administrative activities. According to an interview with one of the stakeholders, women prefer to do the office work, and they are more efficient than men in the preparation and planning phase. They mainly work as coordinators, site assessors, monitors, and implementation control specialists. For the physical work on site, workers are only men.

From a gender perspective, the sector has high gender bias with male dominance prevailing, and little space for women involvement. In fact, this is a main barrier facing women's economic empowerment, given the culture and mentality of gendered work, as well as the prevailing culture that women should

71 Labour Policy and Practice. (2017). Peacebuilding in Lebanon. Issue N. 16. United Nations Development Program.

72 Idib.

not be involved in sectors such as construction or renewable energy. Other challenges hindering further empowerment of women include:

**Market Stagnating as a Whole - Limited access to Finance:** The economic uncertainties and the slow growth of the economy as a whole have had a negative impact on the real estate market, aggravated by the blocking of housing loans from the Central Bank, leading to cash flow problems in the construction sector. Ongoing projects had to be put on hold due to the lack of buyers with the capacity to purchase without housing loans, and the reduced cash flow of the developers, which further slowed down the completion of projects. For women, this represents a challenge, first in terms of access to the construction market, apart from assuming the roles of architects or engineers, and second in terms of access to resources, such as skills and equipment, that could increase their competitiveness, in carrying out similar tasks as men in the sector.

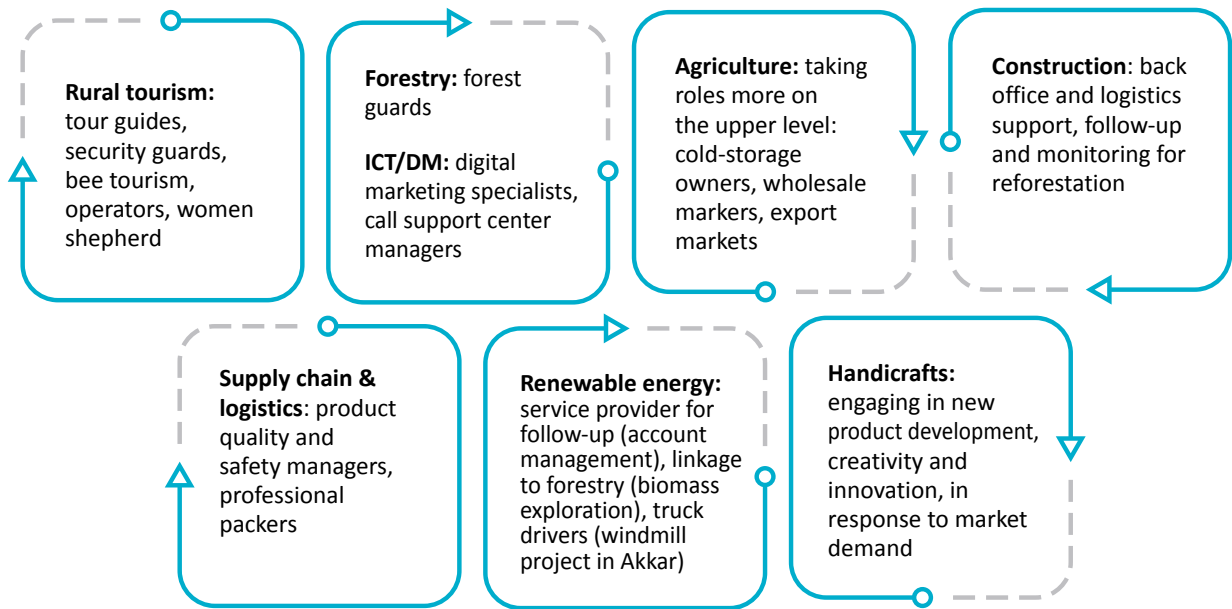
A boost in infrastructure development is expected to take place as a result of the CEDRE investment conference held on April 6, 2018, which involved the commitment of the international community in helping Lebanon achieve the economic security it needs to compensate for the seven years of near zero growth, due to the impact of the Syrian crisis. The Lebanese state presented around 280 projects to submit to the International Community, related to the expansion of the Beirut airport, rehabilitation of Jounieh and Saida ports, establishing waste treatment stations, improving broadband infrastructure, developing the economic zone of Tripoli, and implementing electricity projects. For restoration, the new rental law is expected to provide different opportunities as considerable number of houses will be available and in need of rehabilitation and restoration.

Looking at it from a different perspective, the potential linkages between the construction and other economic sectors and value chain can have a multiplier effect, such as linking it to the tourism sector which is expected to boom in 2019 due to the uplifted ban on gulf tourists, and so a higher number of tourists is expected. With tourism shifting to more experience-based activities rather than just sightseeing, rural tourism is expected to grow further, giving rise to guest-houses and boutique hotels that could facilitate such experiences. This would require rehabilitation and restoration services, especially in rural areas. It is also important to mention that such a boost would also create livelihood opportunities for Syrian refugees who have been historically involved, and even now, have significant women integration in the sector.

For construction, women possess strong skills in terms of monitoring and supervising and can put these skills to practice on site for monitoring the rehabilitation and restoration of old buildings, or monitoring the rental law, or assuming more roles in the head office management. Women, Syrian or Lebanese, can also take on small projects to rehabilitate old houses or other houses within their communities. While this may not encourage all women to join the sector, the triggering of innovative and creative capacities can help them engage more in the handicrafts sector, and develop new products with high demand or products that can help them gain competitiveness and advantage over imported ones.

To recap all the above, the different examples of non-traditional roles that women can take in the different selected value chains, are presented in the figure below, collected through the interviews with the different stakeholders, and analyzed further based on the highlighted challenges and opportunities existing in such sectors.

Figure 21: Overview of Non-Traditional Roles for Women Across Different Value Chains



Whether it is digital marketing, agriculture, forestry, renewable energy, supply chain management, or other sectors, women need support and shadowing to access resources that can facilitate acquisition of these new roles. Such resources range from technical support through coaching, or financial support through access to finances and grants, or psychosocial support through mentoring, or other forms. Details of such support and how it can be provided, not just for the advancement of women, but also for value chains growth, is discussed in more details in the recommendations section, highlighting the required steps for such advancement, be it at the macro-level, value chain level, or women individual level.

For renewable energy, supply chain management, and construction, women need a bundle of resources from access to capacity building on relevant technical skills, business development, or financial resources should they wish to start-up their own businesses. For rural tourism and digital marketing, they require support, not only in terms of capacity building in communication and language skills, but also in marketing, and access to potential clients that they can build on. For agriculture value chains, handicrafts, and essential oils, women need a combination of different support through financial grants, access to technology, marketing support, and capacity building of technical skills, marketing skills, and communication as well as language skills, especially if engaging in export markets. But apart from all of this, they need mentoring and psychosocial support, and they need to feel that someone is there to help them, guide them, and most importantly, trust in their abilities. This can inspire self-confidence and encourage them to take a step forward, with the knowledge that they have a mentor they can lean on and advice they can take to stay on the right path towards achieving their objectives and breaking the stereotypes.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

The value chain approach for women economic empowerment is only valid if adopted with a comprehensive approach; paving the way for more women to participate in economic nodes alone does not imply an improvement in their situation and could actually present an added burden on top of their numerous responsibilities, with more room for exploitation. Thus, empowering women to access resources and gain control over profits and access to promotion along the VC nodes in a supportive environment at the micro and macro levels is what is really required to attain women economic empowerment.

Shifting social norms, cultural stereotypes, and attitudes is a lengthy path and could take a generation to achieve, but the current period in Lebanon is favourable in light of all current initiatives and intentions towards progress. The lobbying and pressure of both public and private stakeholders - including NGOs, INGOs and donors - to address gender issues at the macro legal, political, and business levels could allow for a more suitable environment towards gender equality. In addition, the projects and programs addressing women economic empowerment are on the rise with substantial funding from World Bank, embassies, and other institutional donors.

