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USAID LEBANON GENDER ASSESSMENT

Final Assessment Report

Performance Management and Support Program for Lebanon (PMSPL II)

JANUARY 16, 2019

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Kelsey Simmons, Jennifer Pendleton, Dustin Smith, Abigail Spangler, and Sarah Smith-Lunsford of EnCompass LLC in collaboration with Najwa Andraos of Social Impact, Inc.

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USAID LEBANON GENDER ASSESSMENT

Final Assessment Report

Performance Management and Support Program for Lebanon (PMSPL II)

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Performance Management and Support Program for Lebanon (PMSPL II) for USAID/Lebanon

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ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Center for Educational Research and Development
CLA	Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting
CMI	Center for Mediterranean Integration
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DGTVET	Directorate General for TVET
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IM	Implementing Mechanism
KII	Key Informant Interview
KIP	Knowledge Is Power
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
NCLW	National Commission for Lebanese Women
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PMSPL II	Performance Management and Support Program for Lebanon
RACE II	Reaching All Children with Education
SRGBV	School-Related Gender-Based Violence
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID/LEBANON GENDER ASSESSMENT PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

In 2017, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Lebanon commissioned the Performance Management and Support Program for Lebanon (PMSPL II) to conduct a country-wide gender assessment to complement the Mission's strategic direction and inform USAID's program development. The gender assessment aims to identify opportunities for USAID/Lebanon to address sector-specific gender gaps and integrate gender more intentionally across its portfolio. The ultimate goal is to help advance Lebanon toward achieving more effective and responsive local development and governance and stronger institutions.

In early 2018, the PMSPL II team convened a half-day design meeting with USAID representatives and PMSPL II staff to collaboratively define the focus and key areas of inquiry for the gender assessment. As a result of this meeting, the overarching question and key research questions were identified. The overarching question was:

What gender gaps and opportunities can USAID/Lebanon programs address to better achieve the Mission's development objectives?

The team addressed the research questions using two data-collection methods. Exhibit I covers questions 1–5, researched during the 2018 data collection, centering on the five sectors that USAID/Lebanon currently works in and on the focus areas of each research question.

Exhibit I: Research Questions Focused on in 2018 Data Collection

KEY QUESTIONS	FOCUS AREAS
1. What are the gender gaps and opportunities related to governance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participation in municipal councils/municipal development committees• Participation in local and national elections• Barriers and opportunities for women; youth; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) persons; and persons with disabilities
2. What are the gender gaps and opportunities related to livelihoods and access to finance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Priorities and decision making about how to use financial resources• Types of financial resources and income generation activities desired and available• Gender gaps in access to loans and ability to save
3. What are the gender gaps and opportunities related to water management and governance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water access and use• Concern related to water management and infrastructure• Water-management decisions at household, community, and municipal levels
4. What are the gender gaps and opportunities related to workforce development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How the legal/policy environment supports or hinders workforce participation• The role of gender stereotypes in determining career path/opportunities
5. What are the gender gaps and opportunities related to reforestation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involvement in reforestation and environmental sustainability• Participation and leadership in environmental committees and reforestation activities

The following table shows questions 6–8, researched in 2016 and 2017 as part of three sector-specific gender analyses. The methods used in these gender analyses are different from the data-collection methods used in the 2018 country-wide gender assessment.¹

- | |
|---|
| 6. What are the gender gaps and opportunities related to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education? |
| 7. What are the gender gaps and opportunities related to value chains and small and medium enterprise ownership and/or management? |
| 8. What are the gender gaps and opportunities related to basic education? |
-

ASSESSMENT DESIGN, METHODS, AND LIMITATIONS

ASSESSMENT DESIGN AND APPROACH

This assessment identifies gender gaps in USAID/Lebanon’s technical sectors across USAID’s five gender analysis domains. In line with USAID’s commitment to the Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) approach throughout its program cycle, this gender assessment employed a collaborative methodology that engaged USAID and key stakeholders throughout various stages, including the gender assessment design meeting, the tools adaptation exercise (which took place during a training for data collectors), and a data consultation meeting where findings were validated and conclusions and recommendations developed.

METHODS

Using a mixed-methods approach, the PMSPL II team collected primary and secondary data through document review, key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs) from January 2018 through July 2018.

SAMPLE

All eight governorates and 14 districts were captured in the sample selection. The design enabled the collection of the range of perspectives of gender norms, responsibilities, and roles across the country, permitting relevant key differences in perspectives to be highlighted. The sample also focused on areas where USAID had presence. There was a mix of rural/urban/semi-urban districts, and the PMSPL II team ensured the sample included representation of all 19 sects. The sample size (i.e., total number of focus groups and KIIs) was designed to approximate saturation. Saturation is a term used in qualitative data analysis that describes the threshold where limited or no new information would be obtained from further data collection (see Exhibit 2).

¹ For links to full reports, with methodology, go to “2016–2017 Education Gender Analyses.”

Exhibit 2: Geographic Sample Universe

GOVERNORATE	DISTRICT	# OF USAID IMPLEMENTING MECHANISMS	RURAL/URBAN/ SEMI-URBAN
Akkar	Akkar	5	Rural
Baalbek-Hermel	Baalbek	4	Semi-Urban
Beirut	Beirut	4	Urban
Beqaa	Rachaiya	3	Rural
	West Beqaa	3	Rural
Mount Lebanon	Aley	3	Urban
	Keserwan	4	Semi-Urban
Nabatieh	Marjayoun	2	Rural
	Nabatieh	2	Semi-Urban
North Lebanon	Batroun	4	Semi-Urban
	Koura	4	Rural
	Tripoli	1	Rural
South Lebanon	Jezzine	5	Rural
	Saida	4	Semi-Urban

DOCUMENT REVIEW



The document review covered 30 documents obtained from a PMSPL II project- and Web-based search of publications and studies, USAID documents and program reports, and other development organizations in Lebanon.

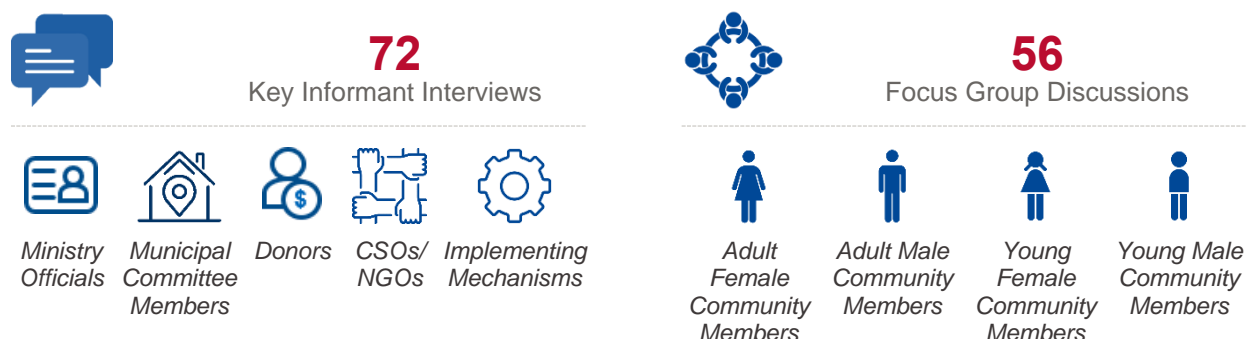
KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The PMSPL II team collected data from 510 individuals: 438 FGD participants and 72 KII respondents.

The data collectors conducted semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders who could effectively speak to the technical areas identified in the research questions. These stakeholders included ministry officials, municipal committee members, donors, civil society organizations (CSOs), and USAID implementing mechanisms (IMs). The PMSPL II team used purposive sampling for the selection of key stakeholders for interviews and FGDs. The purposive sample enabled the team to capture the breadth of the stakeholders' perspectives across those who play different roles within USAID's programmatic landscape (government officials, donors, community members, etc.).

The data collectors conducted FGDs with community members who, in a group dynamic, would provide the best opportunity to gather information across multiple research questions. In each of the 14 districts sampled, the data collectors conducted four FGDs; one per stakeholder category: female adults (25–45), female youth (18–24), male adults (25–45), and male youth (18–24). The PMSPL II team divided the FGDs by age and sex to understand the differences in attitudes, perceptions, needs, and experiences by

both age and sex and to increase the participants' comfort level to share their experiences in a group setting. Each group was composed of 5 to 11 participants.



ANALYSIS

The PMSPL II team conducted an iterative, inductive approach to analysis. The team developed, piloted, and refined a codebook to ensure coding structure relevance to the data and intercoder reliability. The team then conducted thematic coding using Dedoose Version 7.0.23, a Web-based application that allows for analyzing data coded by multiple team members collaboratively. After the thematic coding was finalized, the PMSPL II team conducted an internal data analysis and interpretation meeting. At the meeting, the team members discussed the significance of, and the interrelationships among, the themes, guided by the gender assessment questions, and jointly identified the next steps for further data analysis. The team used this final round of data analysis to generate draft findings.

The team then conducted a two-day data consultation meeting in Beirut in July 2018, which provided the opportunity for USAID and the KII respondents to validate and interpret the gender assessment's draft findings and draw conclusions and recommendations. Inputs from this meeting were used to draft this report.

LIMITATIONS

- **The primary data sample** was limited due to the reliance on the data-collection firm's recruitment database and PMSPL II's contacts. Consequently, selection bias could have been a factor.
- **Data on barriers for LGBTI individuals** within specific sectors were limited. This was due to discriminatory views expressed more broadly toward these individuals and to the limited data collected from LGBTI persons.
- **Reforestation data:** The data collectors observed that while many participants were able to respond to questions specifically focused on reforestation, some individuals misunderstood these questions as pertaining to agriculture more broadly. However, these instances represent a very small proportion of data collected. In addition, during data consultation meetings in Beirut, USAID and other participants suggested that any confusion of the two sectors among respondents resulted from a broader lack of understanding of reforestation in Lebanon, rather than from the gender assessment design itself. The reforestation findings presented in this report are those that have been validated during the data analysis and stakeholder consultations to ensure responsiveness to the initial design question.
- **Data on persons with disabilities:** Data on barriers for persons with disabilities in specific sectors in Lebanon were limited to the literature review and the perceptions of FGD

participants. Furthermore, it appears that respondents perceived and associated disability with mobility impairments, referring less to other disabilities such as visual, hearing, or other impairments. Consequently, primary data on disabilities were limited to mobility impairments.

- **Qualitative methods:** The purpose of a qualitative approach is not to make generalizable statements that can apply to all of Lebanon, which would require a probability sample where respondents without key insights may be selected for inclusion. Rather, qualitative research provides an in-depth understanding of gender-related issues in the selected sectors. Purposeful sampling facilitated the inclusion of information-rich respondents with critical knowledge of, and experience with, issues of central importance to the assessment.
- **Translation:** Data were collected in Arabic and transcribed into English. Although PMSPL II monitored the translation to ensure data quality, some details might have been lost in analysis due to nuances.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

FINDINGS

The following findings reflect rigorous qualitative analysis across research questions 1–5. For a full explanation of the data-analysis approaches that the PMSPL II Team used to generate findings, please see Methods on pages iv–vi. The findings reflect the perceptions and attitudes of multiple respondents across data sources. They are organized, to the extent relevant, around how gender norms and dynamics are experienced differently at policy/institutional, community, household, and individual levels.

FINDINGS FROM 2018 COUNTRY-WIDE GENDER ASSESSMENT (QUESTIONS 1–5)

Governance

- 1 | The legal environment in Lebanon—particularly, personal-status laws and the new electoral law—is a barrier to women’s successful pursuit of political office.
- 2 | There are mixed opinions, particularly among male and female government officials at national and local levels, on using gender quotas to address the current gender gaps in political office.
- 3 | There is a perception across regions and stakeholders that the number of women running for office, and participating in elections more broadly, is increasing.
- 4 | “Patriarchal”² social norms viewing men as better suited for politics continue to limit women’s success in running for and effectively participating in political office.
- 5 | Women are disproportionately affected by social norms and the lack of resources, which influences the likelihood of them getting elected to municipal committees.

² Translated from Arabic, respondents used the term “patriarchy” broadly when describing a society that views men in positions of greater power, leadership, and importance in public relationships and in defining household roles and norms.

- 6 | Women's perceived self-confidence was reported to influence their successful election to, and participation in, municipal committees.
- 7 | Although the respondents recognized that men and women traditionally vote based on social norms and influences rather than on qualifications, this trend could be changing.
- 8 | The respondents perceived the lack of proper infrastructure as the main barrier to political participation for citizens with impaired mobility.
- 9 | Individuals identifying as LGBTI face widespread discrimination but are able to participate in elections or political office when their gender identity or sexual orientation is unknown.

Livelihoods and Access to Finance

- 10 | Personal-status and property laws disproportionately affect women's access to the resources needed to obtain loans.
- 11 | Although both male and female community members reported similar barriers in access to, and ambitions for the use of, loans, women face additional deterrents due to stereotypes about their ability to manage loans.
- 12 | Although men typically control the distribution of finances to manage household activities, more equitable decision making is occurring in some households, depending on who earns the income. Women were more frequently referenced as relying on their families for income.

Workforce Development

- 13 | The absence of a supportive legal environment—including the lack of sexual-harassment policies/laws, poorly-defined or -enforced labor-law protections, and inequitable social-security provisions—hinders women's participation in the workforce.
- 14 | All stakeholder groups highlighted that traditional social norms, such as the perception that women should not work outside the home or are only suited for certain types of work, hinder women's ability to enter the workforce and affect how they participate in it.
- 15 | More women are perceived to be entering and adding to the competition in the formal job market as a result of economic strain and the need for additional household income.
- 16 | LGBTI individuals face significant discrimination in the workforce.
- 17 | Legal protections for preventing employment discrimination against persons with disabilities exist but are not widely understood, and many workplaces are not designed to accommodate individuals with mobility impairments.

Water Management

- 18 | At the household level, women are responsible for managing water resources and making decisions about water consumption. Men are responsible for providing water to the household.
- 19 | In community-level water infrastructure projects, men are perceived as better suited for physical tasks, whereas women are seen to be better suited for administrative work, management, and marketing.
- 20 | Female participation in municipal water committees, particularly in rural areas, is limited by gender norms.
- 21 | Consistent access to water was reported as a high priority for both men and women. Men focused on barriers related to infrastructure and corruption, while women focused on the need for clean water.

Reforestation

- 22 | Men are presumed to be better suited for, and more interested in, reforestation activities due to the perceived physical demands. Women are seen as less engaged, although there are signs of change among younger women in select districts.
- 23 | In environmental committees, men are more likely to be perceived as holding leadership positions, whereas women are seen as fulfilling roles in planning and administration.
- 24 | Community members expressed a need for increased financial incentives, awareness, education, and job opportunities to boost participation in reforestation activities.

