"365 Days of a Gender Journey"
Empowering women to contribute to households’ livelihoods

Embedding sustainability considerations in land management has immense impacts not only on the management of existing natural resources but also on the potential of these resources in contributing to the population’s livelihoods. UNDP’s “Sustainable Land Management in the Qaraoun Catchment” (SLMQ) project aims at improved management of forests, rangelands and arable lands while creating sustainable and inclusive socio-economic opportunities. An assessment conducted for the districts of Zahle, West Bekaa, and Rachaya highlighted the importance of high-value dairy products and honey as income generating value chains allowing the project to intervene and target women and youth. Eighteen (18) women benefited from skills’ development and beekeeping training and were also provided with a starter kit composed of three beehives and the needed equipment and tools for the production and extraction of high-quality honey. The project also supported the creation of an informal group of 16 women under “Manhal el Nisaa” working together to better manage the apiary and apply the techniques acquired to produce good quality honey and increase the number of initial beehives. In efforts to promote collaboration and expansion of the activity, the tools and equipment provided were also made available for use by other beekeepers through this informal group. Additionally, and building on the project’s results, 30 women were trained on the processing of dairy products including both Labneh and Keshek and 23 other women on the production of goat milk soap to promote the product. Basic tools and equipment for production of these products were also provided to support the start-up of the target group.
Mainstreaming Gender in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

UNDP, through “The Support to Host Communities in the Wash Sector” project, and in partnership with the ministry of Energy and Water, is upgrading irrigation infrastructure among remote Lebanese communities in areas where significant needs have been identified. Attention is being paid to gender equality (SDG5), a matter that has been overlooked for years in the sector. It aims to close the gap between male and female by providing equal opportunities for all. It also offers greater opportunities for women to hold better quality jobs thus allowing an improved overall life.

The project’s effects are also long term as it is the cradle of new job opportunities for roles that are there to be filled by all members of society. Indeed, both men and women from the community are reaping the benefits of this project as it creates new labor market opportunities for all.

“The project spearheads equal opportunities for me and my husband, now we both contribute to our household income”, notes Fatima, 50.

The Gender-Corruption Nexus: Exploring Synergies between SDGs 5 and 16 in Lebanon

In the framework of the “Anti-Corruption for Trust (ACT) -Lebanon” project, UNDP directly focused on SDG 16 on “Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all Levels” and recognized the mutually reinforcing nature of SDG 5 on gender equality and women’s empowerment and SDG 16.

In this framework and given the limited knowledge that has been developed in the context of Lebanon, the ACT project explored gender dimensions to corruption, and identified entry points on gender mainstreaming in anti-corruption interventions in Lebanon. Based on this initiative, a premiere in the Arab region, the project spearheaded research on the impact of corruption on women compared to men in three specific sectors, health, labor and customs to inform related policy discussions and corruption risk management initiatives in Lebanon. The findings were based on discussions with a series of key stakeholders including government agencies, NGOs, experts and international organizations, painting a 360-degree image of the hardships and progress women have been going through in the three sectors.
Integrating Gender in Climate Related Policies

Lebanon submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2015 and has received further support to improve the assessment, update, gender-responsiveness, and linkages of its NDC through the Nationally Determined Contribution Support Programme (NDCSP).

Considering the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), gender is to be considered when reducing emissions or increasing resilience to climate change. The NDCSP project’s aim was to enhance gender integration into climate planning through a gender-responsiveness assessment of the policies and activities included in Lebanon’s NDC, among other instruments.

In 2019, an assessment was conducted, including a baseline assessment of the understanding of gender and its integration in policies. Furthermore, after prioritizing climate-related sectors, entry-points were identified to address gender in a targeted manner. To anchor the gender integration in the institutions, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were developed as a step-wise approach for the understanding of gender concepts and its integration in policy-making. Finally, trainings and workshops were conducted for different groups on gender concepts and its relevance.

Through this project, a cooperation with the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) was established to build the capacities of their network and to empower their Gender Focal Points to integrate gender into their sectoral work.
Testimonials

“When I know that I still have a lot to learn, I can confidently say that I no longer believe in taking sides… Impact can be made in many different ways. I would like to take the opportunity on this women’s day to thank all the women that have inspired me. I aspire to be an agent in bridging the gender gap and contributing to reaching a 50/50 split for women in STEM. I am grateful to live in an era where women are raising their voices and supporting each other to be partners for development in their communities.”