In addition, with the age of information and advancements in IT, a change that used to take hundreds of years could take less than ten years, especially with the proliferation of inspiring success stories.

On the long run, the current challenges and barriers can be alleviated by the planned and implemented interventions and the country as a whole can profit from a more favourable business and gender environment. Each project or program should not be expected to resolve all issues, but they can definitely play an important role in presenting success stories, or paving the way for more generalized initiatives experimental approaches in the aim to cause a snowball effect in terms of tackling complex interlinked cultural, economic, and social issues.

Empowering women with the right skills and know-how is a pre-requirement and should not be an aim in itself towards improving women's economic roles. Innovations in trainings and skill empowerment approaches is crucial; previously implemented vocational trainings were not always satisfying in terms of market inclusion of trainees and helping them acquire sustainable skills. Thus, there is need for innovative approaches based on needs assessments.

Cross-cutting psychosocial and soft skills are also needed. The needs assessment at the local level and the inclusion of men and boys in the process are recommended. Market assessments and specifications in terms of skills and work requirements are seen as prerequisites to any training and coaching intervention.

Once women are technically equipped for an economic role, more awareness is needed to gain the support of people surrounding them at the household and community levels; women economic empowerment should be perceived as being in the interest of both men and women, but in cases of blind opposition, women should be able to make their own choices without being threatened by the family or community. So, by abolishing discriminative personal status laws at the macro level, more women will be free to choose their own work

or inherit and own more lands, which in turn would boost their self-confidence and allow them to launch their own business endeavors.

In addition, if access to resources and ease in entering the market are supported by accessible services, such as daycare facilities, BDS, bank loans, and a supportive business infrastructure, the chances of women's success would increase. Allowing women to access those services would give them more time to dedicate to their own businesses, with increased chances of making their own profits.

Women economic empowerment requires strong partnerships, aligned with the SDG 17: "Partnerships to achieve the Goals" incorporating all other SDGs, networks, and long term projects to pave the way for change.

## CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are based on in-depth qualitative analysis, in addition to a discussion on research findings with representatives from the civil society, government, donors, and UN agencies during the project's launch event. The below recommendations are organized thematically to address different project aspects and components. Innovative approaches and engagement of stakeholders' groups are also presented when possible.

### 6.1 LONG-TERM STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Some of the recommendations may be beyond the scope of this particular project, but more at the strategic levels. Pilot initiatives, however, can set the tone and provide examples of more approaches that can be replicated across different sectors.

The aim of long-term strategic interventions is to **provide equal chances for citizens to pursue their ambitions**, in a way that would be profitable to both men and women, but more positively affecting women given the current unfavourable state and additional challenges they face. This will not only focus on economic opportunities but also address infrastructure and education needs, namely joint interventions required from different ministries and government institutions in order to:

- Improve the quality of education and update programs to respond to today's technological advancements and to new market demands, with higher levels of student retention
- Revise the Lebanese educational programs and strategies to secure gender equality and non-discriminatory behavior
- Provide health and social coverage to all citizens in all productive sectors, including agriculture, home services, construction, freelance work...
- Develop infrastructure and transport services in all geographic regions to secure cheap and safe transportation
- Provide electricity and good quality internet connection in all Lebanese areas

Advocacy be accompany all these different actions, and partnerships with different stakeholders are vital for **organizing advocacy campaigns to push for tangible changes in laws and policies** impacting women's economic conditions such as equal wages, maternity leave, working conditions, labour rights, and social protection systems. The starting point can be the implementation of the Capital Investment Plan endorsed at the CEDRE Conference, which will allow for different ministries to work together towards achieving such objectives.

### 6.2 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Changes in women's statuses requires a change in the environment in which these women live, be it in the local surrounding or country as a whole. Such change needs to create a favourable and enabling environment for growth and the economic integration of women, via updating existing laws and drafting new laws that ensure the economic and social rights of women. In particular, the different parliamentary committees should work towards updating the personal status law and

labour law to grant more rights to women, as well as draft a binding sexual harassment law. Also, the amendment of labour laws should be aligned with today's markets and needs.

Other recommendations for action to be considered at the policy level include:

- **Reinforcing the role of gender focal points in ministries and in public institutions** to ensure gender mainstreaming across the various institutions. The NCLW should set indicators for focal points and monitor the process to ensure that the work is progressing towards fulfilling such indicators.
- **Establishing monitoring and control units within relevant ministries** (MoL and MoE) to monitor gender discrimination and unequal pay discrepancies through clear complaint mechanisms under the supervision of gender focal points. This should be accompanied by a public campaign to raise awareness and encourage women to claim their rights when they are victims of discrimination at the workplace. At the macro level, the enforcement of a clear road map to protect women rights in the private sector can be lobbied by the Ministry of Women Affairs and by the LLWB.
- **Extending advocacy efforts to influence decision-makers to abolish and revise discriminatory laws against women including the Personal Status Law and laws criminalizing sexual harassment in the public and private sectors.** This includes establishing clear reporting mechanisms, such as hotlines, to receive women's complaints and also develop safeguarding policies in the private and public sector.
- **Simplifying business set-up procedures**, which should be tackled by both the Ministries of Finance and Economy, to encourage micro and small enterprises, start-ups, and cooperatives creation, as these are crucial for women economic environment. Within this regard, the creation of a one-stop-shop was an old project that never saw the light, but could be established specifically to encourage more women integration in the economy. This should be supported by trainings on start-up establishment and on SMEs registration at the local level, which can be assumed by the different incubators around the country.
- **Establishing Gender Data Collection Systems at Ministries:** The involvement of Ministries (Education, Agriculture, Health, Labour, Social Affairs, Economy) through efficient Gender Focal points coordination could help bring forward the work on discriminative laws and procedures and on gender awareness beginning with school programs, and would ensure segregated data gathering. A committee should be established among these ministries to systematically collect gender data at each ministry and share it with different policy makers in an aim to adopt measures that ensure women favourable integration and protection in the work environment. The data collection can be done in collaboration with CAS, which can provide technical support and analysis for such data.
- **Establishing a coordination committee for women economic empowerment between related ministries** on the one hand, and between other stakeholders, on the other hand, to ensure good project implementation, avoiding overlaps. and a creative positive impact nationwide.



## 6.3 CAPACITY-BUILDING AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Designing appropriate strategies and interventions that address the needs of women.** Gender analysis and needs assessments should be ongoing to feed into designing strategies and activities including training content. This will ensure equal access and participation for all women, including people with physical disabilities and Syrian women refugees, and taking into consideration specific constraints and emerging barriers. It would be useful to look into the checklist of women's inclusivity in vocational trainings included in the "Guidelines for Non-Formal Market Based Skills Training in Lebanon," published by ILO and UNICEF<sup>73</sup> (Annex 9).
- **Developing CAP Programs (Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle)** in non-traditional specialties and in needed VC skills and tackling relevant selected value chains to include young women with low educational levels. This will promote potential promotion to higher technical degrees such as BP, BT and TS diplomas. Additionally, coaching should be provided through different schools to support women and help them put into practice their newly acquired skills to improve their potential for employability or entrepreneurship.
- **Creating a pool of competent technical trainers:** Engaging qualified trainers with the right technical know-how in terms of skills to adopt modern training methods and relevant technical experience for training on competencies within the value chains is crucial to yield positive result. In addition, organizing Training of Trainers (ToT) on gender issues, sensitivities, and non-discriminatory behavior is important. Supervisors should also be assigned to the different training programs to monitor and ensure quality trainings are provided by the different trainers.
- **Creating on-the-job training and dual system modules and programs with all pedagogical needed tools.** This can be done for different value chains, including digital marketing, logistics, and supply-chain management where women can learn and improve their knowledge in practical ways. This can be done through technical schools or vocational training programs at NGOs and/or municipalities. Acquired skills must be experienced through real projects and practically implemented at the community level.
- **Working with the private sector to support an inclusive market system:** Linking women with the private sector goes beyond identifying companies and SMEs supporting women economic integration. This is also focused on providing current incentives for both women and private sector entities within relevant VCs in terms of offering internships for women and job placement opportunities to complement technical or vocational programs.
- **Ensuring Monitoring and Evaluation systems implementation across all capacity building interventions:** The Deming Quality Cycle (plan, do, check, act) monitoring can be maintained to ensure quality trainings and to introduce correctional measures on a yearly basis.
- **Integrating Life and Soft Skills in the different trainings:** Technical trainings should be delivered in parallel to soft trainings to strengthen women self-confidence and to help them acquire digital