FINDINGS OF THE 2016–2017 EDUCATION GENDER ANALYSES (QUESTION 6–8)

Basic Education

- 1 | The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) has no specific policy on gender equality.
- 2 | MEHE's curricula and teaching and learning materials are gender-biased.
- 3 | Teachers are not adequately trained to promote gender equality and inclusive approaches and practices.
- 4 | Schools are ill-equipped to support students with special needs.
- 5 | Early and forced marriage leads to early dropout among girls.
- 6 | Refugee students are channeled into a second-stream system, which might limit opportunities for both girls and boys.
- 7 | Boys participate at lower rates in school leadership roles and responsibilities than girls, attend school at lower rates than girls, and are at higher risk of dropping out in search of economic opportunity.
- 8 | Syrian refugee students, especially girls, have limited access to extracurricular activities.

Higher Education

- 1 | Male enrollment rates in higher education are slightly lower than female enrollment rates.
- 2 | Education policies are gender-blind.
- 3 | Sexual harassment is underreported in schools.
- 4 | There are limited opportunities for refugees to access higher education.

TVET

- 1 | The TVET sector is predominantly male-oriented.
- 2 | There is a lack of specific antiharassment or antidiscrimination provisions.
- 3 | There is no official MEHE guidance on how TVET programs can help increase gender equality within specializations.
- 4 | There are limited safe transportation options for females.
- 5 | There are limited extracurricular activities for females.
- 6 | Female students experience harassment within, and on their way to and from, schools.

CONCLUSIONS

Below is a summary of the cross-cutting themes that emerged across all the sectors (questions 1–8) covered in this report.

Although Lebanon’s **legal and policy environment** includes some key steps forward and broad provisions and strategies with respect to gender equality, significant gaps and opportunities remain to strengthen the enabling policy environment and align with these more gender-sensitive frameworks. These include the following:

- The inequitable distribution of household assets, resources, and decision making—resulting from Lebanon’s 15 distinct, sectarian personal-status laws—creates a ripple effect for women who need these resources to fully leverage political and economic opportunities. Where laws are more supportive of gender equality, they are not consistently understood or enforced.
- Despite the limited recent progress in decriminalizing homosexual behavior, LGBTI individuals currently enjoy no legal protection against discrimination in any sector.
- Although persons with disabilities have some legal protection against discrimination and positive rights to participation in all sectors, neither the public nor the private infrastructure currently provides sufficient accommodation.
- Sexual harassment is presently not defined or addressed under the law and is likely underreported.

Public and private institutions do not integrate gender-sensitive approaches into their curricula, programming, or policies, thus missing out on opportunities to reduce inequality and transform traditional gender norms.

Although females are becoming the markers of **success in education**, this is not translating into norms and opportunities they experience as adults, including in the workforce and other public spaces.

Cultural norms and beliefs around **traditional household versus public/community responsibilities** dictate longstanding biases and assumptions about appropriate activities and behaviors for males and females, thus limiting their ability to participate in nontraditional roles. Men are typically understood to take on more physical roles, responsibilities, and leadership outside of the home and in the workforce, whereas women are perceived to have softer skills focused on caregiving, household responsibilities, and service provision. There are examples of women challenging these norms with different types of nontraditional employment outside of the home, particularly as they achieve higher levels of education. However, these **women often face a double burden of managing household responsibilities and caregiving** in addition to business or workplace demands.

Discriminatory attitudes against LGBTI individuals remain widespread, and many may not openly express their sexual orientation or gender identity. Accurate data on these populations are not available, and the barriers they encounter are not fully understood.

Finally, an overall climate of economic strain, regional political instability, and concerns about domestic political and economic corruption pervaded a number of responses and perceptions among all respondents—women, men, and youth—signaling a need for thoughtful assessment and programming that might influence already scarce resources. Women, LGBTI individuals, and persons with disabilities could be disproportionately affected by these issues, but more research is needed to better understand their implications for Lebanon’s diverse and complex demographic groups.

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF USAID/LEBANON GENDER ASSESSMENT

In 2017, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Lebanon commissioned the Performance Management and Support Program for Lebanon (PMSPL II) to conduct a country-wide gender assessment to complement the Mission's strategic direction and inform USAID's program development. Aligned with USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, developed in 2012, the National Commission for Lebanese Women's (NCLW's) National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2011–2021, and the National Action Plan (2017–2019), this assessment uses a gender analysis approach to identify gender gaps in USAID/Lebanon's technical sectors and determine their causes. The gender assessment's purpose is to identify opportunities for USAID/Lebanon to address sector-specific gender gaps and integrate gender more intentionally across its portfolio. By identifying and addressing these gaps, the ultimate goal is to help advance Lebanon toward achieving more effective and responsive local development and governance and strengthened institutions.

PMSPL II aims to supplement the monitoring and program management efforts of USAID/Lebanon and verify, monitor, and support USAID's program performance in country. This work ensures the achievement of the Country Development Cooperation Strategy's (CDCS's) development objectives (DOs) through a gender-sensitive lens, thus allowing USAID to improve the public sector's capacity to provide transparent, quality services across Lebanon and enhance economic opportunities for males, females, and marginalized groups equally.

CONTEXT

Lebanon has a variety of laws and policies meant to advance gender equality. Article 7 of the Lebanese constitution promotes equality among all citizens, noting that all citizens shall equally enjoy civil and political rights and be bound by public obligations and duties without any distinction. Lebanon is party to a number of key international conventions that serve to protect the rights of women, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)³ and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Center for Mediterranean Integration [CMI] 2017). In December 2016, the newly-formed government of Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri introduced a Ministry for Women's Affairs. The NCLW and the Ministry of Women's Affairs are further mandated to protect and promote the rights of women (CMI 2017).

Despite such mechanisms, the 2016 World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index Report, which quantifies the magnitude of gender disparities between women and men across four key areas (health, education, economy, and politics), ranked Lebanon 135th among 144 countries. Women remain disadvantaged in a number of areas, including the legal system, where citizens are subject to 15 distinct, religion-based personal-status laws (CMI 2017). National laws also disadvantage women. For example, under the Lebanese Nationality Law, Decree No. 15, only men can pass on their citizenship status to their children and spouses when married to a foreign national (USAID/Lebanon Gender Assessment 2012).

There is evidence of gender gaps across the six sectors covered by USAID: governance, workforce development, livelihoods and access to finance, water management, reforestation, and education.

³ Ratified in 1997, but with reservations to articles 9 (2), 16 (1) (c), (d), (f), (g), and 29 (1).

Women are significantly underrepresented in the government, where they hold only 4.7 percent of seats at the national level (2017 Election Data). Women's labor-force participation rate is at 23 percent compared to 71 percent for men (World Bank Gender Data Portal 2016). Women's access to financial support for small business development is also low. Although women own more than 30 percent of micro and small businesses in Lebanon, only 3 percent of bank loans go to female entrepreneurs (USAID/Lebanon 2018). In the water-management sector, there is limited understanding of gender differences in water use and management, including women's household responsibilities for accessing and using water (USAID/Lebanon 2012). In reforestation, there are also limited data on gender gaps, although the Government of Lebanon has recognized that some gaps exist and included an overarching goal focusing on gender equality in the National Adaptation Plan to combat climate change launched in 2017.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) individuals face myriad forms of discrimination in Lebanon. In addition to broad forms of social discrimination, the Lebanese Penal Code contains a provision (Section 534, forbidding "any sexual intercourse contrary to the order of nature") that is often used to penalize LGBTI individuals. However, as recently as July 12, 2018, a district court of appeal in Lebanon issued a groundbreaking ruling that consensual sex between people of the same sex is not unlawful. The ruling follows similar judgments from lower courts that have declined to convict gay and transgender people in four separate rulings between 2007 and 2017 (Human Rights Watch 2018).

METHODOLOGY

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO GENDER ASSESSMENT

In line with USAID's commitment to the Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) approach throughout its program cycle, this gender assessment employed a collaborative methodology that engaged USAID and key stakeholders throughout various stages, including the gender assessment design meeting, the adaptation of tools during a data collectors' training, and a data consultation meeting where findings were validated, and conclusions and recommendations drawn. This participatory process ensured alignment with USAID/Lebanon's strategic priorities and the use of the gender assessment for relevant, meaningful, and effective gender integration throughout USAID's programs.

RESEARCH LINES OF INQUIRY

On January 10, 2018, PMSPL II convened a half-day gender assessment design meeting with USAID representatives and PMSPL II staff using USAID's five suggested domains of gender analysis⁴ to collaboratively define the focus and key areas of inquiry for the country-level gender assessment. The overarching question developed at this meeting was:

What gender gaps and opportunities can USAID/Lebanon programs address to better achieve the Mission's development objectives?

Research questions were addressed using two data-collection methods. Exhibit 3 lists questions (1–5) which were researched during the 2018 country-wide gender assessment.

Exhibit 4 shows questions (6–8) which were researched in 2016 and 2017 as part of three sector-specific gender analyses. The methods used in these analyses are different from the data-collection methods used in the 2018 country-wide gender assessment.⁵

⁴ Under ADS 205, USAID suggests five domains of gender analysis: (1) Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices; (2) Cultural norms and beliefs; (3) Gender roles, responsibilities, and time use; (4) Access to and control over assets and resources; and (5) Patterns of power and decision making.

⁵ For links to full reports, with methodology, go to "[2016–2017 Education Gender Analyses](#)."

Exhibit 3: Research Questions Focused on in 2018 Data Collection

KEY QUESTIONS	FOCUS AREAS
1. What are the gender gaps and opportunities related to governance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in municipal councils/municipal development committees • Participation in local and national elections • Barriers and opportunities for women, youth, LGBTI persons, and persons with disabilities
2. What are the gender gaps and opportunities related to livelihoods and access to finance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities and decision making about how to use financial resources • Types of financial resources and income-generation activities desired and available • Gender gaps in access to loans and ability to save
3. What are the gender gaps and opportunities related to water management and governance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water access and use • Concern related to water management and infrastructure • Water management decisions at the household, community, and municipal levels
4. What are the gender gaps and opportunities related to workforce development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the legal/policy environment supports or hinders workforce participation • The role of gender stereotypes in determining career path/opportunities
5. What are the gender gaps and opportunities related to reforestation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in reforestation and environmental sustainability • Participation and leadership in environmental committees and reforestation activities

Exhibit 4: Research Questions Focused on in 2016–2017 Gender Analyses

KEY QUESTIONS
6. What are the gender gaps and opportunities related to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education?
7. What are the gender gaps and opportunities related to value chains and small and medium enterprise ownership and/or management?
8. What are the gender gaps and opportunities related to basic education?

SAMPLE

GEOGRAPHY AND STAKEHOLDERS

The selection sample included all eight governorates to capture the range of perspectives of gender norms, responsibilities, and roles across the country and highlight differences in perspectives across governorates as relevant. Fourteen districts were sampled for this gender assessment, using the following five criteria: (1) geographic distribution, (2) USAID's presence in the sectors covered in this assessment, (3) rural/urban/semi-urban, (4) refugee population, and (5) representation of all 19 sects.

The sample size (i.e., total number of FGDs and KIs) was designed to approximate saturation (see Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5: Geographic Sample Universe

GOVERNORATE	DISTRICT	# OF USAID IMPLEMENTING MECHANISMS	RURAL/URBAN/ SEMI-URBAN
Akkar	Akkar	5	Rural
Baalbek-Hermel	Baalbek	4	Semi-Urban
Beirut	Beirut	4	Urban
Beqaa	Rachaiya	3	Rural
	West Beqaa	3	Rural
Mount Lebanon	Aley	3	Urban
	Keserwan	4	Semi-Urban
Nabatieh	Marjayoun	2	Rural
	Nabatieh	2	Semi-Urban
North Lebanon	Batroun	4	Semi-Urban
	Koura	4	Rural
	Tripoli	1	Rural
South Lebanon	Jezzine	5	Rural
	Saida	4	Semi-Urban

DATA COLLECTION

Primary and secondary data were collected from January 2018 through July 2018.

SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION

The PMSPL II team began a document review in January 2018. Document review data were obtained from PMSPL II and a Web-based search of publications, studies, quantitative data from the Government of Lebanon and relevant ministries, USAID documents and program reports, international organizations, and documents from other development organizations in Lebanon. The PMSPL II team coded all documents using USAID's gender analysis domains.

The team triangulated the document review data with primary data during the data-analysis and report-writing phases. Following data collection, additional documents were consulted to augment and confirm the findings.

PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION

PMSPL II hired InfoPro, a local data-collection firm, to collect data from 510 individuals: 438 of which through FGDs and 72 through KIs.

PROCESS

The PMSPL II team designed and developed data-collection tools tailored to specific stakeholder groups to address key research questions and focus areas for each sector. In February 2018, the PMSPL II team designed and facilitated a training to level out the data-collection team's understanding of key principles and best practices in qualitative data collection (including appreciative evaluation approaches) when collecting gender-related data. At the training, the data collectors piloted and refined the data-collection tools and ensured the translated tools were accurate and appropriate for each stakeholder group.

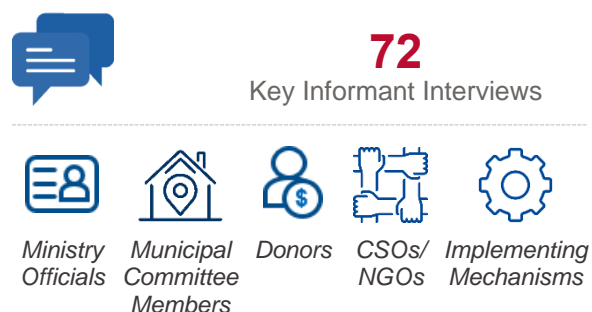
Two data-collection teams and eight regional sub-teams conducted data collection in March–April 2018. Four regional FGD teams consisted of two people per team, a moderator, and a moderator assistant. An additional KII team consisted of four people. The PMSPL II quality-control managers provided technical and quality oversight to all five teams.

The FGD data collectors worked in pairs, with one person facilitating the group discussion while the other took notes as close to verbatim as possible. The data collectors also recorded the sessions for more comprehensive note-taking. The recordings were directly transcribed from Arabic into English, then checked for quality by the PMSPL II team.