- Sarah Hammoud, Participant in the Youth Leadership Programme 5

“The support I received did not only make my beauty salon more attractive and equipped. Adding an upper floor as part of rehabilitation works re-organized available space to guarantee more comfort and privacy to clients, which is a top priority for local women here. Since then, the number of clients I received daily has almost doubled”.

– Amal Jradi, Entrepreneur benefitting from the support to small businesses in Saida to preserve traditions.

On International Women’s Day in 2019, the women municipal Police Officers of Zahle sent a message to the world that #YesWe(women)Can. Standing tall in their uniforms, they proudly conveyed the message UNDP has long been promoting: The time has come for women to be part of Lebanon’s Municipal Police.

“My name is Cosette. I am a woman, a wife, and a mother of four. This is how many see me. However, I am much more than that. While I am a woman, wife and mother of four, I am also a municipal police agent and have served as such Zahle’s community for more than two years now! I am also one of those women who have been told “you won’t make it”. Yet, against all odds, I did, and nothing would stop me.”

Cosette
Youth Leadership Programme (YLP)

In recognition of the vital role youth play in achieving development goals, UNDP RBAS launched a Youth Leadership Programme (YLP) in 2015. YLP aims to empower change-makers and support the young women and men to design and implement innovative, impactful, and sustainable development solutions in different forms. In addition to working on implementing innovative ideas for social change and develop leadership skills, the programme aims to strengthen participant’s gender sensitive lens by enhancing their knowledge about gender equality, SDGs and raise awareness about the importance of women’s empowerment.

Since 2015, UNDP-YLP Lebanon trained more than 1000 youth among which %50 are females coming from different regions and backgrounds. Young women showed high level of enthusiasm, professionalism, and leadership. Here are some of young women success stories.

Malak Safa- YLP 3 ALUMNI
Malak was an active member in UNDP’s Youth Leadership Programme (YLP 3) and received various leadership and entrepreneurial skills trainings. As an active SDG advocate, she was given the chance to attend the regional YLP workshop in Egypt and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) youth forum in New York. Her collective experience gained from the YLP inspired her to develop the “Youth Municipal Shadow Councils” initiative that aims to promote youth and female participation and participatory governance approach at municipal level.

Martine Zaarour- YLP 4 ALUMNI
Martine participated in the UNDP’s Youth Leadership Programme (YLP4) where she gained leadership skills and the needed technical expertise to launch her project Jar Thuraya. Martine was then given the opportunity to participate in the regional YLP workshop in Tunis and then was chosen to attend the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) youth forum in New York. Jar Thuraya is a heritage preservation enterprise that helps Lebanese women with culinary skills sell their home made products to a wider market using e-commerce methods and teaches youth traditional food making techniques to sustain the Lebanese intangible cultural heritage.

Asmaa Serhan- YLP 5 ALUMNI
Asmaa has always been passionate about technology, innovation, and everything new and different within these fields. Her journey began at an early age, although she faced some difficulties pursuing her real interests as she believes that in this part of the world, girls are not empowered enough or encouraged to enter the world of invention and engineering. After being given the opportunity to participate in the UNDP’s Youth Leadership Programme (YLP5), Asmaa gained the necessary skills to develop her smart medical device “Salamati”. As an active YLP alumni member, she hopes to inspire other girls by sharing her story and encouraging them to do what they are passionate about.
Partnering for Gender

The GoL adopts the National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325 with the support of the UN

In September 2019, the Government of Lebanon endorsed, the National Action Plan (NAP) on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The Council of Ministers had committed to develop the NAP since 2017, and had tasked the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) to do so. The NAP is a comprehensive framework to instill stability and security in the country and accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. It provides a set of tools and resources to be used by the different stakeholders to engage women in the process and enable their protection. The process was supported by a partnership among UN agencies in Lebanon incl. UN Women (serving as a secretariat), UNFPA, ESCWA, OHCHR, UNIFIL, and UNDP, and financed by the Governments of Japan and Finland. A joint framework was developed to follow-up on and support the implementation of the NAP in 2020 and beyond.