---

73 Checklist of Inclusivity, Guidelines for Non-Formal Market Based Skills Training in Lebanon, August 2018, ILO and UNICEF, page 22

and business skills, alongside supporting the integration of life skills, namely training provision on leadership, communication, and negotiation skills.

- **Identifying Best Practices and Champions among women learners for greater motivation:** identifying women champions in different economic fields will guide and influence women to challenge social barriers and aspire for advanced and non-traditional economic roles. This can be manifested through organizing meetings and field visits to successful women businesses within non-traditional VCs or in non-traditional VCs nodes in order to encourage women's positive behavioral and attitude changes towards economic inclusion and innovation. The linkage between potential women entrepreneurs and successful businesswomen or other professional players along the value chains can also provide peer-to-peer coaching and mentoring.
- **Boosting creativity, innovation, and curiosity to learn and to advance:** The traditional environment, the overload of household activities, and the confinement of women in their small and secluded communities don't help them interact with new ideas and with different social models: women openness to other cultures and other behaviors towards gender roles as a benchmark along with worldwide success stories can also be a source of inspiration and motivate women to pursue economic adventures. Trainings on creative thinking and innovative approaches, as well as problem solving, should be provided alongside financial literacy and managerial skills to promote entrepreneurship and start-ups.

Figure 22: Agrofood start-up pamphlets



## 6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO VALUE CHAINS

- **Focusing on Heritage as a key component in Rural Tourism:** Tourists are more keen on experiences rather than site-seeing and seek to live like locals in the countries they visit . Thus, it is important to focus on the “experience” when integrating new activities in rural tourism. Focusing on Food Heritage is one recommended sector, dwelling further into bee tourism or food trails that focus on traditional foods and processing of such foods in the region. Also, organizing traditional festivals with focus on bringing back folklore, such as dance, music and songs, in rural areas is economically empowering for remote areas in rural tourism.
- **Disregarding low-level jobs in the construction VC due to their hazardous nature:**<sup>74</sup> There is a need to focus on building the technical and business capacities of women to take on new roles through rehabilitating old houses, based on their skill level, whether painting installing electricity networks at an advanced stage, tiling, or fixing old carpentry products and refurbishing them.
- **Working with high quality standards of food, transportation, and production processes, especially in small ruminant VC:** Ensuring the safety of the product is of utmost importance in this sector and for consumers. Different consumers need to try the product and, unless they are assured of its safety, they won't be enticed to do consume it. Therefore, working closely with women in the handling and processing of the milk is crucial, and so is supporting them with technical knowledge on testing quality of milk and ensuring hygiene standards compliance at each stage of the processing, even if this takes place at their own homes instead of the at cooperative sites.
- **Innovation and controlling quality in the handicraft sector to secure marketing opportunities:** Lebanon cannot compete with imports from China and other countries that produce large volumes, but the comparative advantage lies in the design and quality of the handicraft product (finishing). These two should be the core focus of the support to this value chain, either through linking local initiatives, such as Fantasmeem or Minjara, to local artisans in different regions, or engaging local designers, as part of sustainable design initiatives, to work with local artisans on new products of high quality. Alongside, women can be coached on e-commerce and selling online, thus linking them to the digital media sector and providing different income generating opportunities for women of all ages and backgrounds.
- **Working on skills buildup for women to gain advantage in terms of resilience to climate change:** Agriculture and forestry are highly susceptible to climate change and this is mostly observed through increased forest fires and reduced water availability in such regions. Reforestation is an on-going activity involving communities but in terms of agriculture, technical support and capacity building should be provided to women with regards to planting new crops that do not have high water consumption levels, such as berries, or even small ruminant management, and engaging in processing that focuses on the seasonality of the produce rather than availability year round. There should also be a parallel focus on climate change for producing new products such as sun-dried berries or traditional small ruminant products that are climate change resistant. This provides new income generating opportunities for women, while engaging in building resistance against climate change. There is already an on-going project implemented by AUB on Climate-Smart products, and there is potential for linkage in that aspect. Additionally, women should be trained on reducing food losses, be it at the post-

74 Recommendations at the VC levels

harvest or processing levels, as well as reducing food waste, which also contribute to resilience to climate change.

- **Promote non-traditional roles for women: heads of cold storage facilities and packing houses:** The post-harvest phase is considered a bottleneck for the agriculture sector as it highly impacts the quality of the produce. The large variation in the management of the post-harvest units is negatively impacting the quality and, therefore, the exportability of the agriculture produce. There is a need to upgrade the post-harvest facilities and set-up new ones that are easily accessible to the farmers, and also comply with the standards set by the Ministry of Agriculture. Women can take on such roles given their traditional involvement in handling and packing fresh produce, as well as their intrinsic qualities in being attentive to details and good at management roles. Thus, technical and business management support should be provided for women to take on such roles and manage the cold storage or packing-houses.
- **Promote skill development based on Value Chain trends:** For renewable energy, supply chain management, and construction, women need a bundle of resources, from access to capacity building on relevant technical skills, business development, or financial resources, should they wish to start-up their own businesses. For rural tourism and digital marketing, they require support in terms of capacity building, not only in communication and language skills, but also in marketing and access to potential clients that they can build on. For agriculture value chains, handicrafts, and essential oils, there needs to be a combination of support through financial grants, access to technology, marketing support, and capacity building in technical skills, marketing skills, and communication as well as language skills especially if engaging in export markets. But apart from all of this, they need mentoring or psychosocial support to feel that someone is there to help them, guide them, and trust in their abilities. This will inspire self-confidence and encourage them to take this step forward, with the knowledge that they have mentor they can rely on for strategic advice to stay on the right track towards achieving their objective and breaking stereotypes.

## 6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND COOPERATIVES

### *Banks*

**Securing Seed Funds in selected private banks** to provide women with financial resources without the need for collaterals. However, to ensure a positive impact on the long run, women quotas for bank loans should be applied and endorsed with economic incentives for the banks. Additionally, banks should have monitoring systems put in place to reduce the risk of men taking over loan opportunities. This should take place, first by screening the applicants and then conducting site visits to check on work progress and ensure women are actually in charge of the project implementation.

### *BDS*

- **Expanding the BDS service coverage to different VCs and regions:** BDS and business coaching should also be available to SMEs and start-ups in rural and urban areas outside Beirut to support working women and help them improve the management of their businesses.

Thus, specialized BDS should be promoted in sectors more relevant to rural areas such as agriculture, tourism, and crafts. This will help support the establishment of new businesses with respect to different VCs and geographic regions, taking into account time availability and the real engagement capacity of women, with focus on the quality and the efficiency of the projects. Such services are expected to provide women with different choices and opportunities with direct links to the market.