Only male data collectors collected data from male participants, and only female data collectors collected data from female participants.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

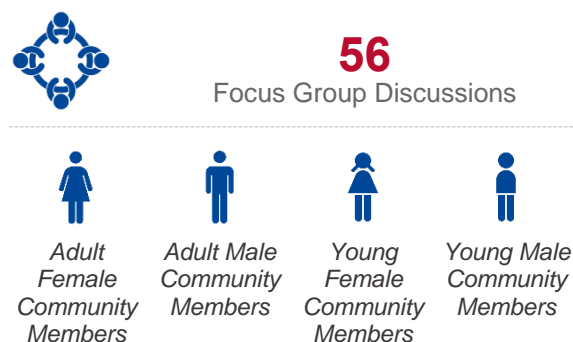
The data collectors conducted 72 semi-structured interviews from March 5 to April 20, 2018, with key stakeholders who could effectively speak to the technical areas identified in the overarching research questions. InfoPro conducted semi-structured interviews with ministry officials, municipal committee members, donors, civil society organizations (CSOs), and USAID implementing mechanisms.



The PMSPL II team used purposive sampling for the selection of key stakeholders for interviews and focus group discussions.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The data collectors conducted FGDs with stakeholders who, in a group dynamic, would provide the best opportunity to gather information on one or more of the research questions. InfoPro conducted 56 FGDs from March 5 to April 20, 2018, with 438 individuals from four key stakeholder groups: female adults (25–45), female youth (18–24), male adults (25–45), and male youth (18–24) from the 14 districts.



The PMSPL II team divided the FGD participants by age and sex to better understand the differences in perceptions, needs, and experiences across different categories and to increase the participants' comfort

level in a way that allows them to freely share their experiences in a group setting. Each group was composed of 5 to 11 participants.

DATA ANALYSIS

The PMSPL II team uploaded the approved interview and FGD transcripts to Dedoose Version 7.0.23 for data coding and analyzing. This Web-based application allows for managing, analyzing, and presenting qualitative and mixed-methods research data; coding by multiple team members collaboratively; and assessing inter-coder reliability.

The PMSPL II team developed a draft coding structure based on the gender assessment questions and a review of a sample of transcripts. The team piloted the codebook to ensure the coding structure's relevance to the data and a consistent code application by the analysts. They refined the codebook based on the pilot and applied the revised coding structure to all transcripts. The team examined each code to generate emergent themes through an inductive process to allow the respondents' voices and experiences to emerge as salient themes and avoid predetermined or expected hypotheses to define the findings.

After this thematic coding was finalized, the PMSPL II team drafted summaries of each theme in preparation for a participatory data-analysis and -interpretation meeting. At the meeting, the team members discussed the significance of, and the interrelationships among, the themes, guided by the gender assessment questions. They jointly identified the next steps for further data analysis, including additional disaggregation based on the themes that emerged by stakeholder type or region during analysis. The team used this final round of data analysis to generate draft findings.

The PMSPL II team presented the draft findings to the project staff and key stakeholders in a face-to-face, participatory, two-day data consultation meeting in Beirut on July 11–12, 2018. This meeting provided the opportunity for USAID and KII respondents to validate and interpret the gender assessment findings and collaboratively draw conclusions and recommendations. The inputs from this meeting were used to draft this report.

ETHICS

All KII and FGD tools included an informed consent statement with a confidentiality clause. Every effort was made to ensure that group discussions were conducted in locations that assured privacy or, if not fully private, were comfortable for respondents. At the start of each interview and group discussion, the data collectors assured the respondents of confidentiality and asked them whether they consented to participate in this gender assessment. With the respondents' permission, the data collectors recorded the KIIs and FGDs. The data collectors explained to all respondents that participation was completely voluntary and that they could stop the interview or leave the group discussion at any time with no negative consequences. The data collectors made it clear that the respondents' identities and the information they provided would be kept confidential.

The PMSPL II team stored the data on a secured, password-protected computer, retaining identifying information in interview transcripts for data-analysis purposes and anonymizing them in this report.

LIMITATIONS

This gender assessment was limited by the following factors:

Primary data sample: Although care was taken to minimize bias during the recruitment process, for FGDs the study relied on InfoPro's recruitment database that had been used for previous research in Lebanon. For KIs, knowledge of appropriate actors was left up to PMSPL II and snowball sampling. Consequently, selection bias could have been a factor.

Data on barriers for LGBTI individuals: There were limited data on barriers LGBTI individuals face within specific sectors in Lebanon. This was due in part to the fact that the primary stakeholders interviewed predominantly expressed discriminatory views toward LGBTI individuals, rather than assessing the specific barriers these persons face within these sectors. Additionally, data were collected from only one CSO working on LGBTI issues, and there were no FGDs with individuals identifying as LGBTI.

Reforestation data: The data collectors observed that although many participants were able to respond to questions specifically focused on reforestation, some individuals misunderstood these questions as pertaining to agriculture more broadly. However, these instances represent a very small proportion of the data collected. In addition, during data consultation meetings in Beirut, USAID and other participants suggested that any confusion of the two sectors among respondents resulted from a broader lack of understanding of reforestation in Lebanon, rather than from the gender assessment design itself. The reforestation findings presented in this report are those that have been validated during the data-analysis and stakeholder consultations to ensure responsiveness to the initial design question.

Data on persons with disabilities: Data on barriers for persons with disabilities in specific sectors in Lebanon were limited to the literature review and the perceptions of FGD participants. Furthermore, it appears that respondents perceived and associated disability with mobility impairments, referring less to other disabilities such as visual, hearing, or other impairments. Consequently, primary data on disabilities were limited to mobility impairments.

Qualitative methods: The purpose of a qualitative approach is not to make generalizable statements that can apply to all of Lebanon, which would require a probability sample where respondents without key insights may be selected for inclusion. Rather, qualitative research provides an in-depth understanding of gender-related issues in the selected sectors. Purposeful sampling facilitated the inclusion of information-rich respondents with critical knowledge of, and experience with, issues of central importance to the assessment.

Translation: Data were collected in Arabic then transcribed directly to English. Although PMSPL II monitored the translation output for data quality, some words and phrases, such as the concept of *wasta*,⁶ were not readily conducive to verbatim translation. The PMSPL II team reviewed the recordings closely to confirm that the translation was correct. However, some details might have been lost in analysis due to nuances.

⁶ "Wasta" is an Arabic word that loosely translates into "nepotism" or "clout" or "who you know."

2018 GENDER ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

The following findings reflect analysis across research questions 1–5. Next to each finding is an icon (or icons) that represent(s) one of USAID’s five gender-analysis domains⁷. The findings are organized, to the extent relevant, around how gender norms and dynamics are experienced differently at policy/institutional, community, household, and individual levels.

USAID’s Gender Analysis Domains:



*Laws, policies,
regulations, and
institutional
practices*



*Cultural norms
and beliefs*



*Gender roles,
responsibilities,
and time use*



*Access to, and
control over,
assets and
resources*



*Patterns of power
and decision
making*

GOVERNANCE

BACKGROUND

Article 12 of the Constitution of Lebanon states that every Lebanese citizen has the right to hold public office (USAID/Lebanon 2012). Yet, in a study that defines political empowerment as the number of women in parliament, the number of women in ministerial positions, and the number of years with a female head of state, Lebanon scored below the global average (El Feki et al. 2017). Over the last five parliamentary elections, the number of women elected ranged from three to at most six out of 128 seats (European Union Election Observation Mission 2018). Currently, one woman serves in the cabinet (as the Minister of State for Administrative Reform) out of 29 members. At the local level, women constitute less than 5.5 percent of council members (The New Arab 2016).

A record number of women ran for office in the 2018 parliamentary elections, but only six of the 86 who were on the ballot were elected, resulting in 4.7 percent of parliamentary seats. Male versus female engagement as voters varied by district in 2018, with a slightly higher overall turnout among women nationally (see Exhibit 6). While more women are running for office and coming up with new strategies for increasing their engagement, they are also facing new barriers. A study by Mahara, a Lebanese media monitor, found that in the 2018 elections, female candidates were featured as guests on talk shows, live programming, news broadcasts, and one-on-one interviews just 5.89 percent of the time, even though they made up almost 15 percent of the candidates (Agence France Presse 2018). However, during the same elections, in the traditionally more conservative district of Akkar, a group of women created an all-women's electoral list because local political groups “didn’t take the issue of female candidacy seriously” (Al Jazeera 2018). The National Action Plan (2017–2019), part of the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2011–2021, focuses on six objectives to increase women’s participation in governance.

⁷ Because the domains are often overlapping and not mutually exclusive, icons point out only the most relevant or dominant domains for each finding, not all domains that are possibly relevant.

These objectives focus on increasing women’s successful participation in leadership positions in political parties at the local and national levels, ensuring the sensitization of the public to women’s presence in political decision making, building women’s capacity to serve in these positions, and advocating for a gender quota.

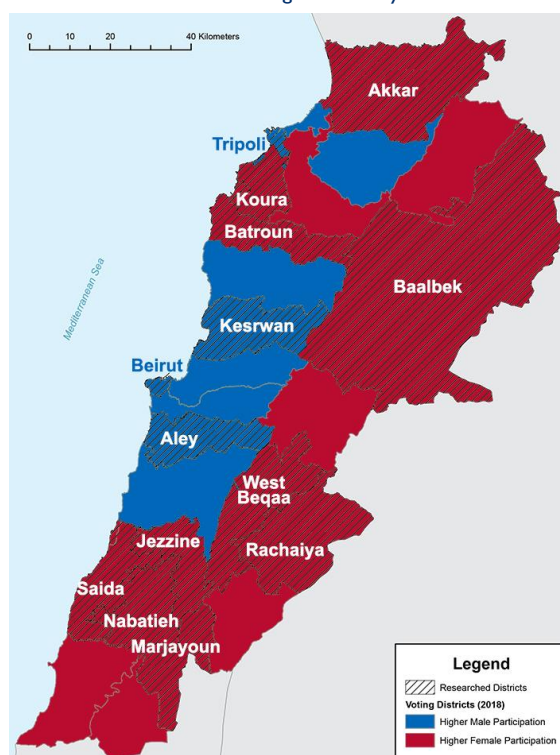
FINDINGS

I. The legal environment in Lebanon—particularly, personal-status laws and the new electoral law—is a barrier to women’s successful pursuit of political office.



The document review confirmed that Lebanon’s personal-status laws have historically limited both men and women from running for office in the municipality where they currently reside. However, because women are more likely to move to their husband’s municipality once they are married, these laws have been seen as disproportionately affecting women’s participation in political office. As far back as 1998, a study reported that women who registered as residents in their municipal areas through marriage had less support in running for political office than other women who were originally from that municipality. This was true across regions, regardless of the female candidate’s education level or sectarian affiliation (Helou 1999). In October 2017, an amendment to Article 25 of Law 655 has allowed women to run for municipal office in their original birth district even if their civil-status records have been transferred to their husbands’ district after marriage.⁸ However, primary data confirmed that despite the 2017 amendment, this restriction remains a hindrance to many municipal members today. Female municipal committee members across rural and urban districts, as well as CSOs, reported that personal-status laws still serve as a deterrent for women running for, and getting elected to, political office. They indicated that these laws affected both unmarried women (who worry that if they got married, they would have to transfer their civil-status records to their husbands’ municipality) and married women (who would have to run in a municipality where they are not well known or recognized). Although some ministry respondents at the national level reported that the formal legal restriction had recently been overturned, at the time of data collection, it was not apparent this change was widely known or implemented across districts.⁹

Exhibit 6: Male/Female Voting Patterns by District



“I’m currently single; however, when I get married, I won’t be able to be a candidate in my village. I’m going to have to submit my candidacy in my husband’s village where I don’t know anyone and that I

⁸ Official Gazette, issue number 49, published on October 19, 2017.

⁹ The PMSPL II team could not confirm the amendment to Article 25 of Law 655 with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs until December 2018, six months following completion of data collection.

have never visited. Why can't a woman be a candidate in her village where she was born and raised?"
- Municipal Committee Member (Female)

The new electoral law, passed in July 2017, was also reported as potentially hindering women's successful candidacy in two ways: (1) by limiting voting to a set party list where women are often less likely to be included, and (2) when women are included on electoral lists, the law requires voters to prioritize candidates within this list and women are rarely prioritized (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants n.d.; IFES 2018). Respondents across interviews and FGDs confirmed this view as they reported that the most important step in getting elected was a woman's ability to get on an electoral list.

"Yes... women [are] running for candidacy. Yet, how many of them are going to make it? They formed 54 lists and how many of them are inclusive to these women?"
- CSO Interview Respondent, Beirut

In the 2018 parliamentary elections, an official statement issued by the head of the European Union Election Observation Mission also highlighted these barriers:

"It's clear also that more needs to be done to facilitate the participation of women in politics in this country. Affirmative measures were not included in the electoral law agreed [on] in 2017; there is room for further representation."

2. There are mixed opinions, particularly among male and female government officials at the national and local levels, on using gender quotas to address the current gender gaps in political office.



The current electoral law makes no reference to the principle of gender quotas (Hussein 2017), and previous attempts to introduce them were unsuccessful. Most recently, in 2010, the Lebanese Cabinet proposed the introduction of a 20-percent quota for women on municipal councils, and although the proposed law was sent for discussion to Parliament, it was not passed.

The topic of gender quotas was spontaneously mentioned across KII and FGD respondent groups when discussing governance. However, views on the usefulness of gender quotas differed. The majority of FGD respondents (both male and female, adult and youth), as well as respondents in interviews with CSOs and donors, supported the idea of gender quotas broadly. Female youth across urban and rural districts most often supported the idea of gender quotas, pointing to them as an important tool for furthering women equality in politics.

Amongst government officials at both the national and local levels, perspectives for and against quotas were split almost evenly between men and women. Female government officials who were against quotas saw them as delegitimizing women's roles in politics. Male government officials, mostly from municipal committees, speculated that quotas might force women who do not want to participate to run for office. Government officials who supported quotas perceived them as an important starting point for enabling women to get elected, then once in office, demonstrate their abilities. Previous research on this topic supports these mixed views. A 2010 study found that 59 percent of Lebanese women and 54 percent of men strongly supported the introduction of gender quotas in parliament (Status of Women in the Middle East and North Africa 2010). A more recent study, in 2017, that investigated opinions on quotas in a broader set of sectors, including government, workforce, and universities, also found mixed views among men and women (El Feki et al. 2017).



For:

“I think we need to start with a quota so that people get used to having female members in the parliament.”

- Municipal Committee Member (Male)



Against:

“I would just like to say that I am against the whole concept of women quotas... We should strengthen and support a person as an individual and not based on their gender.”

- Municipal Committee Member (Female)

3. There is a perception across regions and stakeholders that the number of women running for office, and participating in elections more broadly, is increasing.