Partnering with Parliamentary Committees and Bodies for a more Inclusive Institution

In the framework of accelerating the achievement of SDG5 in Parliament, and in the framework of the joint partnership, UNDP provided high level technical support to the Woman and Child Committee as well as the SDGs Body, emphasizing on achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. As such, a mapping of all laws related to women participation, empowerment, gender equality or discriminatory laws/articles was developed. The tool covers passed laws and draft laws (tracking their status), and is an update of a previously developed gender review (2013). The tool needs to be adopted by the Woman and Child Committee in 2020. In parallel, UNDP supported the SDGs Body in targeting SDG5, by participating in the review and drafting of six draft laws or legal articles, pertaining to social security, labor, public appointments, and discrimination. Further support will be provided in 2020 and beyond to enhance the integration of gender in parliamentary work through the provision of analysis, and informed decision-making.
Sharing Knowledge

Integrating GBV Prevention within Women’s Economic Participation Programming

400 women and 200 men from the South governorate have participated in 17 sessions tackling key concepts related to power dynamics, gender and sexuality, healthy relationships, managing triggers of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and balancing economic power and activism to eliminate GBV. The sessions’ approach is based on the Indashykirwa model (developed in Rwanda and looking into “Champions of Change”), and adapted by UNDP to fit the contexts of Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees.

The initiative is part of a broader intervention on “Integrating GBV Prevention within Women’s Economic Participation Programming” that builds on increased recognition of the connection between target 5.2 of SDG5 “eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation” and SDG8, which focuses on decent work and economic growth. In partnership with the NGOs Abaad, ACTED, ESDU and DOT, the project provides livelihoods activities as an entry point to meet the practical and immediate needs of women, while also contributing to shifting the behaviours, attitudes, and norms that support GBV among couples and communities. The project enables women’s leadership as well through providing opportunities for structured activism. Four “Gender Equality Cafes,” will be established to help bridge the gap between women and community leaders by bringing them together to discuss women’s concerns and collaboratively find effective strategies to facilitate women’s safety, and political and public leadership.

Advocating Reforms: Political Parties and Lebanese Women Participation

In the framework of the Lebanese Electoral Assistance Project supported by the European Union, UNDP in partnership with Women in Front conducted interviews with the elections’ division and political bureaus of the eight main political parties (Kataeb, PSP, FPM, LF, Amal, Future movement, Marada and Hezbollah) to gather their views on endorsing a women quota in the electoral law, adopting more gender sensitive measures within parties, and nominating women party members in the upcoming electoral cycle. The results of the questionnaire were presented during a conference in May 2019 tackling electoral reforms for 2022 (ref. to next article).

Overall, it is worth noting that most political parties promised to endorse gender quota with %20 to %30 on candidacy.
Sharing Knowledge

Integrating GBV Prevention within Women’s Economic Participation Programming

400 women and 200 men from the South governorate have participated in 17 sessions tackling key concepts related to power dynamics, gender and sexuality, healthy relationships, managing triggers of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and balancing economic power and activism to eliminate GBV. The sessions’ approach is based on the Indashykirwa model (developed in Rwanda and looking into “Champions of Change”), and adapted by UNDP to fit the contexts of Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees.

The initiative is part of a broader intervention on “Integrating GBV Prevention within Women’s Economic Participation Programming” that builds on increased recognition of the connection between target 5.2 of SDG5 “eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation” and SDG 8, which focuses on decent work and economic growth. In partnership with the NGOs Abaad, ACTED, ESDU and DOT, the project provides livelihoods activities as an entry point to meet the practical and immediate needs of women, while also contributing to shifting the behaviours, attitudes, and norms that support GBV among couples and communities. The project enables women’s leadership as well through providing opportunities for structured activism. Four “Gender Equality Cafes,” will be established to help bridge the gap between women and community leaders by bringing them together to discuss women’s concerns and collaboratively find effective strategies to facilitate women’s safety, and political and public leadership.

“Parliamentary Elections 2022: Electoral Reforms & Gender Equality”

UNDP and the European Union Delegation to Lebanon under the patronage of H.E. the Minister of Interior and Municipalities, organized on May 23, 2019, a conference on electoral reforms and gender equality. The conference was attended among others by Members of Parliament, the President of the Supervisory Commission on Elections, Ambassadors, and representatives of Civil Society Organizations. It brought together relevant national and international stakeholders to discuss the possible ways to kick start discussions on electoral reforms, and strengthen fairness, representation, and inclusiveness in the upcoming parliamentary electoral cycle towards the 2022 elections.