- **Providing long-term business support and business coaching** to secure solid business results to women entrepreneurs. The average support period should be between two and three years. Each year, an action plan should be set for each business or cooperative, based on the status and advancement of the business unit accomplished in the previous year.
- **Supporting women's access to finance** by providing technical support to develop their ideas and translate them into business plans.

### *Strengthening women cooperatives*

- **Supporting women workers collective action:** Regrouping women in inclusive business structures promoting women's collective organization and unified voice is critical to enhancing women's ability to participate and lead in economic decision-making and action. It also increases bargaining power and creates positive synergy between the members complementing each other within the same group. However, the establishment of new women cooperatives should be based on the need and effectiveness of such structure in a specific VC or in a selected node common to all VCs, (such as the marketing node of rural tourism in a specific geographic area), so as to "institutionalize" and replicate its success.
- **Strengthening women-led cooperatives' governance and democratic practices: Cooperative bylaws** offer the ideal tax-friendly structure in addition to encouraging democratic practices, and equal /fair profits shared among the members. To ensure sound management, support to cooperatives should be provisioned, namely coaching, coupled with capacity building for members to improve governance, profitability, and feasibility to lead successful businesses, along with close follow-up. Access to assets and budgets should be well managed and controlled in supported cooperatives to implement inclusive and democratic activities for all members. Additionally, a pool of experts should be recruited to help establish linkages to coach SMEs and cooperatives, and to provide cross-cutting businesses services and maximize profits and market opportunities.
- **Encouraging outsourcing of different services, through start-ups or other structures, to cover gaps along the value chains.** For example, new product development should be integrated within women cooperatives, each relevant to their regions, and linked directly with the farmers that grow the fruits/vegetables used as raw material. As such, a win-win situation is achieved where cooperatives can source directly from farmer, thereby tracing the produce, and farmers save middlemen costs by selling directly to cooperatives. Another example would be in rural tourism, where different routes or activities should be organized to promote horizontal linkages, such as bee tourism, where tourists can follow the bee trail and engage in honey production. In all cases, it is important to implement interventions with a strategic lens, not only strengthening particular value chain but also working on linking them to other value chains, such as agri-tourism, or agriculture with renewable energy, or digital marketing with tourism and agriculture.
- **Promoting the set-up of permanent markets for cooperatives in urban areas:** This will

help overcome challenges regarding the presence of women at the marketing level within different value chains. The market will help channel products of cooperatives that can be sold, target new customers, and link women producers directly to their clients. Additionally, such businesses should be supported by international organizations or third party private companies to comply, should they want to sell their products within that market, with the **norms and specifications of demanded product quality**, specifically if targeting export markets as a means of accessing new markets and building customers' trust.

## 6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORTING CROSS CUTTING SERVICES

**Promoting collaboration between municipalities, community leaders, and local institutions to facilitate and promote women's economic participation:** The collaboration aims at endorsing initiatives addressing constraints on women's time, mobility, and care responsibilities. Potential initiatives include improving existing day care services in MoSA Social Development Centers and supporting the establishment of business development centers that have nurseries or daycare facilities within their premises. Communities in proximate regions should also receive support from international as well as local non-governmental organizations to encourage the establishment of transportation facilities run by women so as to facilitate mobility and security of women from one region to the other. Support should also be provided by municipalities, with governmental funds, to support women access to reliable electricity, internet, and clean water which are specifically needed for IT and digital marketing sectors as well as for rural tourism and within agriculture VCs.

## 6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENGAGING MEN

In a patriarchal society where most powers are under their prerogatives, **including men in the process and in programs at the community level** to increase women participation is essential.

The endorsement of men-led businesses supporting women participation, access, and control, can take place at different stages. For example, specific incentives should be offered for businesses providing opportunities for women on-the-job training and internships. Monitoring through periodic field visits should also take place to ensure good practices are adopted towards women-safe environments and that the general well-being of women is maintained.

Incentives for men endorsing **supportive practices for women involvement can also take form in receiving more visibility** through highlighting stories in the media, organizing award ceremonies, and promoting more networking opportunities in fairs and exhibitions highlighting the "women-friendly" practices such enterprises adopt. **This can be done in a similar manner to the initiatives carried out by UN Women and UN Global Compact**, in shedding light on the supportive businessmen and companies which already signed the "Women Equality Principles CEO Statement of Support."<sup>75</sup> This is just example of what can be done to motivate men to engage in women economic empowerment.

In the end, it is not about empowering women to take over men's roles in the sectors of construction, renewable energy, or supply chain management sectors, but more about **balancing**

---

75 [www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/networks\\_around\\_world\\_doc/resources/engagement\\_framework](http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/networks_around_world_doc/resources/engagement_framework)

**the roles between men and women, working side by side in a complementary manner to achieve equal access and benefits for both genders in these sectors.** One starting point can be working with different grass-root organizations to lobby for formally recognizing women's role in agriculture and working side by side with men to allow women to be involved in decision making on crops to cultivate, planting, as well as harvesting, and co-managing the post-harvest phase to make sure practices adhere to the standards required.

In construction, there is a need to give more attention to pilot projects that demonstrate success of women-engagement and then replicate this model in other areas. One project piloted by non-governmental organizations as a catalyst can involve men and women working in the rehabilitation of an old house, where the supervisor is a woman. Coaching her, as well as others, can demonstrate the possibility of having gender balanced work in construction and the capacity of women to take on different roles in that sector.

## 6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AWARENESS-RAISING

Developing a focused approach to awareness-raising that addresses social norms and gender stereotypes at scale whilst tackling broader gender inequalities that prevent women from realizing their rights across the economic, political and social spheres is vital.

For that, the following is recommended:

- **Ensuring that context and gender analysis is at the core of the campaign objectives and tactics:** An effective campaign should be based on a good analysis of the context, including gender analysis, to understand the root causes contributing to gender inequalities.
- **Adopting a participatory approach with different women and women-led organizations when organizing awareness campaigns:** Consultations with targeted groups, particularly women and girls, should be maintained at all times. The design phase should be based on identified concerns among women in targeted communities. It's also critical to amplify the voices of women from grassroots and rural areas to be reflected in and showcased through awareness and mobilization work.
- **Adopting an integrated approach to awareness-raising combining a wide range of channels and techniques including media work** is vital, as well as public engagement through art and entertainment, and engaging influencers. The campaign should also benefit from global events such the 16-days of activism and International Women's Day.
- **Ensuring campaign messages are personal, creative, clear, accessible, contagious, and opportunistic,** by taking advantage of any occasion that can serve the cause. Thought-provoking and benefits-based messages are recommended regarding specific issues related to gender equality, chosen carefully according to community-level readiness to prevent back-firing campaigns. However, the results and expectations of any campaign should be realistic and should not expect instant behavioral and attitude changes, but more an influence on the perception and the general "social climate" which can yield change on the long run.
- **Promoting community ownership and sustained engagement:** Engaging directly with community members including both men and women and organizing awareness efforts in collaboration with the municipalities to be agents of change for women economic

empowerment and breaking stereotypes will ensure sustainability of awareness initiatives beyond the project duration.

- **Extending awareness-raising on gender equality** to promote changes in beliefs and practices among market actors and the private sectors should be prioritized.
- **Scaling up ambitions** for women's economic participation from the household, to the community, to local markets, and to the national level with an aim to promote discussion and challenge the discourses related to women's capabilities, economic rights, unequal division of labor is vital in parallel to recognizing women's labor and unpaid care work, and encouraging the fair distribution of domestic tasks.
- **Encouraging fair distribution of household activities** is important particularly within the family, especially in terms of childcare, elderly care, and household activities through awareness on family interest and economic profit of working women. This can be supported by **introducing awareness programs in schools** to target behavioral changes for both boys and girls, and for their parents indirectly.
- **Conducting awareness campaigns complemented by trainings on start-up and SMEs establishment and registration** is useful to encourage them not to function informally and to open opportunities for export or benefit from supportive programs for women entrepreneurs.