Only 17 women have served in Lebanon’s parliament since women gained the right to vote and run for office in 1953,¹⁰ with a maximum of six women serving in parliament during any single term. Prior to the most recent national election, in 2018, women made up only 3 percent of positions in parliament (Hussein 2017). However, women’s engagement as candidates is increasing. In the 2018 parliamentary elections, 86 female candidates ran for office, representing a more than seven-fold increase from the 2009 election. Out of the 976 candidates who originally registered to run, 113 were female, compared to only 12 in 2009 (Ministry of Women’s Affairs 2018). In primary data collection, both interview and focus group respondents from all stakeholder groups, except for community-level male adults, confirmed this increase and reported perceptions that women’s participation in political life is increasing. Examples of women’s engagement included running for office, campaigning for candidates (including going door-to-door and arranging community events), and helping at the polls on election day. Community-level youth across urban and rural districts throughout the country agreed with this view. Male youth reported that they saw their role “evolving out of patriarchy” and female youth reported a “new generation in raising awareness” of the role of women in politics.

Female government officials at the national and local levels reported that although women’s participation was increasing, it was much easier for women to participate in municipal elections than in parliamentary elections. Male government officials at the national and local levels displayed positive attitudes toward this change, noting that the female officials they served with often took a more holistic perspective of the problems facing their community. They also reported they enjoyed working with women because they often focused on “softer” initiatives, such as health, education, and the environment.

4. “Patriarchal”¹¹ social norms viewing men as better suited for politics continue to limit women’s success in running for, and effectively participating in, political office.



Previous studies have documented that both men and women in Lebanon continue to see men as better suited for political office and leadership positions (NCLW 2012, USAID 2012). As a 2012 U.K. Department for International Development’s desk review of previous literature summarized, “The

¹⁰ This does not include the appointment of six women in the 2018 parliamentary election.

¹¹ Translated from Arabic, respondents used the term “patriarchy” broadly when describing a society that views men in positions of greater power, leadership, and importance both in public relationships and in defining household roles and norms.

absence of women from decision-making positions in Lebanon has often been attributed to the deeply patriarchal character of the Lebanese society governed by customary rather than codified laws. This is enforced by the traditional rules governing the functioning of the [Lebanese] political system, which by definition consider politics as a male preserve and dismiss women's views in political matters as irrelevant.”

All stakeholder groups interviewed across regions and rural and urban settings expressed similar views, except for community-level males. They reported different perceptions of how these patriarchal views affected women's success in politics. Female community members (particularly youth), female government respondents at the national and local levels, and CSO respondents reported that patriarchal norms make it more difficult for women to get elected because people prefer male candidates they are used to seeing in positions of power. Male government officials at both levels signaled their own acceptance of traditional norms and stereotypes about women's roles, stating that many women would not want to participate in politics simply because they are women.

“The thing is, women have only recently entered the political field, so society needs some time to get used to the fact that a woman can reach, participate, and do anything – same as any man.

- Community Member (Female Youth)

“Let's not fool ourselves and say that we are for equality. The female nature is different from the male nature.”

- Municipal Committee Member (Male)

Patriarchal views that reinforce the existing norms around gender roles were also reported to influence women once they reached political office. Female government ministry respondents reported they were limited from serving in ministries, such as the Ministry of Defense or Ministry of Interior, that are traditionally viewed as reserved for men. Male and female CSO and government representatives reported that female government officials face barriers in attending political events, such as meetings and networking events that occur at night, when a woman is traditionally expected to be at home taking care of her family.

5. Women are disproportionately affected by social norms and the lack of resources, which influences the likelihood of them getting elected to municipal committees.



Although all interview and FGD respondents reported that social and economic status, political affiliation, and *wasta* affected both men and women's chances of being elected to municipal committees, women were seen to be disproportionately affected due to their limited access to resources and discriminatory social norms. For each category where this was listed as an important influencing factor for getting elected, a reason as to why this factor disproportionately affects women was also mentioned. A list of the most reported factors and the subsequent barriers for women can be seen in Exhibit 8.

KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING ELECTABILITY	REPORTED BARRIERS FOR WOMEN
<p>Economic Status: Candidates must have the financial resources to run for, and participate in, municipal committees.</p>	<p>CSO respondents reported that women often have lower salaries than men, and income is needed to run for office.</p> <p>Female municipal committee members added that once in office, women often do not have the resources and time to sustain a voluntary municipal committee position that has no salary.</p> <p><i>“Firstly, what’s important is the access to tangible resources and who has greater access between men and women. It is well known that the salary differs between men and women.”</i></p> <p>- Implementing Mechanism Respondent (Female)</p>
<p>Social Status: Candidates are more likely to get elected if they are from an influential family, as well as if they have their family members’ support.</p>	<p>Municipal committee members highlighted that even women from prominent families needed additional approval from their husbands or other men in their family prior to running for office. It was also reported that the male of the family was more likely to be put forward for political positions compared to a woman.</p> <p><i>“Their husbands would prevent them from doing so. A woman might support her husband if he were to run for office but might not take the initiative to run for office herself.”</i></p> <p>- Municipal Committee Member (Female)</p> <p>Previous gender assessments have confirmed this view, adding that women often put their family or religious affiliation ahead of their interest in running for office.</p> <p><i>“Sectarian competition has, in effect, restricted the abilities of women groups to unite and push for female political representation, with women often putting the political interests of their sects and families ahead of their own interests as women and their commitment to gender equality.”</i></p> <p>- PMSPL II 2012</p>
<p>Political Connections: Candidates require the right political connections (<i>wasta</i>) and ability to influence their electorate.</p>	<p>CSO respondents highlighted that men who are already in political office are more likely to have the political connections needed to run for office again, thus disadvantaging women and other individuals with fewer connections.</p> <p><i>“If you don’t have a political party or someone to support you, you won’t reach your goal. It’s easier for men because people in power are males and they tend to support men rather than women.”</i></p> <p>- CSO Respondent (Female)</p>

6. Women’s perceived self-confidence was reported to influence their successful election to, and participation in, municipal committees.



Donor, CSO, and female community member respondents suggested that because of the social and structural barriers women have faced in politics, there are fewer women who have the self-confidence to run for office. They noted that many women do not think they could ever reach an office and therefore do not even attempt to run.

“Women lack belief in their ability... It is not only about community trust, but there are also women who don’t really believe they can be part of the municipal council.”

- Donor Respondent (Female)

Additionally, male and female municipal committee members highlighted that a woman's self-confidence remains important once she is in office. Male community members often attributed the female municipal committee members' success to their "personality" and ability to connect with the community. Female municipal committee members focused more on their need to have the self-confidence to speak up in municipal committees, where they are usually a minority.

"The factor that helped her succeed was her charisma and influencing personality. She was able to work well and was quite popular among the town residents."

- Municipal Committee Member (Male)

"You need to raise your voice so that you can be heard. When I first started in the municipality, I used to sit and listen, for a whole year, we would reach a conclusion and then we would have the same issue. Once, four months ago, I raised my voice. I told them 'it's been a year and you are not working correctly, I am here, and I listen to you time and time again...' Sometimes, when you talk to them, they look at you with disdain."

- Municipal Committee Member (Female)

A subset of female and male municipal committee members reported they did not see any barriers to women's participation in municipal committees. Female municipal committee members often claimed they had not faced any discrimination and did not like the focus on them as women, but rather preferred to be seen as professionals, the same as men. Furthermore, they thought the focus on gender equality was hampering women's progress in this area by reinforcing gender norms instead of focusing on a candidate as a candidate, regardless of their sex.

"I personally don't like to stress on the idea of equality. I also don't like women and feminist non-governmental organizations because when we emphasize such matters, we are showing people that women and men are not equal. I believe that we don't have inequality as long as we don't stress on equality and women's rights. The solution is to avoid such a topic."

- Municipal Committee Member (Female)

"I don't consider that I succeeded because I am a woman, but because I am a professional member in this municipal committee. A man would also succeed only if he was a professional in his field. I succeeded not because I am a woman, but because I am a woman in this municipal committee and was able to succeed just like a man... It's true that I am a woman, but I am also a professional woman."

- Municipal Committee Member (Female)

7. Although respondents recognized that traditionally, men and women voted based on social norms and influences rather than on qualifications, this trend could be changing.



Many of the social norms that influence a political party's choice of a candidate for their electoral list (see Finding 5) influence the citizens' voting patterns. Respondents from all stakeholder groups reported religion, political affiliation, and bribery as being the strongest influences on the voting patterns of Lebanese citizens. Community members (both men and women) added their family's influence, saying they often voted for candidates their family was personally, religiously, or politically affiliated with. Respondents from all stakeholder groups reported that influences on voting differ based on the voter's region, socioeconomic class, and education level, frequently highlighting that educated voters (mainly in Greater Beirut) and voters from a higher socioeconomic class were often less influenced by external people than those in more rural areas.

“In the case of educated social classes, both men and women have the same perception. However, in the case of the non-educated social class, women often follow their husbands’ instructions.”

- Municipal Committee Member (Female)

However, there is evidence that this trend could be changing. Female community members in urban and rural areas and men in urban areas reported that a candidate’s qualifications and political platform were also important in their decision making. Yet, in rural areas, male community members reported that qualifications did not matter as much as the aforementioned factors, particularly bribery. Male community members and government respondents at the national and local levels highlighted that the sex of a candidate did not influence how they voted in comparison to their education, qualifications, and platform. Women community members in both urban and rural areas also reported that even though their families might encourage them to vote for a particular candidate, it was ultimately their decision. Finally, all stakeholder groups, but particularly male community respondents, mentioned a desire to reduce the influence of corruption in voting.

“I support my parents with whatever they want to do, and I respect my husband and his family. You should take into consideration both your parents and in-laws’ opinion, but I cannot vote for someone I do not see suitable, regardless of his sect.” - Community Member (Female Adult)

“You have people who don’t like to vote because they think that the winners are already known and agreed upon beforehand, so they feel it isn’t necessary or important for them to vote.” - Municipal Committee Member (Male)

8. Respondents perceived the lack of proper infrastructure as the main barrier to political participation for citizens with impaired mobility.



Respondents across stakeholder groups pointed to infrastructure as the main barrier to political participation among individuals they understood to have disabilities. Many polling stations are far from these individuals’ homes or located on the second floor of buildings not equipped with elevators. A few respondents reported that due to discriminatory views of people with visible physical impairments as also having mental disabilities, it would be difficult for these persons to run for office. However, all stakeholders recognized there were no laws preventing them from doing so.

“Logistically, maybe if you want to talk about handicapped people, unfortunately, there are many centers available that are located on the second or third floor without equipped stairs or elevators.” - CSO Respondent (Male).

9. Individuals identifying as LGBTI face widespread discrimination, but can participate in elections or political office when their gender identity or sexual orientation is unknown.



Community members and government officials from rural and urban districts expressed discriminatory views toward LGBTI people. They also reported that no law specifically prohibits LGBTI individuals’ participation in political office.

“The LGBTQI community is something else. Anything out of the human familiarity, I do not prefer, and I consider them perverts. I feel like they are sick, just like using drugs, this is called perversion and requires treatment.” - Government Ministry Respondent (Male)

A CSO respondent working on advocacy for LGBTI rights reported that their main focus in trying to combat these discriminatory views was at the national level, backing politicians who have shown more progressive views in hopes they would also be advocates for LGBTI rights. Human Rights Watch reported that in the most recent parliamentary elections, for the first time, several prominent candidates publicly advocated the repeal of Article 534, which prohibits sexual relations “contradicting the laws of nature” (Human Rights Watch 2018).

“We have hope in some people who are progressive in their view of issues whether it is women’s rights, gay rights, or marginalized groups’ rights in general. We hope that if these people make it, they will raise the voice.”

- CSO Respondent (Male)

CONCLUSIONS

There continue to be signs of progress for women’s political engagement, but significant barriers remain at the policy, community, and individual levels. Factors negatively affecting women’s progress in this area can be seen from both a supply and demand side.

On the “supply” side, to create an enabling environment for women’s political engagement, significant social and cultural norms seen across findings need to be addressed. These include the influence of traditional patriarchal views that men are better suited for politics; the traditional understanding of roles and responsibilities that limits women’s participation in politics; and the influence of sectarian/religious factors, political affiliation, and family that disproportionately creates barriers for women. The small number of women who are successful in surpassing these barriers and making it onto electoral lists are often not prioritized by political parties within those lists or do not have the position needed to be influential in decision making.

On the “demand” side, because of the social norms that reinforce gender roles and patriarchal views that men are better suited for political office, there is a general perception that women need even more confidence and support to run for political office. Women who have the financial and social means and confidence to run and win must also be well prepared and supported to face potential barriers once they make it into office, ensuring that their participation enables them to meaningfully influence decision making within their committees.

LIVELIHOODS AND ACCESS TO FINANCE

BACKGROUND

In recent years, economic strain, resulting in part from regional instability, has contributed to a challenging environment throughout Lebanon for both women and men with regard to economic opportunity, access to finance, and livelihoods.¹² Opportunities for entrepreneurship are ripe, but formal income and collateral requirements pose continued obstacles for both men and women to access finance (PMSPL II 2012; USAID/Lebanon 2018). Women’s access to support for small-business development is disproportionately low. Recent reports indicate that women own more than 30 percent

¹² Additional discussion on gender in labor market participation and workforce development can also be found below, in [Workforce Development](#).

of micro and small businesses in Lebanon, but only 3 percent of bank loans go to female entrepreneurs (USAID/Lebanon 2018).

Women in Lebanon face fewer formal, legal barriers to entrepreneurship compared to women in other countries in the region. However, unequal personal laws and traditional household norms related to access to, and control over, financial resources are an impediment for women (Abdo and Kerbage 2012; Latif n.d.). Under Lebanon's sectarian personal-status law system, household property and assets are typically held in the name of, or signed over to, the male "head of household" upon marriage (Abdo and Kerbage 2012; Human Rights Watch 2015). Although specific sectarian laws vary, respondents across stakeholder groups repeatedly mentioned that female spouses and heirs typically receive a proportionally lower distribution of any inheritance, leaving women who wish to secure loans or otherwise enter the formal economy with limited or no property, assets, or other collateral solely in their name or control. Perceptions remain that, in some households, socially conservative norms around responsibilities and financial decision making may further inhibit women's autonomy and influence over the use of loans and other household income, including for prospective business expenses.

FINDINGS

10. Personal-status and property laws disproportionately affect women's access to the resources needed to obtain loans.



Both male and female FGD respondents perceive standard lending and credit requirements as creating obstacles to accessing loans. However, women are seen to be at a greater disadvantage since they often have less access to the needed proof of income, collateral, or guarantors.