During the conference, and as a baseline for discussions ahead, the “Gender Key Results: Parliamentary Elections 2018” brochure was presented, to have a gender outlook at the 2018 Parliamentary Elections. Recommendations for a national strategy to endorse and implement reforms in the next electoral cycle were put forward. Participants also received an overview on the results of the “Advocating Reforms: Political Parties and Lebanese Women Participation”, questionnaire aiming to identify the stance of political parties on a women’s quota in the electoral law and on adopting more gender sensitive measures inside their parties.

During the conference and while discussing Electoral Reforms for 2022, participants addressed future inclusive electoral reforms that would tackle all human rights including Women, Youth and PWDs.
Special Women’s Edition of the Quarterly Peace Building in Lebanon News Supplement

On August 19, 2019, the UNDP Peace Building Project published a special issue of The Peace Building in Lebanon News Supplement dedicated to Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian women.

The 22nd edition of the News Supplement, funded by Germany through the German Development Bank KfW, was devoted to women in Lebanese society, including Syrian and Palestinian women. The theme of the News Supplement went beyond a discussion of women’s rights to focus on their role in peacebuilding, as well as on their evolving role and participation in daily life in times of both conflict and peace. Contributing writers in this edition were almost entirely women journalists, activists, researchers, and community leaders, but also former civil war fighters. Articles highlighted the need for greater inclusion of women in all aspects of social life, as community mediators, peacemakers, and mothers, looking at their missions, struggles, sacrifices, hopes and aspirations. The News Supplement gave special attention to women’s role in peace processes, drawing from research that showed higher probabilities of peace agreements lasting when women were involved in the process. Some articles also examined the role of Syrian women in conflict prevention and mediation in Lebanon, as well as the contribution of Palestinian women leaders to Lebanese society in several fields.

The Arabic version of The Peace building in Lebanon News Supplement no. 22 was distributed with An-Nahar newspaper alongside its regular daily edition to all subscribers and points of sale, while the English and French versions were distributed with The Daily Star and L’Orient-Le Jour respectively. UNDP also distributed 1,300 copies of the Arabic edition to targeted recipients across Lebanon, including municipalities, NGOs, and academic institutions. Since December 2019, this edition and all other editions of the News Supplement are also available online on a new dedicated website: https://www.peacebuildingsupplement.org

The Notre-Dame University (NDU) Faculty of Law and Political Sciences expressed vivid interest in the News Supplement as a safe space for discussion and offered to host a discussion around the topics of this edition to precede International Women’s Day 2020 (8 March). The discussion took place on February 26, 2020 at the NDU campus in Lebanon and included contributors, professors and students. The discussions revolved around the role of Lebanese women in consolidating peace during the Civil War and in reinforcing the legitimacy and sustainability peace processes, as well as on challenging the stereotyping of women in the media.
**News from the CO**

**Aiming for the Gender Seal**

The Lebanon Country Office was selected to participate in the 2019-2018 round of the Gender Equality Seal launched by our Headquarters in June 2018, with strong support from Senior Management. Following a first self-assessment, the CO developed an action plan of steps to undertake to upscale gender equality and women’s empowerment across the various streams of the office’s work.

As such, throughout 2019, the different projects and the CO engaged in partnerships with all stakeholders and at all levels of society and state in Lebanon to push the gender agenda forward. In parallel it has embarked on an in-house journey to revise the business environment to make it more conducive to gender mainstreaming. Accordingly, a number of capacity building sessions were designed and provided, measures adopted, tools and guidelines developed, and procedures reviewed and enhanced to transform the organization. By end of January 2020, UNDP Lebanon underwent another evaluation to measure progress, and is now awaiting related results.

**Gender Transformative Programming**

A capacity building session on gender analysis and mainstreaming of programme, project and operations staff was held on October 9, 2019. This session allowed project gender focal points and other UNDP staff to strengthen their understanding of gender, review the main related concepts and practice gender analysis. In total 31 participants benefited from the training.

The four-fold objectives of the session were to increase UNDP staff members’ knowledge of gender related concepts, present tools to mainstream gender into projects and programmes, enhance staff capacity to undertake gender analysis, and reinforce gender mainstreaming in UNDP’s work towards transformative gender equality results, reporting, and impact.