## 6.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTNERSHIPS, NETWORKING, AND ALLIANCE-BUILDING

Initiating strategic partnerships with various actors and institutions including communities, civil society organizations, think tanks and engaging with governance institutions is crucial for promoting women's economic participation and leadership. For this purpose, a diversified partnership portfolio is noted below:

- **Building Partnership with Civil Society Organizations:** It is to select strong partners with field experience to recruit groups of women to work with, in each geographic area in order to:
  - a. Assess the educational and skill levels of women and their needs; coach the group to strengthen their capacity at the personal level regarding self-confidence, ambition, and self-projection (allowing them to envision the status of their projects three years into the future);
  - b. Work on introducing and presenting new VCs opportunities. At this stage, working with men at the local community level is crucial to endorse women initiatives.
- **Developing Collaboration with Local Authorities:** Since the current municipal councils will remain as they are until 2022, it's crucial to ensure sustainability of activities through signed MoUs to prevent after the efforts being lost after 2022. Support can include, but is not limited to:
  - a. Encouraging more women to present themselves as candidates to municipal elections and prepare them through leadership programs.



- b. Training municipal human resources on GBV prevention and referral. Engaging municipal councils and religious authorities at the local level to tackle the GBV issue at the community level (police trainings should encourage such interventions).
  - c. Using municipal linkages to promote rural communities and attract people to visit and make use of local economies. “Produits du Terroir”(local products).
- **Collaboration with Governmental Institutions and Public Institutions:** Coordinated initiatives with the NCLW, the Ministry of Women Affairs, and the LLBW are recommended to regroup, organize and reinforce the work of gender focal points, as well as monitoring. Similarly, joint efforts should be established with the Ministry of Economy and Trade, and the Chamber of Commerce to facilitate enterprise and start-up procedures and increase enterprise registration, in general, and for women, in particular.
  - **Coordination with FAO and the General Directory of Cooperatives:** Within their scope of work in reorganizing and empowering cooperatives as inclusive economic structures, close collaboration should be maintained with FAO and the General Directory of Cooperatives to improve the work of existing women cooperatives relevant to selected Value Chains and to support in establishing new cooperatives.
  - **Working with Private Sector and Financial Institutions:** Coordinated actions should be created with businesses and companies to benefit women’s economic empowerment across the value chains including: making women more visible along their value chains, addressing gender pay gap, establishing flexible working arrangements, increasing the share of procurement from women-led enterprises and cooperatives, providing trainings and internships that are specifically targeting women and enabling women’s access to improved and sustainable livelihoods opportunities. These actions should be supported by a dialogue with the private sector to highlight best examples from companies that do integrate equal labor conditions for working with women employees. Partnerships should also extend to financial institutions such as the Central Bank of Lebanon, private banks, Kafalat, and microfinance organizations to bring together and work towards facilitating women’s access to finance.
  - **Engaging, Media Agencies, Female and Male Public Figures and Celebrities** to create a movement supporting women’s economic participation and leadership.

## REFERENCES

1. Creating Economic Opportunities in Support of The Lebanon National Jobs Program, Program for Results, June 6, 2018, World Bank
2. World Bank (2013), Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict
3. Women in Lebanon-Infograph 2019, World Bank, ILO and UNICEF
4. World Bank. (2015). Lebanon Economic Monitor: The Economy of New Drivers and Old Drags, Global Practice
5. Gender Assessment for Lebanon, USAID, 2012
6. القوانين والسياسات والممارسات المتعلقة بالنوع الاجتماعي في لبنان Gender Justice Report, UNFPA-UNDP-UN Women 2018
7. Dah, A., Abosedra, S., & Dahbourah, F. (2014). Gender Pay Discrimination in Lebanon, Assessment of Recent Data. Oxford Journal: An International Journal of Business & Economics 5(1)
8. Janmyr, M. (2016). The Legal Status of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, Lebanon. AUB policy Institute
9. Drivers of Despair-Refugee Protection Failures in Jordan and Lebanon- Norwegian Refugee Council
10. World Bank and Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs (OMSWA) in Lebanon, November-December 2017
11. Agro Industry Fact Book, Sectors in Focus, Investment and Development authority of Lebanon, [www.idal.gov.lb](http://www.idal.gov.lb)
12. ICU, *Freekeh Value Chain Assessment and Mapping*, United Nations Development Program, UNDP, Lebanon, 2018
13. Mercy Corps, *Small Ruminant Dairy Value Chain Assessment*, Protect and Provide Livelihoods in Lebanon, Beirut, June 2014
14. Hamade K., *Non-Wood Forest Value Chains in Lebanon*, Food and Agriculture Organization, Lebanon, 2016
15. Ministry of Tourism, *Rural Tourism Strategy*, USAID Lebanon Industry Value Chain Development Project (LIVCD), Lebanon, February 2014
16. The Executive Magazine, *Traditional Handicrafts in Lebanon: something old, something new*, Lebanon, April 2019: <http://www.executive-magazine.com/special-report/traditional-handicrafts-in-lebanon>
17. United Nations Development Program, UNDP, *Prioritization and assessment of value chains within the Renewable Energy Sector in Lebanon*, April 2018
18. Investment & Development Authority of Lebanon, Sectors in Focus: Information & Communication Technology: [https://investinlebanon.gov.lb/en/sectors\\_in\\_focus/information\\_technology/experts\\_views\\_on\\_the\\_sector](https://investinlebanon.gov.lb/en/sectors_in_focus/information_technology/experts_views_on_the_sector)
19. BankMed, Analysis of Lebanon ICT Sector, Market & Economic Research Division, Lebanon, June 2015
20. World Bank. (2015). Lebanon Economic Monitor: The Economy of New Drivers and Old Drags, Global Practice for Macroeconomics & Fiscal Management, GMFDR MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION
21. World Bank. (2012). Good Jobs Needed: The Role of Macro, Investment, Education, Labour and Social Protection Policies

22. [http://w.idal.com.lb/en/doing\\_business/labor\\_force/profile](http://w.idal.com.lb/en/doing_business/labor_force/profile)
23. World Bank Group. (2017). Jobs for North Lebanon. Beirut
24. United Nations. (2017). Government of Lebanon, Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020. Lebanon
25. World Bank. 2018. Lebanon's Economic Outlook,
26. <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/866011507054530081/MEM-Oct2017-Lebanon-ENG.pdf>
27. Beyond Reform & Development (BRD). (2017). Leaders for sustainable livelihoods. "Skills gaps analysis for improved livelihood sustainability in Lebanon", p.15. Lebanon
28. UN High Commissioner for Refugees. (2018). Livelihoods assessments Reports
29. Avis, C. (2017). Gender equality and women's empowerment in Lebanon. University of Birmingham Knowledge, K4D, evidence and learning for Development
30. Wallace, T. (2013). Women's work in Lebanon: making the invisible visible. Lebanon. CRTD.A
31. Towards Decent Work in Lebanon: Issues and Challenges in Light of the Syrian Refugee Crisis – ILO, 2015
32. Carreras, E. (2017). Gender Analysis in Lebanon, Situation analysis report- European Union under the Contract n° 2017/388231.
33. Leaders for sustainable livelihoods. "Skills gaps analysis for improved livelihood sustainability in Lebanon". 2017
34. ESCWA Gender in Agriculture and Agro-processing in Lebanon 2001
35. CEDAW 2014 report
36. The Global Gender Gap Report, World Economic Forum 2018
37. Lebanon GAP Mashreq Conf- 8Jan2019-Power Point Presentation
38. Lebanon Gender Justice & The Law, UNDP, 2018
39. DISSECTING LEBANESE LAW 293 ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: ARE WOMEN PROTECTED? Fatima Moussawi and Nasser Yassin, AUB Policy Institute, 2017
40. Resource Guide for Gender Integration in Value Chain Development in Lebanon, USAID 2016
41. Employment and Labour Market Analysis (ELMA), GIZ, 2016
42. Guidelines for Non-Formal Market-Based Skills Training in Lebanon, ILO and UNICEF August 2018
43. National Strategy for Gender equality 2017-2030, Ministry of State for Women's Affairs
44. Potential Opportunities for Women's Economic Empowerment in Potato and Leafy Green Vegetable Value Chains, Akkar, Northern Lebanon- ILO and Mada, 2017
45. Gender in Value Chains Toolkit Agri- ProFocus Learning Network
46. Developing Gender-Sensitive Value Chains A Guiding Framework, FAO 2016
47. Gender Profile LEBANON, Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, 2016
48. LEBANON MENA Gender Equality Profile Status of Girls and Women in the Middle East and North Africa, UNICEF, 2011
49. Women in Lebanon through Numbers, CAS, 2014, Power Point Presentation in Arabic