"The thing is, there are a lot of ownership documents that are not in the name of women, meaning they can't obtain a loan." - Government Ministry Respondent (Female)

Although no formal laws or regulations explicitly prohibit women from accessing loans, personal-status laws are seen as a hindrance. Particularly, female community members, as well as CSO, government, and donor respondents reported that personal status laws that limit the distribution of property and inheritance to women further exacerbate women's ability to obtain the needed collateral.

"Since women lack collateral because of the inheritance laws... women in general are still at a very big disadvantage in owning non-moveable assets like land, buildings, and things you could use for a loan as collateral. Because women lack these types of assets, they are less likely to have access to loans."
- Donor Respondent (Female)

11. Although male and female community members reported similar barriers in access to, and ambitions for the use of, loans, women face additional deterrents due to stereotypes about their ability to manage loans.



Adult female community members mentioned using loans to open shops; start new or enlarge existing businesses, like hairdressing parlors, sewing shops, or beauty salons; or start home-based enterprises, such as selling pickled goods or household/beauty products. Young women confirmed this view and also noted instances of women using loans to launch such businesses.

Among youth, females reported an interest in using loans for personal expenses and supporting family, whereas males were more likely to focus on education or business expenses. Female youth also frequently mentioned accessing car loans, a fact also mentioned by young males.

Government ministry and CSO respondents reported limited financial literacy as a barrier to obtaining loans by both men and women, but particularly women. CSO respondents overwhelmingly commented on women's limited familiarity with how to apply for loans.

“Not a lot of people understand the education or the training that they need in order to run a business, or to manage their finances, and this continues to be an issue.” - Government Ministry Respondent (Male)

Other research indicates that as women transition from employee to entrepreneur, there remains a skill gap in marketing, accounting, financial management, and relevant legal functions (USAID/Lebanon 2018). Nevertheless, some government respondents also suggested that women were not only capable but potentially more reliable in managing loans.

“It has emerged that women are far more reliable than men when it comes to micro-finance. For example, they do repay their loans, and the default rate is much lower.” - Government Ministry Representative (Male)

In light of the above-mentioned barriers to accessing loans, when women, particularly female entrepreneurs, do want to seek finance, they must pursue other ways to finance business projects, such as loans from family members (USAID/Lebanon 2018). CSO and government respondents reported some newer programs designed to support women's access to finance and economic participation.

Both male and female respondents from governmental and nongovernmental organizations mentioned the government's Kafalat program as a promising mechanism for increasing entrepreneurship and business ownership among men and women. Male and female FGD participants were aware of Kafalat, as well as other lending programs that do not require income certification. However, the document review found that although community associations and lending programs with less stringent requirements exist, they often focus primarily on informal economic sectors such as agriculture (Abdo and Kerbage 2012; Latif n.d.).

12. Although men typically have control over the distribution of finances to manage household activities, more equitable decision making is occurring in some households, depending on who earns the income. Women were more frequently referenced as relying on their families for income.



Although male and female community members access financial resources from similar sources, women were more frequently referenced as receiving support from family. Male and female FGD respondents identified both formal and informal sources of income and financial resources, such as employment income, credit cards, *wasta*, remittances, and family. Female respondents more frequently reported that they received financial support mostly from family members, including husbands, fathers, mothers in some cases, and working children.

Community members from all stakeholder groups stated that working men typically provided funds to their spouses to pay household bills, purchase food, and cover other necessary expenses related to education and general care for their children.

“The man is usually the source of income, and he usually gives it to the woman who will be responsible for managing it. She knows the necessities that she needs to purchase.” - Community Member (Male Youth)

However, there was some divergence across FGD respondents. Some groups reported that decisions on household spending were taken jointly, rather than by the man only. Among other groups, both male and female community members suggested that the individual who earns income should have decision-making powers over how those funds are used, both within and outside the domestic sphere.

“I am the source of most of the income and I am the person in charge. I am the one who spends the money.” - Community Member (Female Adult)

CONCLUSIONS

Standard credit and collateral requirements are generally perceived as burdensome and pose barriers to access to finance for both males and females, particularly those with limited assets or income. However, these barriers disproportionately affect females. Discriminatory personal-status laws and practices (especially on property and inheritance) create unequal access to, and control over, financial resources at the household level. This inhibits women’s ability to secure the necessary assets and collateral needed to qualify for loans.

While CSO and government respondents reported other programs and initiatives working on women’s economic empowerment (including support to individuals and small and medium-size enterprises), participants in the data consultation meeting indicated that such initiatives were not currently explicitly aligned with the national strategy and could pose challenges for women beneficiaries. Their main concerns were:

- Programs often incentivize women’s engagement in conventional, home-based enterprises or service industries that are not always responsive to market needs.
- The lack of financial literacy can harm program beneficiaries if they are not aware, for example, of taxes, regulations, or other start-up costs.
- There is a need for further assessment of the efficacy and reach of these programs, particularly for women in rural areas.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

BACKGROUND

According to recent studies, female participation in Lebanon’s formal labor sector is low. In 2014, female labor participation as a percentage of total female working-age population was approximately 24 percent (Ministry of Finance and United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] 2017). A 2016 UNDP labor assessment of select sectors viewed as having high productivity or growth potential (agro-food production, residential construction, and information and communication technology) identified a significant underrepresentation of women, who made up only 20 percent of the workforce among respondent businesses (UNDP 2016).

Article 26 of the Lebanese Labor Law states that employers must not differentiate between women and men “with regard to the: type of work, amount of wage or salary, employment, promotion, professional qualification, and apparel.” Nevertheless, a gender wage gap is well recognized and increases with age (Ministry of Finance and UNDP 2017, UNDP 2016). Under the National Social Security Fund, key family and education benefits typically attach to the income of the husband rather than the wife. Also, no laws currently exist that prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace. In this weak legal environment, individual employers and the private sector have significant leeway either to institute more progressive

practices to promote gender equality within their own business or industry or to maintain gender-blind labor practices that enable long-term patterns of discrimination to continue.

Although educated and skilled women are increasingly seeking positions in the formal workforce and other business opportunities, long-standing norms regarding women's traditional caregiving roles and household responsibilities continue to create barriers (USAID/Lebanon 2018). University and TVET students have some autonomy in choosing a course of study but are heavily influenced by family, counselors, and the overall perceptions of what is "available"—ultimately, subject to preexisting employer practices defining certain sectors and positions as more suitable for males or females (USAID/Lebanon 2017a, USAID/Lebanon 2017b).

FINDINGS

I3. The absence of a supportive legal environment—including the lack of sexual harassment policies/laws, poorly defined or enforced labor law protections, and inequitable social security provisions—hinders women's participation in the workforce.



CSO respondents, male government workers, and donor respondents remarked on the absence of various laws and policies and the insufficient enforcement of existing laws as hindering women's participation in the workforce. Although the legal enabling environment in Lebanon officially prohibits sex discrimination, in practice, it lacks the key provisions and policies needed to advance gender equality in the workforce. Legal protections are notably absent in the non-formal sector (Latif n.d.).

"The social and economic laws... are against women. The social-security law... is one of the most prominent examples of discrimination against women; meaning, a man can insure his family, while a woman can't." - CSO Respondent (Female)

"I know there are associations that hire women because they consider that women earn a lower salary." - CSO Respondent (Male)

While respondents spoke about the need for sexual-harassment policies, primary data did not reflect the extent to which the absence of such protections specifically influences women's decisions on when or where to seek employment.

I4. All stakeholder groups highlighted that traditional social norms, such as the perceptions that women should not work outside the home or are only suited for certain types of work, hinder women's ability to enter the workforce and affect how they participate in it.



A 2012 market survey in Saida showed that most institutional respondents reinforced traditional gender stereotypes, suggesting that women were better at jobs that require communication with clients, such as sales, and jobs that require care and affection, such as nursing and teaching. In general, they also stated that women were more lenient, better able to endure difficult work conditions, and more organized in their work. Conversely, they suggested that women were less suitable for jobs that require physical strength, equipment maintenance, and accounting. Sixty percent of these respondents believe there are certain jobs women are unable to do, such as being a driver, storage supervisor, or a porter, or working in security or electrical maintenance. Twenty-two percent of these same respondents believe there are jobs only women can do, such as childcare; being a receptionist or cashier; or working in sales, nursing, or sewing (Knox et al. 2012).

Interview and FGD respondents across stakeholder groups observed that both perceptions and practices regarding women's household responsibilities limit women's ability to fully participate in the workforce. These data are consistent with numerous previous studies. Some respondents and earlier studies articulated norms defining certain types of physical employment as more suitable for males.

"In general, hard jobs are suitable for men. Women can work and aren't lacking anything, but some tasks, which are physically demanding, are hard for them (like mechanics and construction). Is she going to climb a roof or hold a wrench? Men should be prioritized over women in such jobs." - Community Member (Adult Male)

"Of course, religious figures tell you 'a woman's main job is looking after her house, kids, and family, and everything that contradicts with that is taboo'." - Donor Respondent (Female)

CSO representatives and donor respondents stated that women's marital status and household responsibilities, including childcare, also limited their options. This double burden of household chores limits women's ability to work long or late hours or at a longer distance from home. Some respondents pointed to the fact that prospective employers may freely ask women about their marital status or refuse to hire women who expect to need maternity leave.

"So, if a woman is married, this would be considered a hindrance." - CSO Respondent (Male)

"Sometimes, employers ask if a woman is married as they are worried if she is going to need maternity leave. This is one of the factors that might affect her chances of getting the job." - CSO Respondent (Female)

One donor respondent noted that some companies were introducing policies such as flexible working hours to be more responsive to the needs of employees who must balance their jobs with their household responsibilities.

15. More women are perceived to be entering, and adding to the competition in, the formal job market as a result of economic strain and the need for additional household income.



Male and female community respondents across age groups reported that due to the economic climate, many families require more than one income to cover household expenses. Therefore, women are increasingly pursuing formal employment.

"Yes, of course, the woman is also working. Both husband and wife are working nowadays to make ends meet for the whole family." - Community Member (Male Adult)

As more women enter the workforce or become aware of the different opportunities or roles they are able to fill locally or in other locations, demand may continue to change.

"Perceptions vary from Beirut to Jbeil for instance. In Beirut, women want to work and participate, and would like to have a role in society. In rural areas, women are happy the way they are, [but] when they're being exposed through awareness sessions and seeing other municipalities, they start demanding to have a role and participate like in other areas." - Implementing Mechanism Respondent (Male)

16. LGBTI individuals face significant discrimination in the workforce.



With Lebanese courts only recently, in 2018, moving toward decriminalizing homosexual behavior, LGBTI individuals enjoy no legal protections against employment discrimination. Many KII and FGD respondents across stakeholder groups expressed discriminatory attitudes. Only two CSO respondents reported perceptions or knowledge of the barriers facing the LGBTI community. Some community FGD respondents—both male and female—agreed that the stigma against LGBTI individuals makes it even harder for them to secure employment. Among the primary reasons an employer may not choose to hire an LGBTI individual is that it would be “damaging to the reputation” of the company and its employees.

17. Legal protections for preventing employment discrimination against persons with disabilities exist but are not widely understood, and many workplaces are not designed to accommodate individuals with mobility impairments.



Law 220/2000 imposes minimum hiring requirements for persons with disabilities by both public and private companies of a certain size. However, male and female community FGD respondents from both age groups noted that people with mobility impairments do not enjoy equal employment opportunities. Barriers include the belief that persons with disabilities might be less productive and the scarcity of accessible facilities and transportation means.

“You have those with special needs... if they want to go to work, there are no elevators in the building, but only stairs. Also, it depends on their work. They can’t work at all jobs if they have a handicap in their legs. They cannot move easily or do certain things. But they can work as a secretary for example although we perceive them as disabled. But these people are like us. They are mentally sane and maybe even understand things better than we do.” - Community Member (Female Adult)

CONCLUSIONS

There is a dearth of legal protections and incentives to promote inclusive hiring practices and institutional policies. Aspects of the Labor Law that promote nondiscrimination and wage equality are not enforced well and do not apply to informal sectors where women frequently engage, such as agriculture. There is little or no accountability for employers who engage in discriminatory practices, and social protection programs are needed.

Traditional norms surrounding women’s household responsibilities and caretaking obligations are barriers to their employment outside of the home—not only due to stereotypes about the types of jobs that are “appropriate” for women or men, but also because of the time constraints posed by women’s additional unpaid, home-based labor and childcare. Data consultation meeting participants elaborated by pointing more specifically to a need for supportive institutional policies, such as flex time, provision of childcare, and consistent provision of parental leave to give caregivers (predominantly female) more flexibility in seeking employment. However, there is also a need to address and break down gender norms within the home regarding the division of household chores and childrearing responsibilities so that these tasks do not disproportionately limit women.

WATER MANAGEMENT

BACKGROUND

Lebanon stores only 6 percent of its total water resources, compared to an average of 85 percent across the Middle East and North Africa region, affecting rural and urban areas alike. In the Beirut and

Mount Lebanon districts, there are over 20,000 illegal wells, and residents pay up to 15 percent of their total household expenditure to secure water to their homes (World Bank 2017). According to the United Nations, 70 percent of the freshwater resources are polluted (Relief Web 2017). UN-Habitat estimates that demand on water services has increased by almost 30 percent since the influx of 1.5 million refugees as a result of the conflict in Syria (Government of Lebanon and United Nations 2017).

Although there have been several important reforms in Lebanon's water sector to mitigate the lack of access to water for men and women and promote integrated water-resource management, they have typically not taken the differing gender needs into account (USAID/Lebanon 2012). A 2017 report highlighted the potential harm from the lack of data on gender gaps in water management: "... [I]t is very important to understand and acknowledge the critical role women can play in water-related initiatives and the risks women face when water is scarce. However, the tendency in the country has been to disregard women when it comes to water-sector developments" (Latif n.d. 2017).

FINDINGS

18. At the household level, women are responsible for managing water resources and making decisions about water consumption, while men are responsible for providing water to the household.



Women across Lebanon have traditionally been responsible for decision making related to water consumption at the household level. As one study highlights, "Women are traditionally in charge of cleaning and rationing water, which puts extra stress on their daily lives" (Latif n.d.). Furthermore, a 2017 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report found that in addition to water, women are responsible for dealing with rubbish disposal and cleaning, even though men are the primary users of the water (Hydroconseil 2017).

Primary data confirmed that these findings were still relevant. CSO respondents and female community members (adult and youth) reported that women handled and managed the household's water consumption for cleaning, washing, hygiene, and drinking purposes within the home. They also noted that women were responsible for notifying men (typically husbands or male heads of households) when water needs to be resupplied, and men are generally responsible for purchasing the water. Some young and adult men corroborated this information, although there were fewer instances of males discussing this household-based water management role in their focus groups. CSO respondents associated women's role in water management with Lebanon's "patriarchal society," which limits women's responsibilities to homemaking, cleaning, and taking care of children.

