

Women and the Industry of Peace

Many of the women we meet every day in Lebanon have been able to rise to the challenge of building peace. Many of them, if not all, were able to keep a measure of resilience and strength during times of war and displacement. This supplement presents national and international perspectives to better understand the work of women in peace building in Lebanon: their missions, struggles, sacrifices, hopes and aspirations. It also showcases—through the lives of Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian women peace builders residing in Lebanon—the reasons why women must have a role in deciding their own future and building a better peace.

As activists and peacebuilders, refugees, heads of households and community leaders, women in this supplement are sharing experiences and lessons learned from their work in the field of peace building in Lebanon.

This supplement, funded by Germany through the German Development Bank KfW, also reflects the commitment and the full support of Germany to the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 in Lebanon and in the region. Adopted in the year 2000, this resolution recognized the impact of conflict on women, and their contributions to peace, security and conflict prevention and recovery. These topics constantly need to be addressed and discussed in Lebanon, especially that according to the Global Gender Gap Report published in 2018 by the World Economic Forum, Lebanon ranks 140 out of 149 countries ahead of only Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria, Iraq and Yemen in the region.

In this context, the German Government and the German Development Bank KfW along with their partners, are also working on supporting women in Lebanon by strengthening political participation and raising awareness about the important role of women as community leaders in selected communities in Lebanon. Promoting economic participation and combating gender-based violence are also at the core of the embassy's mission in Lebanon. And while focusing on women as community leaders, we can never forget the important role that men play as change agents.

When women are engaged in politics and security sectors in addition to mediation, peace processes and negotiations, peace and security are strengthened. This is what the supplement you have in your hands reflects.

Enjoy reading it.

Mr. Sascha Stadler
Director, German Development Bank
KfW, Lebanon

Arab Women: Beacons of Peace

As the Arab region continues to struggle with crises, our supplement focuses on the many actions that women take every day in Lebanon to contribute to pathways to peace and participate in peacebuilding and conflict resolution at their own levels.

The stories in this issue, therefore, highlight the many Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian women that are stepping in as beacons of peace across Lebanon and challenging women's expected or traditional roles. They remind us of the importance of strengthening women's representation in the collective consciousness and documenting their impactful contribution to social change.

Specifically, recounting Lebanese women's peacebuilding efforts during and post-civil war can serve as an example for other countries at war. Conveying the balancing acts that Syrian women strive to make in the education of their children can be a model for conflict mediation in all refugee communities across the globe. Finally, showcasing the engagement of Palestinian women leaders in their communities highlights the impact of education and the arts on building peace. All these beacons of peace should serve as an inspiration everywhere.

Celine Moyroud
UNDP Resident Representative

Meeting the challenge

It is very curious to note that when any subject related to the status of women is discussed, there are still men in Lebanon, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, who feel obliged to sketch a smirk, suggesting that there are more important issues to deal with. A tad macho reflex, remnant of a tenacious oriental tradition of confining women to their role as mothers and wives at home, loving and resigned.

Certainly, this attitude is no longer as blunt and ostentatious as it was in the days of the absolute patriarchal system, the time when the father, husband or brother decided everything and demanded obedience and submission from all family members. The reluctance of some men to emancipate women is manifested in a more insidious way, such as forcing the future wife to abandon all professional life in order to devote herself to the home; offering the woman candidate for employment in a company a lower salary for work equal to that of her male colleagues; reluctantly accepting parity in administrative or

political responsibilities, only to play with figures and then empty the concept of its content...

However, it is easy to see that today, with the development of education, especially in large cities, Lebanese women are increasingly represented in professional life, right up to the top levels in societies, universities and the liberal professions. Many have become financially self-sufficient and, as a result, no longer need to cling to a father's or husband's side to take their place in society.

Nevertheless, it would be unfair to hold men alone responsible for the slowness of women's acquisition of their rights. Some of them are even pleased with their situation, ruling out in advance any challenge to patriarchal «authority». It is especially up to these women to rise to the challenge of freeing themselves from male guardianship. Of course in a gentle and humane way, but with a good dose of firmness.

Gaby Nasr
Managing Editor - L'Orient-Le Jour supplements

Women are Key Elements for Peace Building

Perhaps the responsibility of women is more severe in times of adversity and war than it is in good times. The challenges become bigger, living difficulties, security situation, educational constraints... And perhaps the repercussions fall on the mother and the elder sister more than on men who master the arts of war, and fail in the face of peace efforts because it diminishes their power and their eastern masculinity, which delves in manifestations of violence and power. Paying attention to women in this case becomes a pressing duty, ahead of the living requirements of food and clothing, because when a mother reaches the state of loss and confusion, this will transform the whole family, and will make the children vulnerable to murder and fighting, terrorism, crime and theft. And this situation creates ongoing and re-emerging

wars. Hence, the necessity and urgent need to provide women with care and follow-up, especially in refugee camps, where things are set to slip away, even head towards chaos, and where means of control are limited. In some parts of our Arab world, the mother is a tool for procreation, and if the idea does not evolve with hard work, our world will lag behind. It would be desirable if we could achieve what the Prime Minister of Lebanon, President Saad Hariri noted, that a woman becomes Prime Minister. Maybe then women in advanced positions could achieve what men have not been able to do, because experience is the best proof, and we have nothing to lose in trying, because we have reached the «Maximum» losses.

Ghassan Hajjar
Editor in Chief - An-Nahar newspaper