50. Action Document for “Supporting the private sector development in Lebanon, EU, 2015
51. Market Assessment: Saida Building Resilient Communities in Lebanon: An Integrated Approach to Livelihoods and Income Generation for Vulnerable Populations, CESVI, 2017
52. Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020, UNHCR, 2018
53. Skill Gap Analysis for Tripoli Special Economic Zone, UNDP 2017
54. القوانين والسياسات والممارسات المتعلقة بالتنوع الاجتماعي في لبنان, Arabic, 2018 UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP
55. Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture index, USAID, 2012
56. Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Lebanon, K4D HelpDesk Report, 2017
57. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, The Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995
58. The Handicraft Sector in Lebanon Executive Summary, ILO, UNICEF– June 2018
59. Honey Value Chain Assessment Report Final Lebanon Industry Value Chain Development, USAID, 2013
60. The Honey Value Chain Approach Access to Markets, Aggregation, Productivity, Training Programs and Innovation, USAID, May – 2015
61. Supporting Private Sector Development in Lebanon Component 1 Agribusiness Value Chains in the Akkar region Halba, RMF, Fair Trade, Mada-Expertise France, 2018
62. Increasing Competitiveness of Vegetables Value Chains in Akkar: The Case of Tomatoes, Peppers, Lettuce, Pumpkins and Jute Mallow, fair Trade, Expertise France, 2018
63. Export Value Chain Analysis Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Lebanon, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 2016
64. Improving Economic Opportunities for Fishermen in Sahel Zahrani Union of Municipalities, UNDP 2016
65. Non-Wood Forest Product Value Chains in Lebanon, FAO, 2016
66. Zaatar in Lebanon Value Chain Assessment and Analysis, UNDP, 2018
67. Potatoes and Leafy Green Vegetables: Value Chain Analysis (Akkar, Lebanon), ILO, 2015
68. Jobs for North Lebanon: Potato, Recycling and Solid Waste Value Chains, ILO September 2017
69. Prioritization and Assessment of Value Chains within the Renewable Energy Sector in Lebanon, Solar Water Heaters, Solar Photovoltaic (PV), Wind energy, Bioenergy, UNDP, 2018
70. Freekeh in Lebanon Value Chain Assessment and Analysis, UNDP, 2018
71. Rural Tourism Value Chain Assessment Report, USAID, 2014
72. Rural Tourism Value Chain Assessment Report, MercyCorps, 2014
73. Social Impact, Resource Guide for Gender Integration in Value Chain Development in Lebanon, USAID, Lebanon, August 2016.
74. Mc. Kenzie, Lebanon’s Economic Vision, Ministry of Economy & Trade: <https://www.economy.gov.lb/media/11893/20181022-1228full-report-en.pdf>
75. World Bank, Strategic Assessment : A Capital Investment Plan for Lebanon, Beirut, April 2018: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/935141522688031167/pdf/124819-REVISED-CIP-Assessment-Final.pdf>

## Annex 1: Gender Analytical Framework Table

	Participation	Access	Control
<p><b>Macro</b></p> <p><i>Applies to all value chains. Exceptions will be highlighted when identified.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Labour and employment regulations that enable or hinder women's equal participation in value chain development?</li> <li>- Sectoral regulations that enable or hinder women's equal participation in value chain development?</li> <li>- Social regulations to support women's entry to the labor market?</li> <li>- Gender equality law and policy that promotes women's equal participation in value chain development? Does it include commitments towards specific groups of women (i.e. rural women, women-headed households, refugee women)?</li> <li>- Relevant government commitments to women's equal participation in value chain development (sectoral, trade, export policy relevant to the selected value chains)? Specific measures?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do policy and institutional settings support women to have greater access to productive resources?</li> <li>- Do policy and institutional settings support women to have greater access to relevant services?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do policy and institutional settings support women to have greater control over productive resources?</li> <li>- Do policy and institutional settings support women to control benefits from value chain development?</li> </ul> <p>Economic rights</p> <p>Property ownership</p> <p>Inheritance law</p> <p>Land tenure</p>

<p><b>Meso</b></p> <p><i>Will be disaggregated per value chain</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do women participate?</li> <li>- What roles do they perform? What roles do men perform? (Division of labor).</li> <li>- The nature of women's participation (formal, informal, paid, unpaid, seasonal, temporary, casual)?</li> <li>- Visibility and value granted to women's role?</li> <li>- Are women involved in stages where substantive value is generated? What are the benefits for women?</li> <li>- Health and safety issues that women face in their work?</li> <li>- What determines women's participation (norms, culture, attitudes, skills, availability)?</li> <li>- Opportunities to promote women's participation (vertical and horizontal relationships)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gendered access to relevant productive resources?<sup>76</sup></li> <li>- Gendered access to relevant services?<sup>77</sup> Are services providers specifically reaching out to women?</li> <li>- Gendered access to hired labor (if labor intensive activity)?</li> <li>- Gendered access to markets (transport, type of markets, middle-men)?</li> <li>- Women's capability to use the available resources / services?</li> <li>- Influencing factors that enable or hinder women's access?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who controls access to productive resources?</li> <li>- Women's ability to negotiate (decisions on sales, management of income)</li> <li>- Who controls benefits?</li> <li>- Women's involvement in decision-making structures with regards to value chain management (for example membership criteria and management positions in cooperatives / associations)?</li> <li>- What type of decisions are made by women?</li> <li>- How does decision-making processes look like?</li> <li>- To what degree to women from vulnerable communities participate in decision-making processes?</li> <li>- Influencing factors?</li> <li>- Opportunities to promote women's leadership?</li> </ul>
Node 1			
Node 2			
Node 3			
Node 4			
<p><b>Micro</b></p> <p><i>Applies to all value chains. Exceptions will be highlighted when identified.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the intra-household division of labor (domestic responsibilities)?</li> <li>- Does the intra-household division of labor enable or hinder women's participation in value chain work?</li> <li>- Women's mobility (are there spaces not available to women)?</li> <li>- Norms and values with regards to women's and men's respective involvement in domestic work and economic activities?</li> </ul>	<p>See meso-level analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intra-household decision-making of time-use?</li> <li>- Who earns income?</li> <li>-</li> <li>- Intra-household decision-making of income and spending?</li> </ul>