"The woman's most prominent role is not to waste water. She participates in an effective way. She puts a schedule to manage water consumption. If she receives water every 2 days, she will clean the house on one day only." - Community Member (Adult Female)

"The woman plays a bigger role when it comes to water management, and this is something we noticed in every community we interacted with. If the water tank gets empty, the husband will complain and criticize his wife for not paying enough attention to water consumption. This is because we live in a patriarchal society, which means the woman is the one that handles domestic chores such as scrubbing, sweeping, and cleaning... She's the one that takes care of the children and bathes them, so in actuality, she is the one responsible for water consumption. She is the decision-maker in this area. Now, when the water is completely consumed, this is where the man plays a larger role, since he is the one that has to provide the family with the water that they need." - CSO Respondent (Male)

Male community members are seen as responsible for purchasing or fetching water. When asked about access to water, male respondents across most districts said they and their communities mostly accessed water by buying it, filtering it, or getting it from wells and natural sources like springs. Young women and a few adult women also said these were the most common ways they and their communities accessed water. Overall, fewer female stakeholder groups discussed how they or their families accessed water outside of the home.

Respondents in regions where natural water sources are available, such as Jezzine, said they relied on these natural sources for many of their non-drinking water needs, such as watering crops and household cleaning. Other sources of natural water include rainwater, which respondents in Nabatieh cited.

19. In community-level water infrastructure projects, men are perceived as better suited for physical tasks, whereas women are seen to be better suited for administrative work, management, and marketing.



Community members and CSO respondents said that men and women fulfilled different roles in water management and infrastructure projects. Male community members reported that most women were better suited for office-based roles, such as administrative work, management, marketing, and sales. Both men and women community members saw men as better suited for implementing field projects because much of the work required physical exertion. CSO respondents reported that men were more likely to hold leadership positions in these projects due to the common perception that men have greater authority on decision making when it comes to managing water outside of the home.

“More women work in offices while more men work in the field.” - Community Member (Male Youth)

“... but as a woman, she wouldn’t be able to replace a pipe for example.” - Community Member (Male Youth)

Male community members reported that women who are mechanical engineers or more highly educated on the topic might have a wider role in this sector.

“Women are like men. They are qualified and equipped for similar positions.” - Community Member (Male Youth)

20. Female participation in municipal water committees, particularly in rural areas, is limited by gender norms.



Community members – mostly males from Akkar, Baalbeck, and Rachaiya – reported that no women worked in water management in their municipal committees and that this was mainly due to women preferring more “culturally-acceptable” committees. A female adult respondent from Tripoli explained that in her municipality, the government had assigned female municipality officers to committees on women’s and children’s issues and “[channeled] the women to very specific cases.”

“... When they divided tasks in the municipality committee, they assigned responsibilities related to women’s and children’s issues to women.” - Community Member (Adult Female)

A female municipal committee member reported that because of her lack of involvement and, therefore, lack of understanding of water issues, when community members come to her with issues they are facing, she must defer to the men on her municipal committee.

21. Consistent access to water was reported as a high priority for both men and women. Men focused on barriers related to infrastructure and corruption, while women focused on the need for clean water.



When asked about their priorities for water projects, male community members (adult and youth) more often focused on infrastructure and decreasing the cost of purchasing water. Adult male community members in several regions said that corruption and other forms of external interference were a barrier to accessing clean water for themselves and their communities. The most reported example was the belief that the Lebanese government forbids citizens from digging wells so that water companies can continue profiting from the business of selling water, while it is more affordable and convenient for citizens to access clean water from wells. In Marjayoun for example, community members blamed Israel for damming a nearby river, and in Baalbeck and Jezzine, community members mentioned bribery and *wasta* as limiting factors. The only mention of corruption by female community members came from Koura, where it was believed that water became scarcer in the summertime because it was diverted to tourist locations.

Female community members focused more often on the need to ensure access to clean water for the community in general, rather than specifically for their homes. Female and male community members both mentioned a need for water for agriculture and irrigation purposes.

*“It depends on the individual’s situation. There are people who have connections and can therefore remedy their situation. There is *wasta* involved, like in any other company in our country... it all depends on a person’s capability and necessity, and this is what makes him resort to alternative solutions.” - Community Member (Male Adult)*

“... should provide water to all houses without exceptions, because some of these people deliver water to some place and not the other.” - Community Member (Female Youth)

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, findings show that women play a substantially greater role in water management and decision making within the home, while men are responsible for providing the water itself. At the community and municipal levels, men are seen as better suited due to the perceptions of the physicality of the task. Women are seen to be more suited for office-based tasks, such as administration and planning, except in cases where women are specialized and have a higher level of education in a related field. Both men and women are concerned about water access, with women focusing on home-based concerns regarding the need for clean water, and men on access issues in relation to infrastructure and corruption. The limitations of women’s participation in administrative roles in water management projects, combined with their frequent absence from municipal-level decision making, reflect how traditional and cultural norms around men’s and women’s accepted roles continue to limit women’s full participation in this sector.

REFORESTATION

BACKGROUND

Wars, urban sprawl, forest fires, and unsustainable land-use practices have led to the eradication of many forests in Lebanon. As of 2016, forests made up only 13.6 percent of the country’s surface area. The Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Environment, the Council for Development and

Reconstruction, as well as local municipalities, national reserves, the private sector, and NGOs have committed to efforts to recover the deforested areas (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO] 2016).

In July 2017, the Government of Lebanon launched the National Adaptation Plan process to discuss priority areas for climate-change adaptation. This plan concentrates on three key sectors—water, agriculture, and forestry—with an overarching focus on gender equality and the better use of sex-disaggregated data, which had previously been overlooked in these sectors (Relief Web 2017). The process also focused on a need to mainstream climate change throughout other sectors and ministries. The Government of Lebanon’s National Action Plan (2017–2019) includes three objectives focused on women’s role in environmental activities (National Action Plan [2017-2019], English Version):

- Activating women’s role in the process of environmental decision making and programming.
- Sensitizing women to the importance of their role in the protection of the environment and in rooting environmental awareness in their society.
- Enhancing the knowledge of the role of women in the protection of the environment and sustainable development.

FINDINGS

22. Men are presumed to be better suited for, and more interested in, reforestation activities due to the perceived physical demands. Women are seen as less engaged, although there are signs of change among younger women in select districts.



Government and CSO respondents and male and female community members, especially women, viewed females as unsuited for the physical labor required to plant trees, move rocks, and haul wood. Some female community members (adults and youth) expressed little interest in working in reforestation due to the physical demands of such work.

“Of course, the laborers would mostly be men.” - Community Member (Female Adult)

Some women reported that they were too preoccupied with household chores (such as cooking and caring for their children) to participate in reforestation activities. One CSO respondent suggested that women could be less likely to engage because planting might take place at a location far from home or at a time that is inconvenient for women, such as in the evening, when women are meant to be at home.

One male government ministry representative highlighted that because reforestation was a municipal issue and many women did not own the land being used, they might be unlikely to get involved. However, female community members reported that they were more likely to be involved in planting done within the confines of their home. Another CSO respondent said that there was, sometimes, a division of labor within reforestation for men and women, whereby men plant the trees and women maintain them (trimming, watering, and replanting).

Young female community members in Akkar, Aley, Beirut, Rachaiya, and West Beqaa reported that even if they were interested in reforestation, their parents might restrict their participation. One young woman in Rachaiya stated that women do not participate in reforestation because females working in reforestation are seen as overly masculine or “manly.”

Moderator: So, you barely participate?

Respondent: At first, they won’t agree, but when I convince them, they do allow me.

Moderator: So, you can convince them, and you can reforest?

Respondent: Nowadays, they do agree. However, a few years ago, they didn't.

(Community Member, Female Youth)

23. In environmental committees, men are more likely to be perceived as holding leadership positions, whereas women are seen as fulfilling roles in planning and administration.



Male and female community members reported that women were traditionally seen as important stakeholders for reforestation and were responsible for logistics, planning, and administrative roles in environmental committees and reforestation projects. CSO respondents spoke of women's role in reforestation, environmental advocacy, and awareness-raising campaigns.

"...This is a tricky question because we have heard talk about women's draw in environmental committees. In my previous job, we established environmental committees, and there, we saw that they actually play a crucial role in environmental awareness, preserving the forest, and protecting nature, because first they are mothers, they are teachers, they are [the] closest to home." - Donor Respondent (Female)

Male community members across districts provided some exceptions to this division of responsibilities, like when they work with women with expertise in reforestation and engineering for example. In these cases, they said that women played the role of project managers who oversee teams of men in the field. One CSO respondent suggested there could be an opportunity for women to play more significant roles in certain regions but did not specify these regions.

"In reforestation or nature reserves, the majority of the workforce is women, because they are activists... They work as guides in the nature reserves that we are working with." - CSO Respondent (Male)

24. Community members expressed a need for increased financial incentives, awareness, education, and job opportunities to boost participation in reforestation activities



When asked what would increase engagement in reforestation, both male and female community members expressed a need for greater financial incentives and resources, such as providing trees and plants for planting. Male community members expressed a need for increased wages and insurance so that the time and money invested in reforestation would not be lost. Many community members remarked that the existing laws to protect forests were rarely enforced. Male youth from Beirut and Jezzine stated a need to raise broader awareness on conservation issues.

"... Increasing work opportunities and encouraging laborers and offering them support." - Community Member (Male Adult)

"What's happening here is you work all day to sustain your household, or would you rather spend all your effort on caring for the tree and watering it?" - Community Member (Male Adult)

"But awareness isn't enough because there isn't enough money. No one can afford buying 5,000 trees to plant." - Community Member (Male Youth)

Female community members expressed the need for increased financial incentives, financial backing, and planting support (such as plants, shrubbery, or other products). Female FGD respondents, especially

adults, emphasized the need to raise awareness of reforestation more broadly and the different types of roles women can play. Other suggestions included creating organizations that either institute job quotas or specifically target women, and to a lesser extent, support encouragement from communities for women to participate in these activities.

“Women think they cannot contribute in almost any field. So, through awareness sessions, give them simple tasks at first. For example, ask women to get four plant shrubs and plant them in front of their house.” - Community Member (Female Adult)

CSO respondents suggested the need for more education and training in reforestation for women and remarked on recent increases in women’s participation in their reforestation training.

CSO respondents and select government ministry representatives stated that women were becoming more respected in this field because there are more women specializing in areas that enable them to serve important roles in nature reserves or work in botany.

These same respondents spoke of the need for targeted programming that responds to differences in education and opportunities for women with more education and women who have less exposure or opportunities to work in this area.

“Women do have pioneering roles. They are there. Even in running nature reserves, they have an important role.” - Government Ministry Respondent (Male)

CONCLUSIONS

Women’s roles are seen to be more appropriate when activities are close to their homes. Women more often participate in planting within their homes or fulfill administrative tasks. Men are seen as fulfilling more physical tasks in implementing these projects and taking on leadership roles in reforestation efforts at the community and municipal levels.

The findings suggest a potential for change because there is a perception that more women are entering relevant fields such as botany. Additionally, data indicate there are numerous ways for bolstering women’s participation, particularly with the aim of fulfilling the goals presented in the Government of Lebanon’s National Action Plan (2017–2019).

Some respondents said that their decision on whether to actively participate in the sector or not was at least partially driven by economic factors. These factors include the lack of financial support, as well as the perceived limited enforcement of the laws that protect reforestation efforts and investments. Considering the current economic situation in Lebanon, it could be necessary to ensure that reforestation is an economically viable career option for Lebanese citizens if we want to enhance the participation of both men and women.

2016–2017 EDUCATION GENDER ANALYSES

In 2016 and 2017, PMSPL II conducted three education gender analyses:

- [Basic Public education](#)
- [Higher education](#)
- [TVET](#)

A summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations were formulated for the [Resource Guide for Gender Integration in Education Programming](#) and can be found in this section. The methodology, including data-collection methods, sample, and analysis, differed for each report.

Data from these sector-specific reports were triangulated with data from the five sectors covered in the 2018 Gender Assessment to identify cross-cutting themes, overall conclusions, and recommendations.

BASIC PUBLIC EDUCATION

FINDINGS

Gender parity in enrollment is evident at the basic-education level in Lebanon, but equal access does not necessarily translate to equal quality of education. Girls and boys face different challenges in accessing quality education, and the needs of different groups of students, including those with disabilities, refugees, and those at risk of dropping out of school for work or marriage, need to be effectively integrated into basic education.

The government provides training to all teachers in the basic public education system and has delivered teacher training courses aimed at promoting gender equality in the classroom. However, the gender equality training is not mandatory, and many teachers have not taken it. Many public schools are ill equipped to support students with disabilities—Lebanese teachers frequently lack training opportunities, schools often lack adequate infrastructure, and the basic

Gender and Inclusion Gaps in Basic Public Education

- The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) has no specific policy on gender equality.
- MEHE curricula and teaching and learning materials are gender-biased.
- Teachers are not adequately trained to promote gender equality and inclusive approaches and practices.
- Schools are ill-equipped to support students with special needs.
- Early and forced marriage leads to early dropout among girls.
- Refugee students are channeled into a second-stream system, which might limit opportunities for both girls and boys.
- Boys participate at lower rates in school leadership roles and responsibilities than girls, attend school at lower rates than girls, and are at higher risk of dropping out in search of economic opportunity.
- Syrian refugee students, especially girls, have limited access to extracurricular activities.

public education system is not equipped with curricular modifications¹³ and resources.

POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

MEHE does not have a specific policy on gender equality in education, gender is not effectively integrated in the existing MEHE curriculum, and teachers are not adequately trained on gender and inclusive development in the basic-education setting. There is widespread recognition among local and international donor organizations that the existing MEHE curriculum is outdated, heavily gender-biased, and in need of revision.

MEHE has a mechanism to address school-related, gender-based violence (SRGBV), but cases of sexual harassment and abuse are directed to mechanisms outside the school. There is no law that prohibits child marriage, which is a primary reason that girls drop out of school.

Despite the efforts of MEHE and international community, the refugee students' needs are not being fully met. The basic-education system aims to achieve basic accommodation for these students, but not an equitable and effective integration. Given the ceiling placed on the number of non-Lebanese students who can enroll in the first shift, the majority of refugee students in the second shift might be limited in their ability to integrate with their Lebanese peers and participate in extracurricular and other school activities. MEHE's policy restricts refugee parents from participating in school parent associations, which hinders integration and limits these parents' decision-making power regarding their children's education.