**News from UNDP’s All Women Basketball Team**

For the second consecutive year, staff members from UNDP and other UN agencies were brought together to form a women basketball team and compete in the 2nd BAN-CO women league that kicked off on March 25, 2019. After the success of the 1st edition of the tournament in 2018, and winning the championship, UNDP decided to compete again alongside other teams including from the banking and private sectors (Banque Du Liban, Blom Bank, BLC Bank, MTC touch and UNDP). In hopes of a second championship, knowing that throughout the tournament the team managed to maintain a solid status as number 1 before entering the finals, the team managed to place second. While receiving the team trophy, the captain, Tala Moukaddem, expressed her satisfaction with the team’s results and was grateful for the opportunity to compete and play in a healthy environment, emphasizing UNDP’s role in empowering women and promoting equality.

“Every win is a blessing and every loss is a lesson. Although we came short this year in second place, I am very proud of the team for showing great professionalism, sportsmanship and dedication during the entire championship and for reaching the finals”.

Tala Moukaddem.
Publications

Thematic Brochure: “2018 Lebanese Parliamentary Elections – Gender Key Results”
The UNDP Lebanese Elections Assistance Project, funded by the European Union, developed a thematic brochure: Gender Key Results for the 2018 Parliamentary Elections. The publication is a result of an industrious research that collected and compiled relevant data related to women participation in the 2018 elections.

The brochure covers profiles of all the women candidates, list/candidates data per minor and major electoral districts and number of votes obtained during E-Day. Furthermore, the voting data is disaggregated in different categories (polling stations, out of country voting and polling officials vote) and by gender.

The research also includes a detailed breakdown of preferential votes obtained by all the women candidates in their respective districts.

Finally, the publication includes at the end, the recommendations identified by the participants at the thematic post-electoral working group organized by the project at the end of 2018. The recommendations could represent the road map for future electoral reforms and advocacy campaigns.

Lebanese Parliamentary Elections - Publication

Special Women’s Edition of the Quarterly Peace Building in Lebanon News Supplement
On August 2019 ,19, the UNDP Peace Building Project published a special issue of The Peace Building in Lebanon News Supplement dedicated to Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian women. (Ref. to section 5)

Special Women’s Edition of the Quarterly Peace Building in Lebanon News Supplement
The Way Forward:  
Plan of Action (2021-2020)

Building on the shift the Country Office has embarked on in 2019 guided by its Gender Seal Action Plan, and on the momentum Lebanese women have set by expressing their desire to actively participate at all levels of society and state, UNDP Lebanon will, among other areas of intervention, focus on the following objectives:

- Conduct an in-depth gender analysis to mainstream gender equality and women inclusiveness and participation as a main cross-cutting axis of the 2024-2021 Country Programme Document (CPD).
- Based on the analysis and the directions of national priorities, the new CPD, the new United Nations Strategic Framework, the Global UNDP Gender Strategy, develop a new Gender Strategy for the Country Office.
- Systemize the use of the Gender Screening Tool, to make sure to properly revise ongoing action to make sure the gender element is properly integrated and find alternatives to do so. Make sure that any new intervention follows a mandatory gender analysis/screening in the design phase.
- Closely engage with public institutions, to prioritize gender issues and mainstream gender in at the national and local levels, in different areas of engagement, including analysis, policy and legal reform, and implementation.
- Lead on gender analysis and mainstreaming in all coordination mechanisms related to the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP).
- Engage all stakeholder towards the advancement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) -5 Gender Equality.
- Develop further common agendas among different areas of intervention, and addressing gender from an integrated perspective to maximize results.
- Tap into the national, regional, and global resources and partnership to enlarge the Country Office’s gender agenda, exploring innovative solutions and different modalities to address gender equality and women empowerment.
- Enhance cooperation with UN agencies, using existing channels, for increased technical support, and sharing of tools and best practices, on specifically the 1325 women, peace, and security, women political participation, and developing productive sectors. Actively participate in and contribute to the UNCT Gender Working Group, and other joint efforts.
- Encourage projects and country office to actively communicate gender results and contributions.
- Share the latest news and trends from the gender communities of practice with relevant CO and project colleagues.
- Implement further capacity building and training activities, for the Country Office and projects on gender related concepts, analysis, and planning.
- Engage Country Office and project team members in gender sensitive activities. Highlight gender objectives and enabling activities as part of the selected strategic priorities for UNDP Lebanon.