



Tanseeq

COORDINATION

For Ending Gender Based Violence In Lebanon

Issue 5 / January - June 2012

EDITORIAL

Gender Based Violence (GBV) is a global phenomenon manifested in every aspect of life, including education settings where many girls, and sometimes boys, can undergo violence. It is related to power inequalities between sexes and targets particularly women and girls. Despite the widespread nature of the phenomenon, it is rather under-researched and most of the times unreported, owing to a culture of tolerance of GBV and out of fear of stigmatizing the victim.

GBV is indeed a violation of human rights and a manifestation of gender discrimination. It poses serious threats and obstacles for the achievement of the Education for All Goals and the Millennium Development Goals, especially the ones relating to gender equality. UNESCO Beirut has been giving this topic a special attention throughout conducting various activities aiming at raising awareness at the national level and advocating for policy change.

Most recently, UNESCO implemented a national study on "School Related Gender Based Violence in Lebanon", in cooperation with La Sagesse University. The study's findings confirmed that all forms of violence were expressed in schools and universities, with psychological and moral harm being the most common forms of violence followed by physical violence. As for sexual violence, the majority of those who reported being sexually abused were females. The study revealed that the root causes of violence in

Lebanon include the absence of effective protective laws, poverty, cultural practices, conflict between parents, child neglect, political tension, action movies and videogames that young children are being exposed to.

However, what is encouraging in the Lebanese context is the stakeholders' very high commitment towards minimizing GBV: on one hand, Ministries have seen GBV within schools and universities as a major issue and have shown their willingness to work on improving the situation in Lebanon and on the other, many civil organizations have been working to contest GBV in Lebanon.

Nevertheless, combating GBV in Lebanon still requires a multi-sectorial coordination approach including education, social services, justice, media and communication. Thus, there is a need to ensure that GBV responses are an integral part of the educational and social policies translated in the plan of actions of the relevant Ministries and all Education Institutes whether being schools or universities.

I would like to thank UNFPA Lebanon for giving me the opportunity – through TANSEEQ newsletter - of contributing to this important issue and would like to congratulate them for their invaluable efforts in raising awareness and advocating to end GBV in Lebanon.

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Acknowledgement: This newsletter was developed by UNFPA with the support of the Italian Cooperation Office of the Embassy of Italy in Beirut.



IT IS CONFIRMED: TANSEEQ IS A SUCCESS, AND WE CAN MAKE IT BETTER!

Two years after its publication, and with the objective of assessing the usefulness, content and effectiveness of TANSEEQ newsletter in being used as a national knowledge sharing tool on GBV in Lebanon, UNFPA conducted an online opinion poll among various actors and stakeholders including those working in the area of GBV prevention and response. Results were positive and recommendations inspiring, and came as follows:

When asked about the format, all respondents were unanimous: TANSEEQ was perceived as an attractive newsletter (93%), displaying nice colors (93%) and attractive design (93%). The newsletter was considered clear with a readable font (100%), sections of an appropriate length (95%) and a useful bilingual format (100%).

Regarding the content, 93% considered that TANSEEQ had effectively reached its purpose in acting as a national knowledge sharing tool on GBV. Respondents found TANSEEQ pleasant to read (100%), understandable (100%), informative (100%) and complete (95%). In addition, the majority of the respondents found most or some of the newsletter's information new (94%), and all found it useful (very useful 36%, somewhat useful 64%).

Respondents also provided several recommendations for further ameliorating TANSEEQ. Those essentially revolved around a broader dissemination of TANSEEQ: distribution of hard copies in women activist hanging out/meeting places, dissemination to boys and men, distribution in public libraries, creation of online format, making use of social media to better disseminate the content, production of a French version, to name but a few. Another set of recommendations provided suggestions for additional type of content, essentially stories about GBV, success stories, recently-published statistics regarding GBV in Lebanon or worldwide, upcoming seminars and meetings, recently published studies.

All in all, 73% of respondents rated TANSEEQ as a great newsletter, and UNFPA will do its best to take the suggestions into consideration in order to improve it and fulfill the expectations and needs of partners and stakeholders to the extent possible. Once again, UNFPA wishes to thank all those who contributed their time and provided constructive suggestions for enhancing this national knowledge sharing tool.