CULTURAL NORMS AND BELIEFS

In general, parents and students value education, and parents view it as an important tool for their children, particularly girls, to have an independent future (PMSPL II 2017). Male students generally value education for securing livelihoods, while female students value it because it reduces their dependence on men. Teachers believe there is limited gender bias in their classrooms and schools, although classroom observations from studies indicate otherwise. Educators mostly favor co-ed classrooms but encounter resistance from adolescent boys and girls, as well as parents in a few regions that are more religious and conservative.

GENDER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Boys participate at lower rates in school leadership roles and responsibilities than girls and attend school at lower rates than girls. There are a variety of reasons for this, many of which stem from cultural norms and beliefs. Boys are given more freedom to participate in activities outside of the home, both recreational and work-related, whereas girls are expected to attend school and return home and have limited options to participate in activities outside of school or the home. On the other hand, girls take on more responsibilities than boys at home.

Male students are at a higher risk of dropping out of school compared to girls, especially in Cycle 3, because they have more access to income-earning opportunities outside of school.

¹³ The term “curricular modifications” refers to adapted learning objectives for certain students and includes the use of different assessment rubrics, exemption from certain projects, and so on. The term “modifications” is used in individualized education programs designed for students with learning disabilities and that detail the support and services a school will provide to meet the needs of a student with a disability.

The roles and responsibilities of those working in the basic-education system are also gendered. For example, in the 2015–2016 academic year, 79 percent of basic-education teachers and administrators were female, while most leadership positions are perceived to be held by males.¹⁴

ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER RESOURCES

Girls play leadership roles in the school but do not have the same access to extracurricular activities as boys, mainly because of their parents' concern for their safety when traveling to and from school and of their additional responsibilities at home. There also exists a gender divide in extracurricular-activity participation. Boys are more likely to participate in sports activities, while girls tend to participate more in celebrations, cultural activities, and lectures. This does not necessarily reflect different aspirations as it can also be dictated by the cultural norms and expectations about appropriate activities.

Syrian refugees also face limitations in accessing extracurricular activities because these activities usually take place during the time they're attending second-shift classes. Access is even more limited for female refugee students because of their restricted movement outside the home due to cultural norms and familial concerns for their safety. Both Lebanese and non-Lebanese students also have limited access to psychosocial support because counselors are not present in all schools (first and second shift). Additionally, schools lack the necessary resources to ensure the inclusion of children with special needs, and girls with disabilities have a more restricted access to education and formal employment than boys with disabilities.

PATTERNS OF POWER AND DECISION MAKING

SRGBV is common in and around schools in Lebanon. Girls experience verbal harassment and boys are subjected to physical violence and bullying. Male and female Syrian refugee students regularly face bullying and discrimination from peers, school management, and the host community. The common punishment for all students is their exclusion from the classroom and extracurricular activities, and boys experience more physical violence as punishment than girls.

HIGHER EDUCATION

FINDINGS

Male enrollment in higher education was slightly lower than female enrollment—46 percent compared to 54 percent of the total student enrollment in Lebanese universities for the 2015–2016 academic year (Center for Educational Research and Development [CERD] 2016). Eighty-six percent of higher-education students are Lebanese and 14 percent non-Lebanese. Over the last four years, approximately 2,400 Syrian refugee students enrolled in Lebanese universities (these data are not sex-disaggregated), compared to 510 in early 2016.¹⁵

Gender and Inclusion Gaps in Higher Education

- Slightly lower male enrollment in higher education than female enrollment.
- Gender-blind education policies.
- Underreported sexual harassment.
- Limited opportunities for refugees to access higher education.

¹⁴ Finding based on qualitative data gathered during PMSPL II's gender analysis. Quantitative, sex-disaggregated data are currently unavailable for teachers and principals to confirm this finding.

¹⁵ EU, 2016, p. 1

Although more women than men are enrolled in higher education, women do not have equal access within the education system and in many other social, economic, and political aspects of their lives due to unequal laws and regulations, deeply patriarchal cultural values, and inadequate public policies and political systems that promote gender equality.

LAWS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

Higher education policies (governmental and institutional) are gender-blind¹⁶ and do not actively promote gender equality. In the higher-education gender analysis, only two of the sampled universities had an antiharassment policy in place. A campus “culture of silence,” combined with low awareness and recognition of what constitutes sexual harassment among staff, faculty, and students, results in underreporting. Although most universities have both formal and informal grievance processes that are gender-blind, both male and female students have found the formal processes ineffective and have not taken advantage of informal reporting processes for fear of reprisal.

Topics related to promoting gender equality are not widely integrated into curricula, which does not help students, staff, and faculty to better understand topics such as harassment. Most universities do not, even informally, take action to raise awareness of gender equality or gender-based-violence (GBV) prevention and response. Informal activities that do try to raise awareness of gender inequality, such as student clubs, are largely student-led and female-dominated.

CULTURAL NORMS AND BELIEFS

Cultural norms that stereotype males and females in all aspects of life persist across Lebanon among students, peers, parents, and employers within the university setting. These stereotypes in higher education take the form of funneling students into tracks of study by sex and perceiving females as more studious and more able to outperform males academically.

A student’s choice of university is highly motivated by its proximity, affordability, and reputation, but sociocultural influences affect the field of study they choose, often based on stereotypes of male and female roles.

Policies to ensure the training of university staff and faculty to address sexual harassment and gender stereotypes and bias are not standardized.

GENDER ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TIME USE

According to CERD, in the 2012–2013 academic year, 38 percent of faculty members at all academic levels in both public and private universities were women. However, at the administrative level, the percentage of women in these roles differed between public and private universities. In public universities, women represent 58 percent of people in administrative roles, whereas in private

¹⁶ The term “gender-blind” refers to policies and programs designed without prior analysis of the culturally-defined set of economic, social, and political roles, responsibilities, rights, entitlements, obligations, and power relations associated with being female and male, and of the dynamics between and among men and women and boys and girls. Gender-blind programs or policies ignore gender considerations altogether. In contrast, gender-aware programs/policies deliberately examine and address the anticipated gender-related outcomes during both design and implementation. An important prerequisite for all gender-integrated interventions is to be gender-aware.

universities, 47 percent of administrators are women (CERD 2013). These figures differ from those in basic education, where the majority of teachers are thought to be female.¹⁷

In 2008, enrollment rates (according to the most recent available data) across faculties and disciplines^{18,19} show that females dominated majors such as social services, environmental studies, education, life sciences, social and behavioral science, humanities, health, and arts, while males dominated majors such as engineering, telecommunication, computing, law, and architecture.²⁰

Most students say that they make their choices completely independently, but external influences remain, including from parents, market needs, counselor advice, and social norms. To some extent, gender stereotypes could reflect employers' desire to hire women for stereotypically female jobs and men for stereotypically male jobs. Many male and female students choose majors that reflect these stereotypes because that is where they believe they will be the most employable. Even when males and females enter fields dominated by the opposite sex, they are directed to specialties and jobs within those fields that are perceived to be more "gender appropriate."

Syrian students, refugees or not, might perceive access to universities as limited due to harassment, and this could influence their decision to change universities if the opportunity exists. Accommodations for refugees across universities are limited and not all universities offer modifications and accommodations for students with special needs.

ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER ASSETS, SERVICES, AND RESOURCES

The National Education Strategy Framework (2010–2015) specifies that all students should have equal opportunities, although students in urban areas have more access to education and resources than students in rural areas. Dependence on external funding and variations in quality exist along sectarian and geographical lines. These factors have particular implications for female students.

The Lebanese University, the only public university in Lebanon, is the first choice for poor families to send their daughters to, especially those in rural areas.²¹ Women accounted for 70 percent of Lebanese University graduates in the 2015–2016 academic year (CERD 2016).

Male and female students at the universities sampled for the higher-education gender analysis indicated that career-guidance counselors at some universities supported their choices of major. But in general, there is a lack of clear career-counseling services, much less gender-sensitive ones (PMSPL II 2017).

PATTERNS OF POWER AND DECISION MAKING

Proximity, affordability, and reputability are the three most important factors that affect a student's choice of university. Females are usually more influenced in their choice by the availability of scholarships, financial aid, and support from their family and friends. Current male and female students

¹⁷ Finding is based on qualitative data. Quantitative, sex-disaggregated data are not available for teachers and principals.

¹⁸ Yearly census on schools, teachers, professors, and students in the public schools.

¹⁹ Includes The State of Children in Lebanon Survey (Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey II), 2000; The Lebanon Family Health Survey, 2004; The Living Conditions of the Households of 2004 and 2007; and The Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey III, 2009.

²⁰ Central Administration of Statistics (CAS). 2010. *Gender Statistics in Lebanon Current Situation and Future Needs*.

²¹ Atallah, S., and Helou, M. 2012. *Gender Assessment for USAID Lebanon*.

have not experienced cultural barriers or constraints to accessing, continuing, or completing their education, although economic and infrastructure challenges persist.

Both female and male students participate in campus clubs and extracurricular activities, and female students have equal opportunities for campus leadership positions (PMSPL II 2017).

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET)

Lebanon has both public and private TVET institutions. According to CERD, there are 120 public and 217 private TVET schools (CERD 2016) spread across Lebanon.²² The TVET student population represents about 13 percent of students aged 12 to 21.²³ The number of TVET students in 2015–2016 was 75,791 (CERD 2016), mainly in Mount Lebanon, 55 percent of which were male and 45 percent female, representing a shift from the basic- and higher-education sectors.

LAWS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

While the current policies and regulations that govern TVET-school operation and management are not overtly discriminatory, they are predominantly male-oriented and include no specific anti-harassment or anti-discrimination provisions. There are no policies in place that require TVET staff or teachers to be trained on gender equality or GBV. Also, although gender focal points might organize these trainings at specific institutions, there is no requirement for teachers to attend.

CULTURAL NORMS AND BELIEFS

In Lebanon, TVET is commonly viewed as an alternative option for students who struggle with traditional academic education, rather than a viable path to skill acquisition and employment. And although students are trained in specific technical or vocational tracks, TVET education does not necessarily prepare them to enter a workforce with a high youth-unemployment rate. Within TVET education, there are gaps in terms of which training tracks male and female students pursue, with some

Gender and Inclusion Gaps in TVET

- Predominantly male-oriented.
- Lack of specific anti-harassment or anti-discrimination provisions.
- No official MEHE guidance on how TVET programs can help increase gender equality within specializations.
- Limited safe transportation options for females.
- Limited extracurricular activities for females.
- Female students experience harassment within, and on their way to and from, schools.

²² Other sources, however, such the Directorate General for TVET (DGTNET) (<http://edu-lb.net/schoolrasmelist.php>), indicate that there are 131 public schools, and SchoolNet website EAID (http://www.schoolnet.edu.lb/schools/vocational_ar.htm) lists 434 private TVET institutions. When this discrepancy was further investigated, DGTNET explained that every school that gets a permit for operation is on their list, including schools initiated as part of larger charity projects, such as NGOs or orphanages. Different branches of the same school are also counted separately because each branch must have different sets of official papers for the permit issuance. CERD explained that their information was based on secondary data provided by the DGTNET.

²³ This was calculated by subtracting kindergarten and basic education students from the total number of formal education students. The total number of students in grade 5 and up (age 12 and up) in formal education is 329,840, which makes the total number of students, including higher education and TVET, 605,310 (<http://www.crdp.org/stat-details?id=25997&la=ar>).

tracks being more dominated by one than the other. There are many factors that contribute to this, but cultural norms and beliefs about acceptable employment fields for women and men play an prevalent role.

GENDER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIME USE

Gender stereotypes, roles, and responsibilities strongly influence the tracks students choose within the TVET system. Within the Lebanese society, men are traditionally perceived as the main breadwinners, whereas women are viewed in light of their reproductive roles. Men are perceived as strong and capable of performing physical activities, whereas women are perceived as weaker and in need of protection. Whether overtly or subliminally, these stereotypes affect students' specialization choices and employment prospects upon graduation. Even when females specialize in male-dominated tracks, they are often relegated to deskwork upon employment. And although TVET programs do not explicitly direct students toward sex-specific tracks, efforts to actively recruit students to specialize in tracks traditionally dominated by the other sex are limited. There exists no official MEHE guidance on how TVET programs can help increase gender equality within specializations.

Promising Practice: Curriculum Revision

Under the Reaching All Children with Education (RACE II) Strategy, MEHE and CERD, in collaboration with the World Bank, are working to revise the Lebanese TVET curriculum, which has not been updated since 1997. The goal of the revision is to ensure it is competency-based, learner-centered, and relevant for the 21st-century needs of the workforce.

In addition to the formal curriculum, MEHE will develop standardized, non-formal education programs that could work as pathways to formal education, particularly for children who have been out of school for a period of time. A strategy to integrate gender across the curriculum was developed by CERD to help inform the redesign process.

ACCESS TO, AND CONTROL OVER, ASSETS, SERVICES, AND RESOURCES

No official efforts have been made to promote student entry into non-traditional tracks because no official MEHE policy guidance exists. These efforts may be undertaken on an *ad hoc* basis but are not formalized or consistent across TVET institutions.

During the PMSPL II gender analysis, TVET students mentioned infrastructure challenges related to the size of classrooms and availability of facilities and equipment. In addition, students indicated issues related to transportation from remote areas and institutions that are difficult to reach. This is a bigger problem for female students who already have limited safe transportation options.

PATTERNS OF POWER AND DECISION MAKING

Students overwhelmingly choose TVET majors and career paths that align with the existing gender roles and norms. Exceptions exist, but mainly among female students. Most students say their specialization decisions were influenced by parental advice, personal preference, and guidance from the TVET institution. Cultural and gender norms influence the decision-making processes for all students.

Both male and female students participate in student clubs, but extracurricular activities are limited in TVET institutions in general, especially for female students. TVET students generally have fewer opportunities for self-development and self-expression, particularly females, due to the absence of extracurricular activities, student-governance bodies, and clubs, in comparison with other education institutions. In cases where sports activities are available, they are sex-segregated and female students are either not welcome in, or not invited to, male-dominated sports activities.

No specific data exist about sexual harassment in TVET institutions. However, the TVET gender analysis conducted by PMSPL II indicates that female students experience harassment within, and on their way to and from, institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

This section offers a summary of cross-cutting themes that emerged across all sectors covered by research questions 1–8 (see Exhibit 3 and Exhibit 4).