76 Productive resources are defined per value chain node

77 Services are defined per value chain node

## Annex 2: Matrix for existing value chain selection

Weight (%)	Criteria	Score											
		VC1	VC2	VC3	VC4	VC5	VC6	VC7	VC8	VC9	VC10	VC11	VC12
Economic Growth Potential Criteria (20%)	Existing gap between market demand and supply	3	4	3	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Available wholesale and retail distribution channels, with substantial client number willing to purchase the products	4	3	5	5	4	3	4	5	5	5	4	3
	Opportunity to improve and expand production	4	5	4	4	3	4	4	5	4	5	4	4
	Competitive prices when compared to other suppliers	3	3	4	2	3	2	3	4	4	2	3	4
	Potential of upgrading and innovation enabled by technological and managerial support	3	5	4	3	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	5
	Availability of raw material and existence of adequate infrastructure	5	3	4	4	3	4	5	5	3	3	3	3
	Sub-total score	22	23	24	22	21	22	24	28	25	24	22	23
	Weighted Score (Weight * Total Score/6)/ 100	0.73	0.77	0.80	0.73	0.70	0.73	0.80	0.93	0.83	0.80	0.73	0.77
	Gender Empowerment (50%)	Existing role for women in the value chain	3	2	5	4	4	1	3	3	4	5	4
Substantial number of women employed or working in the sector		4	2	4	4	4	1	2	4	5	3	3	4
Syrian and Lebanese women possess basic educational levels		4	2	4	4	4	4	2	3	2	5	4	4
Opportunities for women to acquire new skills to upgrade processing and to diversify products		3	5	4	3	3	2	5	5	3	4	3	5
Women integration and potential access to income, assets and equipment		2	3	4	4	3	2	4	4	3	4	4	4
Low entry barriers for poor entrepreneurs and small-scale producers		2	3	5	2	3	4	5	4	3	4	4	4
Innovative sectors opening new opportunities to women		1	5	4	2	2	1	5	3	3	3	3	4
Compatibility with women's time and mobility constraints		3	4	4	3	4	3	5	4	3	4	4	4
Fit to women safety and basic rights		2	4	4	2	2	1	4	4	4	4	4	4
Low barriers for women's participation in leadership positions		1	5	4	2	2	2	4	3	2	4	4	4
Potential promotion for women along the value chain nodes		2	4	4	3	3	2	4	5	2	3	2	4
Sub-total score		27	39	46	33	34	23	43	45	34	43	39	45
Weighted Score (Weight*Total Score/11)/ 100		1.23	1.77	2.09	1.50	1.55	1.05	1.95	2.05	1.55	1.95	1.77	2.05

Programmatic Criteria (30%)	<b>Outreach</b>												
	Benefit nationwide versus regional benefits	4	4	5	4	3	5	4	4	4	3	3	4
	Availability of structured and organized actors	3	2	4	3	3	2	4	3	4	2	1	3
	Size of the value chain (number of actors involved in the value chain)	5	3	3	5	4	3	2	3	3	3	2	4
	<b>Project Related Aspect</b>												
	Relevance to ministries and government planning in economy and social policies	3	4	3	2	4	3	5	4	4	3	2	4
	Municipalities and cooperatives responsiveness and activeness	2	3	3	4	3	4	5	4	3	3	2	4
	<b>Prospect of Success</b>												
	Existing of other organization to collaborate with	2	3	4	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	4
	Availability of sufficient resources: time and know-how	4	2	5	4	4	1	3	4	3	3	3	4
	Potential interest for investors	2	4	3	3	4	2	4	3	4	3	3	4
	Availability of service providers and enabling environment to support actors	3	2	4	3	4	2	4	2	3	3	4	4
	Sub-total score	28	27	34	30	32	25	35	31	32	27	23	35
	Weighted Score (Weight*Total Score/9)/ 100	0.93	0.90	1.13	1.00	1.07	0.83	1.17	1.03	1.07	0.90	0.77	1.17
<b>Total Weighted Score</b>	<b>2.89</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>4.02</b>	<b>3.23</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>2.61</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>3.98</b>	



## Annex 3: Matrix for new value chain selection

Weight (%)	Criteria	Score			
		VC1	VC2	VC3	VC4
Economic Growth Potential Criteria (20%)	Existing gap between market demand and supply	2	3	5	5
	Available wholesale and retail distribution channels, with substantial client number willing to purchase the products	4	3	4	4
	Opportunity to improve and expand production	2	4	4	5
	Competitive prices when compared to other suppliers	1	4	5	4
	Potential of upgrading and innovation enabled by technological and managerial support	1	4	5	5
	Availability of raw material and existence of adequate infrastructure	4	3	2	4
	Sub-total score	14	21	25	27
	Weighted Score (Weight * Total Score/6)/ 100	0.47	0.70	0.83	0.90
	Gender Empowerment (50%)	Existing role for women in the value chain	1	3	5
Substantial number of women employed or working in the sector		0	3	4	3
Syrian and Lebanese women possess basic educational levels		4	3	3	3
Opportunities for women to acquire new skills to upgrade processing and to diversify products		4	4	5	5
Women integration and potential access to income, assets and equipment		1	5	5	5
Low entry barriers for poor entrepreneurs and small-scale producers		4	5	4	4
Innovative sectors opening new opportunities to women		5	5	3	4
Compatibility with women's time and mobility constraints		1	4	4	4
Fit to women safety and basic rights		1	4	3	3
Low barriers for women's participation in leadership positions		3	4	4	3
Potential promotion for women along the value chain nodes		3	4	4	4
Sub-total score		27	44	44	43
Weighted Score (Weight*Total Score/12)/ 100		1.13	1.83	1.83	1.79

Programmatic Criteria (30%)	<b>Outreach</b>				
	Benefit nationwide versus regional benefits	5	5	5	4
	Availability of structured and organized actors	5	5	5	4
	Size of the value chain (number of actors involved in the value chain)	5	4	5	4
	<b>Project Related Aspect</b>				
	Relevance to ministries and government planning in economy and social policies	1	4	5	4
	Municipalities and cooperatives responsiveness and activeness	1	4	4	4
	<b>Prospect of Success</b>				
	Existing of other organization to collaborate with	0	4	4	3
	Availability of sufficient resources: time and know-how	1	4	3	3
	Potential interest for investors	1	4	4	4
	Availability of service providers and enabling environment to support actors	1	5	5	4
	Sub-total score	20	39	40	34
	Weighted Score (Weight*Total Score/9)/ 100	0.67	1.30	1.33	1.13
<b>Total Weighted Score</b>	<b>2.26</b>	<b>3.83</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>3.83</b>	

## Annex 4: Justification for each selected Value Chain

### 1. Handicrafts

- ✓ Strong link to the rising sector of tourism. Tourists expenditure is 1/3 devoted to shopping: handicrafts, clothing and books (The World Travel and Tourism Council)
- ✓ Women are active in along the supply chain in the technical production, the design, and the marketing
- ✓ The mobility between the VC nodes has high potential, with leader positions to women
- ✓ Existence of supporting structure and resources

### 2. Small Ruminants

- ✓ Increasing Demand for Small Ruminant Products
- ✓ Existence of roles for both Syrian and Lebanese women in value chain
- ✓ Higher Potential for upgrading roles for women and taking leadership through Cooperatives and other structures
- ✓ High interest of national and international organizations to further develop sector-Linkages with other sectors such as rural tourism

### 3. Rural Tourism

- ✓ Increasing demand for domestic tourism: different forms and sectors
- ✓ Considerable number of women working along chain with less barriers for new entry
- ✓ Higher opportunities for entrepreneurship in diversified sectors: Gastro-tourism emerging trend
- ✓ National Interest building on existing initiatives of tourism and agriculture
- ✓ National benefit and availability of services providers (enabling environment)