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MEN AND BOYS IN ACTION TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

In April 2012, under the regional programme for "Promoting working with men and boys to end violence against women in the Middle East" funded by the European Commission, Oxfam and KAFA (Enough) Violence & Exploitation organised a review meeting for the Steering Committee (SC) established in 2009. This visioning exercise focused on evaluating the SC's role and discussing its future mandate. Members agreed that the SC will widen its scope and become a national network of organisations working on the approach of engaging men and boys in fighting violence against women, not only focusing on the project activities as such. Though a national body, many of the SC members have regional and/or global links, which they will draw on to share learning and extend influence. The criteria for membership will be belief in and commitment to the approach. New members can be admitted through proposals to the Chair (Oxfam/KAFA), and have to be agreed by the group. Interested organisations/individuals can contact Hiba Abbani at hiba.abbani@kafa.org.lb

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“FRAIL ARGUMENTS AGAINST A JUST CAUSE”

In April 2012, Azza Charara Baydoun published her article “Frail Arguments against a Just Cause”: an in-depth analysis of the psychosocial observations made by the Coalition of Women’s Committees and Associations for Defending the Family allied with Dar Al Fatwa against the law protecting women from family violence that was submitted to the Council of Ministers by the National Coalition for Legislating the Protection of Women from Family Violence. In her article, Baydoun deconstructs the said observations which are not much different from the prevalent beliefs in the Lebanese society, and highlights by that the fragility of their psychosocial bases and the weakness of the logic behind arguments founded on assumptions, preconceptions, and general principles instead of tangible facts.

The article concludes that the campaign waged by the Islamic Courts and the Coalition against the law is a clear indication of their fear of losing control over the personal and family state of affairs of people, which constitutes their last area of authority in contemporary Lebanese society. The article was published in the Idafat quarterly (a refereed academic journal published by the Arab Association of Sociology), Double issue 17 and 18 of Fall-Spring 2012. The article is also available via the following link: <http://www.facebook.com/notes/azza-baydoun/>

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LAUNCHING OF THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL TASK FORCE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN LEBANON

The Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) in partnership with ABAAD Resource Center for Gender Equality and International Medical Corps launched the “National Technical Task Force to End Violence against Women (VAW) in Lebanon” on March 9, 2012 which also marks the International Women’s Day. A wide range of experts and stakeholders took active part in the meeting through reviewing the terms of reference pertaining to the group. The technical task force aims at institutionalizing efforts to fight VAW in Lebanon by establishing a national database to fill the statistical gap. It will also develop country specific specialized tools to identify and document cases of survivors of VAW. Furthermore, the technical task force will institutionalize the ethical framework for services provided to survivors and will set quality assurance criteria for services provided by medical centers as well as by listening and counseling centers affiliated with NGOs, MOSA’s Social Development Centers, in addition to the Ministry of Public Health’s Primary Health Centers. This initiative constitutes a concrete framework for cooperation between governmental, non-governmental, international organizations, as well as private institutions to end VAW in Lebanon.

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EMPOWERING TRIPOLI NGOs IN FIGHTING GBV

In April 2012, the Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women (LECORVAW), in partnership with UNFPA, implemented a 5 days GBV workshop in North Lebanon. This project falls under the MDG-F joint programme on Conflict Prevention and Peace Building with the participation of 6 UN organizations i.e. UNFPA, UNDP, UNRWA, UNICEF, UNESCO, and ILO.

The objective of the workshop consisted of empowering individuals from local NGOs based in Tripoli on various aspects related to GBV by equipping them with the knowledge, understanding, and tools to better respond to GBV in terms of services, referral, information, outreach, awareness and advocacy.

During the first phase of the workshop, 15 NGOs representatives – mostly women - had their capacities enhanced in a wide spectrum of areas such as International Conventions and Treaties that govern protection from GBV, GBV causes and consequences, GBV in emergencies settings, health consequences of GBV, and Lebanese legislations concerning GBV. In addition, the participants were introduced to various GBV programs and actors in Lebanon and were provided with a directory of outlets that provide services and referrals.

The second phase of the workshop aimed at enhancing the participants' capacities in project design and development through introduction to rapid and needs assessment, defining objectives, articulating activities, developing indicators, and preparing budgets. As a result and at the end of the workshop, participants submitted small project proposals reviewed by UNFPA, LECORVAW, and MDG-F representative whereby 4 projects were selected to receive funds for implementation of several activities all intended to raise awareness on women empowerment and GBV prevention.