Although Lebanon’s **legal and policy environment** includes some key steps forward and broad provisions and strategies with respect to gender equality, significant gaps and opportunities remain to strengthen the enabling policy environment and align with these more gender-sensitive frameworks. These include the following:

- The inequitable distribution of household assets, resources, and decision making—resulting from Lebanon’s 15 distinct, sectarian personal-status laws—creates a ripple effect for women who need these resources to fully leverage political and economic opportunities. Where laws are more supportive of gender equality, they are not consistently understood or enforced.
- Despite the limited recent progress in decriminalizing homosexual behavior, LGBTI individuals currently enjoy no legal protection against discrimination in any sector.
- Although persons with disabilities have some legal protection against discrimination and positive rights to participation in all sectors, neither the public nor the private infrastructure currently provide sufficient accommodation.
- Sexual harassment is presently not defined or addressed under the law and is likely underreported.

Public and private institutions (schools, government offices, workplaces) do not integrate gender-sensitive approaches into their curricula, programming, or policies, thus missing out on opportunities to reduce inequality and transform traditional gender norms.

Although females are becoming the markers of success in education (higher completion rates at all levels and taking leadership roles through university-level education), this is not translating into norms and opportunities they experience as adults, including in the workforce and other public spaces.

Cultural norms and beliefs around **traditional household versus public/community responsibilities** dictate longstanding biases and assumptions about appropriate activities and behaviors for males and females, thus limiting their ability to participate in nontraditional roles. Notwithstanding evidence that younger women are taking on leadership roles in school by adulthood, men are typically understood to take on more physical roles, responsibilities, and leadership outside of the home and in the workforce, whereas women are perceived to have softer skills focused on caregiving, household responsibilities, and service provision. There are examples of women challenging these norms with different types of nontraditional employment outside of the home, particularly as they achieve higher levels of education. However, these **women often face a double burden of managing household responsibilities and caregiving** in addition to business or workplace demands. There is a need for more flexible work environments across sectors to ensure both female and male caregivers have the same opportunities.

Discriminatory attitudes against LGBTI remain widespread, and many may not openly express their sexual orientation or gender identity. Accurate data on these populations are not available, and the barriers they encounter are not fully understood.

Finally, an overall climate of economic strain, regional political instability, and concerns about domestic political and economic corruption pervaded a number of responses and perceptions among all respondents—women, men, and youth—signaling a need for thoughtful assessment and programming that might influence already scarce resources and opportunities. Women, LGBTI individuals, and persons with disabilities could be disproportionately affected by these issues, but more research is needed to better understand the implications for Lebanon’s diverse and complex demographic groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for questions 1–5 were created based on the data collected, feedback from relevant stakeholders during the July data consultation meetings, and relevant literature. Recommendations for questions 6–8 can be found starting on page 44.

Prior to action, the recommendations should be presented and discussed with the relevant actors to ensure their alignment with existing interventions and avoid effort duplication. To better understand which actors are working in this space, a mapping exercise should be conducted within each sector. Some recommendations are directed toward USAID’s higher-level engagement and strategic planning, while others focus on more specific activities that merit consideration when supporting implementing mechanisms.

The following strategies should be applied across sectors to support the transformation of traditional gender norms:

- **Male Engagement:** Ensure all interventions not only target women but also focus on engaging men as equal partners and stakeholders.
- **Identifying Champions and Positive Role Models:** There is a need to spotlight positive male and female role models and champions and focus on efforts to transform stereotypes about gender-appropriate roles and responsibilities.
- **Focus on Youth:** Engage male and female youth through schools, media, and social platforms to change gender norms at a young age.

GOVERNANCE

OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
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Supply: Reduce the existing barriers to equal political participation	
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- | | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy/Enabling Environment:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Work with the appropriate ministry to support the adaptation of existing laws that limit women’s participation (personal status law system) and support the civil society to advocate for this law adaptation.○ For those laws that have been changed, such as Article 25 of Law 655, support CSOs to increase awareness of that change through community-level awareness drives and other media campaigns to ensure men and women can take advantage of this change.• Social and Cultural Barriers:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Work at the national and local levels to engage female politicians as role models in school programming (curricula, after-school events), media, and other public fora.○ Work with local religious and community leaders to serve as champions for increasing women’s political participation.○ Support and expand programming to educate youth regarding the changing gender norms, specifically focusing on how these norms influence men’s and women’s roles in politics. |
|--|--|

OPPORTUNITIES RECOMMENDATIONS

Demand: Increase demand among women to run for political office and be an active member of the electorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission additional research to learn from, and build on, the good practices of the political parties that have been successful in engaging women in decision-making roles. • Encourage government officials to ensure political party platforms are clear so women who want to participate can easily see how their interests fit within a party's platform. • Support programming that researches effective media strategies to educate the general public on women's roles in politics, and ensure equal coverage of men and women in media.
Reduce discrimination against marginalized populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the existing advocacy that is working to reduce bias toward this population. • Conduct further research and consultations with CSOs working with marginalized populations to learn what kind of programming is needed at the municipal and national levels in order to engage these populations and reduce broader discrimination.

LIVELIHOODS AND ACCESS TO FINANCE

OPPORTUNITIES RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve the legal enabling environment and reduce the disproportionately-burdensome lending requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with other donors/networks to support the review/revision of legal and regulatory measures in order to improve women's access to finance and business development, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Regulatory barriers that could adversely affect women or other new business owners. ◦ Personal-status laws that limit women's access to collateral.
Ensure programming is responsive to the market needs and national economic strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct and/or leverage the existing market analysis and feasibility studies and link programming to the national economic strategy to ensure female beneficiaries are being connected with sustainable opportunities and reduce potential unintended, harmful consequences of loan programs that target women. • Collaborate with, and leverage the work of, implementers conducting value-chain analyses and market assessments. • Conduct a landscape analysis of women's finance and economic empowerment programs and use the findings to inform Project Appraisal Documents to ensure that rural and other potentially marginalized groups of women are appropriately targeted.
Ensure all financial-literacy training and management-skills training for women entrepreneurs or loan recipients is responsive to needs that cut across starting up and running a business, not just loan applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support financial-literacy training, regulatory/business-management training, and capacity-development programs, not only for prospective beneficiaries/loan applicants, but also on an ongoing basis to address the needs of new business owners. • Support community- and school-based awareness-raising activities and identify role models to enable both males and females to understand and pursue a variety of market-driven enterprises and roles, not just opportunities in traditional or informal sectors.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Support a more robust legal enabling environment and stronger institutional policies and enforce non-discrimination provisions and principles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support programming for policy development, advocacy, and incentive structures to encourage businesses to engage in gender-equitable practices, such as the proactive recruitment of women (including into management positions), the institution of flex time, and offering parental leave. • Work with both the public and private sectors to improve disability accommodation, with an initial focus on integrating such efforts into private-sector programs (including corporate social responsibility initiatives) and other institutional partnerships.
Transform the traditional views on the gender division of labor, both within the workforce and at the household level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage youth and educational programming and identify positive male and female role models to (1) promote more equitable norms around the division of household labor and childcare responsibilities, and (2) provide examples of both men and women working in non-traditional jobs.

WATER MANAGEMENT

OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Household Level: Raise awareness among community members about the varied roles and responsibilities of water management in the home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure programming focuses on securing functional channels for women to directly communicate about household water issues at the community and municipal levels. • Develop youth-centered programming that supports changes in household norms and a more equitable distribution of labor with respect to water management and usage. • Ensure gender-sensitive programming is integrated into future water projects, particularly focusing on the disconnect between women's role in managing water at the household level and their limited role in decision making at the community and municipal levels.
Community Level: Expand the role of women in water-infrastructure projects and professions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage more women in needs assessments and designs of community water-infrastructure projects so that project designs reflect both male and female experiences and needs with respect to water usage. • Support programming that encourages and facilitates more women going into the engineering and infrastructure fields. • Target female engineers to serve as champions in educating the community on water infrastructure to provide positive role models and break down the stereotypes around traditional gender roles and responsibilities. • Enhance awareness and engage role models for men and women on different types of opportunities to engage in the planning and implementation of water-infrastructure projects.
Municipal Level: Remove the barriers that keep female municipal members from participating in water-management committees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure both male and female municipal council members have access to information on infrastructure in their communities so that they can be more effective and participate equally in serving their community on this issue. • Ensure female municipal committee members are invited for training, have the backing of their community, and can fully participate.

REFORESTATION

OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Household Level: Support expanding reforestation activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support programming that engages women and men in expanding women's roles beyond the household to reforestation maintenance at a broader level. • Identify and work with female experts in botany and reforestation, as well as community-level women who are already engaged in reforestation, to serve as champions and role models for women's contribution in this field. • Expand education on reforestation more broadly in schools, ensuring boys and girls see their potential roles in supporting it. • Ensure that transportation is safe, work hours convenient, and activity locations accessible for all potential contributors, including women.
Community Level: Support environmental committees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage regional- and municipal-level water authorities to expand training to men and women, ensuring women can fully participate. • Ensure women have the ability to serve, when desired, not only in administrative positions, but also in other leadership and technical roles in environmental committees. • Collaborate with organizations working in reforestation to complement their activities.
Policy Level: Advocate for laws protecting reforestation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for greater enforcement of laws that protect men and women from potential financial losses and incentivize them to invest their time in reforestation activities.

EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2016 and 2017, PMSPL II conducted three education gender analyses:

- [Basic Public Education](#)
- [Higher Education](#)
- [TVET](#)

Recommendations from these gender analyses can be seen below.

BASIC EDUCATION

Opportunity	Potential Activities
1. Address gender bias in the teaching/ learning process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise curricula at teacher-training colleges and universities. • In partnership with concerned governmental bodies, develop in-service training focused on gender equality for teachers. • Work with concerned governmental bodies to remove gender stereotypes and bias in teaching and learning materials. • Provide training to teachers, administrators, and students that encourages non-traditional tracks for students going to TVET education following graduation. • Design new and expand existing interventions that increase girls' participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. • Develop and implement similar programs for boys to help increase gender equality across all sectors.
2. Increase the different education-sector stakeholders' knowledge of gender norms and equality beyond girls' education and parity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train teachers, school administrators, and concerned government officials to be more gender-aware by covering topics such as gender equality in the classroom, stereotypes, SRGBV, and what gender-equitable curricula are. • Develop and support coordinating mechanisms for gender focal points at different ministries working on education, refugees, and so on to boost collaboration and improve communication and programming.
3. Improve school infrastructure to take into account the specific needs of girls, boys, and students with special needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct gender and inclusion analyses of the existing sites (infrastructure and learning environment) and identify strategies to address the gaps. • Design education infrastructure with access and inclusion in mind. • Provide technical assistance to concerned governmental bodies to operationalize Law 220 for persons with disabilities and secure basic rights for other marginalized populations, such as refugee students.

Opportunity	Potential Activities
4. Provide psychosocial support to students and refugees, particularly those who have experienced trauma and GBV, either in schools or through a referral system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with concerned governmental bodies to develop psychosocial/counseling guidelines specific to basic-education age groups. • Train both male and female teachers on trauma-informed counseling skills. • Establish guidance on referral networks for students in the health, legal, and psychosocial fields. • Develop interventions that increase access to extracurricular activities for girls and Syrian refugees in the second shift.
5. Create safe environments for students commuting to and from educational institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a safety audit of the school environment to identify risk points for students. • Develop interventions to address the identified risks, such as holding classes during the day when it is safe to walk, and subsidize transportation to and from school. • Design interventions that take into account the different needs of girls, boys, refugees, students with disabilities, and students who live in remote or insecure areas.
6. Create parity in the number of male and female staff in school leadership positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a mentorship and leadership program for female staff to build their capacity to take on school leadership positions. • Train managers/supervisors on gender equality concepts to transform the stereotypes and bias related to promotions. • Create a monitoring system that tracks the number of male and female educators in teaching and school leadership positions.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Opportunities	Activity
1. Address gender bias in the teaching/ learning process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise curricula at teacher-training colleges and universities. • Develop an in-service training focused on gender equality for teachers.
2. Address sexual harassment and assault, especially on public-university campuses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement campus-wide, awareness-raising interventions on gender. • Work with university leaders to develop and implement a formal orientation program for students and teachers on sexual harassment and assault (what it is, how to respond). • Develop and implement strategic communications campaigns that engage students on topics related to discrimination, sexual harassment and rape, and gender balance in employment. • Develop and implement interventions with male and female students, faculty, and administrators to break the “culture of silence” around sexual harassment, rape, and other harmful acts. • Design and implement training on gender equality and sexual harassment for universities, that can be customized for faculty, administrators, and students. • Develop gender-equality guidance and sexual-harassment training for employers recruiting university students for internships and/or jobs. This could help disrupt the perpetuation of gender stereotyping in job recruitment and assignment. Such initiatives might also help increase the employability of males and females in jobs dominated by the opposite sex, as employers become more aware of previously unnoticed gender discrimination in their hiring practices and job assignments. This might, in turn, encourage male and female students to choose majors and career paths they would have otherwise dismissed as more suitable for the opposite sex. • Develop sexual-harassment policies and formalized sexual-harassment training for employers.
3. Transform gender-blind university policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with concerned governmental bodies to identify and revise gender-blind policies to make them at least gender-aware, if not gender-transformative.
4. Transform sex-biased tracks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop behavior-change communication initiatives to increase gender diversity within majors, as well as the specific tracks that students choose to follow within their faculties. • Establish systems for recruiting students in sectors dominated by one sex.

Opportunities	Activity
5. Improve career counseling and support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a market analysis of employment in Lebanon, disaggregated by sex, to assist university career counselors in their efforts to provide practical guidance to students on the labor market's needs. • Work with concerned governmental bodies and private and public universities to create gender-equitable career-guidance frameworks that describe the pre-university orientation program's role, as well as the career advisor's role and the employer's input on the job market. • Design and deliver leadership-development training particularly focused on women at universities. Although there are more female than male students in universities, their prospects for employment upon graduation are not equal due to the gender norms of the job market.

TVET

Opportunities	Activities
1. Develop gender-equitable internal policies for TVET-institution management and operation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train and recruit female instructors. • Fund extracurricular activities with a psychosocial component.
2. Increase student engagement in non-traditional tracks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop recruitment campaigns and incentives to attract males and females to non-traditional TVET tracks. • Link with private-sector companies willing to employ non-traditional employees—for example, students who study untraditional subjects. • Establish official policies and interventions to support recruitment for non-traditional tracks. • Develop interventions with parents and students that emphasize specialization choice based on interests, rather than on gender norms. • Develop leadership programming for both female and male students to help increase their capacity, especially given the stigma surrounding TVET education.
3. Increase access, safety, and security for students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide transportation subsidies to students who have challenges in getting to and from school, especially girls and women who experience harassment, low-income students, refugee girls, and students with disabilities. • Develop harassment policy, hotlines, and accountability systems within TVET institutions.

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