### 4. Honey

- ✓ Opportunities in both export and domestic markets, especially if quality and certification are improved, with better packaging
- ✓ Innovative role for women, with substantial source of secondary income. Women have added values for requested skills to improve the sector
- ✓ Rooms for improvement in understanding modern beekeeping techniques and principals. So, if women are empowered with needed skills, they will have the power of knowledge to enter the sector in leader positions
- ✓ Many cooperatives and supportive structures already exist

### 5. Oregano

- ✓ Existing demand with increase due to export potential
- ✓ Higher potential for technology integration and development along the value chain.
- ✓ Existing role of women with more opportunities for increasing jobs and taking on leading

positions along the chain

- ✓ Fit with national reforestation strategies with more private sector interest for cultivation due to export potential

## **6. Freekeh**

- ✓ Increasing demand for health-conscious consumers- locally and abroad
- ✓ Increasing investment in sector, in terms of processing and packaging.
- ✓ Available skilled resources: The high ability of both Syrian and Lebanese women to possess related and upgraded skills and
- ✓ Concentrated in South but with potential scale up to other regions
- ✓ The strong interest to work on the value chain from many players

## **7. Renewable Energy**

- ✓ Innovative sector newly introduced in the Lebanese market. The Solar Photovoltaic (PV), the Wind Energy, and the Bio-energy are expected to generate for the year 2021, 14,323 jobs under the conservative scenario
- ✓ There is a need for skilled people in operation, service, maintenance and logistics. Women can benefit from an accessible learning curve, especially with her higher education rates
- ✓ This VC is perfectly aligned with government strategy and supported by many actors

## **8. Fresh Fruits, Vegetables and Potato**

- ✓ Opportunities for fresh & processed products for exports and local market. Increasing demand for fresh fruits, vegetables and potatoes worldwide
- ✓ On-farm jobs for non-Lebanese and for Women especially in post-harvest and in processing. Robust skill development path in agriculture and in industrial processing.
- ✓ High interest in fruits, vegetables and potatoes for many actors including Ministry of Agriculture

Similarly, justifications or rationale adopted for the identification of the new value chains were summarized per value chains, as described further in the paragraphs below.

## **1. Logistics and Supply Chain Management**

- ✓ Sector of service represents more than 60% of the economy. E-commerce and the new ways of doing business rely on connectivity
- ✓ Gap between supply and demand for qualified employees in logistics, quality control and other managerial activities
- ✓ Integrated within the IT Sector
- ✓ High education of young Lebanese women favours them in this VC
- ✓ Leader and entrepreneurial opportunities, with high potential to access income and other benefits for women

## 2. ICT with Focus on Digital Marketing

- ✓ Marketing Essential and Main Weak node of different value chains- inability to ride digitization wave
- ✓ High education of young Lebanese women favours them in this VC
- ✓ Existing Initiatives towards increase digital literacy of Lebanese & Syrian Women in marginalized areas
- ✓ Positive Spill-over effect with potential jobs creation in different sectors: Tourism, Agriculture, Environment
- ✓ Lower barriers to entry and low investment costs required

## 3. Medicinal and Aromatic Plants-Essential Oils

- ✓ International increased demand for essential oils and medicinal plants for pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries
- ✓ Rich Biodiversity with existing involvement of women in oil extraction- Laurel
- ✓ High interest in investment in such sectors with potential for diversification in different products: Oregano oil, lavender, sage,
- ✓ Alignment with national forestation and environment protection priorities
- ✓ More potential for technology upgrading

## 4. Construction with Focus on Restoration

- ✓ The 4th economic sector in Lebanon “35,000 operators employing 130,000 people in a multitude of roles” (Employment and Labour Market Analysis, GIZ, 2016)
- ✓ Potential of specialization and improvements, especially in restoration: the amended rent law will release apartments from their old tenants. Restoration and maintenance would be in high demand
- ✓ The innovation aspect for women, Syrian and Lebanese
- ✓ High labour intensity at the national level
- ✓ Women safety aspect should be highlighted in this sector, though.

## Annex 5: Current and Future Projects

Level	Projects
	CDR
	Kafa
	MoET
	FAO
	MoSA & Expertise France
<b>Participation</b>	IECD
	Mada
	MoSA
	Handcpd Union
	Injaz
	LLWB
	Handicapped Union
	CDR
	NCLW
	Kafalat
<b>Access</b>	BLC
	Mada
	MoSA & Unicef
	MoSA
	Majmoua
	USAid
	LLWB
<b>Control</b>	ILO
	Coop Direct/Fair Trade/ No Garlic No Onion
	BLC

## Annex 6: Checklist of Inclusivity

	CURRICULA DESIGN	LOCATION & PHYSICAL ACCESS	MONITORING	TRAINING IMPLEMENTATION	TESTING & CERTIFICATION	OUTREACH RELEVANT TO ALL CATEGORIES
WOMEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carry out a questionnaire/ inclusivity checklist on existing curricula to see if courses are inclusive or not.</li> <li>- Carry out a needs analysis to identify gender-specific issues that should be addressed in the curricula design.</li> <li>- Ensure schedule respects the specific needs of women.</li> <li>- Trainers should be aware and have undergone gender-sensitivity training.</li> <li>- Subjects covered should be taught in a gender-inclusive manner.</li> <li>- The mix of theory + practice within curricula should also take into account the needs of women and those with child-rearing duties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Safe transportation to and from training locations for women and other vulnerable groups.</li> <li>- Provision of childcare at the training location should improve inclusivity of mothers and main caregivers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carry out assessments in safe spaces.</li> <li>- Respect cultural sensitivity and other factors likely to impact on women taking part in training.</li> <li>- Female staff to conduct the evaluation or be part of the evaluation team where possible.</li> <li>- Questions specifically tailored to women should be included.</li> <li>- Anonymity and confidentiality should be assured.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure gender-appropriate methods of transportation are available and provided.</li> <li>- Provide information about rights/awareness to all trainees and staff.</li> <li>- Where possible, ensure that training (both class- and workplace-based) has some degree of time flexibility, especially with respect to school timings or other responsibilities that women may have.</li> <li>- Support services (e.g. childcare) should be provided or available.</li> <li>- Issues of personal safety and harassment must be taken seriously.</li> <li>- Psychological support should be available, alongside effective and confidential complaint mechanisms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Childcare should be made available during study and test times.</li> <li>- Location and time of tests should take into account the external responsibilities that women may face.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training should be designed on the basis of the needs and resources (time, location and accessibility) of all parties (students, trainers and businesses offering placements or on-the-job training).</li> <li>- Involve beneficiaries in the planning and evaluation of training – this should meet their norms and habits (overall conditions).</li> <li>- Media and visibility campaigns should be undertaken to better attract groups which may be currently underserved or feel that such courses are not suited to them.</li> <li>- Announce training schedules well before the start of the programme.</li> <li>- Write a clear outreach message in terms of logistics, ideally with specific messages for different target groups.</li> <li>- Service providers should be accredited and follow good standards that are nationally and internationally recognized, and be endorsed by local employers.</li> </ul>

Checklist of Inclusivity, Guidelines for Non-Formal Market Based Skills Training in Lebanon, August 2018, ILO and UNICEF, page 22

## Annex 7: Women Equality Principles CEO Statement of Support

### **The Seven Principles ask signatories to:**

1. Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality
2. Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination
3. Ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all women and men workers
4. Promote education, training, and professional development for women
5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain, and marketing practices that empower women
6. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy
7. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality



Study conducted by:

**NIRAS**

BARRIERS  
Opportunities  
BARRIERS  
Opportunities  
BARRIERS  
Opportunities  
BARRIERS  
Opportunities