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WHAT IF WOMEN...

The Girl Scout in Lebanon - Jeunes en Marche (JEM) section, in coordination with UNODC office organized a forum focusing on women's right, entitled "What if women..." on March 31, 2012 at the UN House in Beirut. The event was attended by Her Excellency Ms. Mona Ofeich, former Minister of State, in addition to representatives of NGOs and other actors involved in the fight for the rights of women. During the forum, a total of 250 young girls were grouped under 12 teams whereby each team represented one women's right, including women victims of human trafficking. This event comes as a result of a long process of preparation between November 2011 and March 2012, where each team appointed one focal point (member of an NGO, artist, journalist...) based on criteria such as action and commitment in favor of the right chosen by the team. Subsequently, each team has conducted research and interviews in order to highlight the status of the chosen right in Lebanese Laws (implementation, ongoing reforms, challenges...). Each of the 12 teams also submitted recommendations or an action plan to address the challenges and reinforce the chosen right. These recommendations and plans were reviewed by a jury and the first prize was attributed to the one addressing the right of women and family laws under the project "What if women could give her Lebanese nationality to her children?"

WHAT IF WOMEN... (LIST OF TOPICS ADDRESSED)

- Could give their Lebanese nationality to their children
- Could prove themselves on the sports field
- Could be equal professionals
- Could have a proper education
- Could have the right to bank supervision for their children
- Could be more than housewives
- Could save their own lives
- Knew that they were priceless (Woman victim of human trafficking)
- Were better drivers
- Could reshape their confidence instead of their appearance
- Could be more than plastic
- Could be active members in the political field

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SUPPORTING IRAQI WOMEN TO COUNTER GBV AND GALA DINNER FOR RAISING AWARENESS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In January 2012, Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center (CLMC) launched a one-year support group to provide Iraqi refugee women facing different kinds of violence with tools on conflict resolution and stress management. This project, funded by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the US Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration will enable up to 120 survivors of GBV to meet weekly and discuss several topics, such as reproductive health, maternity and sexuality.

In parallel, in May 2012, CLMC organized its first Gala Dinner at the Phoenicia Hotel in support of over 150 female migrant workers who are victims of human trafficking in Lebanon and are referred each year to CLMC's Safe House, a one-of-its-kind service in Lebanon. During this event, about 300 invitees were sensitized on the various forms human trafficking can take in Lebanon through Louella's testimony, a former resident. Guests were also introduced to the services CLMC provides victims with to help them start a new life.

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TRAINING ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND OTHER SUBJECTS: A STEP TOWARDS FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN DEMOCRACY BUILDING

In early 2011, Association Najdeh designed a plan for a leadership training program in Nahr al-Bared, Beddawi and Ain al-Hilweh camps for Palestinian refugees as well as in Tyre's Palestinian refugee gathering. The program aimed at enabling young Palestinian girls aged between 18 and 35 years, who are beneficiaries of the association programs, to act as leaders within their communities and take active part in the decision-making process. This training program is implemented in partnership with the European Commission, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development and under the umbrella of the "Empowerment, Employment, and Advocacy" three-year-project that Association Najdeh is implementing to address gender inequalities among Palestinian women refugees in Lebanon by empowering them in their own communities and making them an active element therein.

Building on this, several training workshops were conducted in March and June 2012, on a number of topics, including violence against women, discrimination, leadership, political participation, communication, conflict resolution, as well as advocacy and campaigns. The training program targeted three groups: one group in Saida gathering and two in Ain el-Hilweh camp where 50 girls and women participated. Association Najdeh will pursue this initiative by training two additional groups in the refugee camps of Al-Bared and Beddawi, and at a later stage, by forming committees of these women and girls to get them involved in managing the affairs of their local communities.

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FILM SCREENING: "LIVING IN THE 21ST CENTURY: WOMEN RECOUNTING THEIR STORIES"

The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) in collaboration with Women's Voices Now, an organization whose mission is to empower and give voice to women, organized a film screening entitled "Living in the 21st Century: Women Recounting their Stories" on May 9, 2012. The short-films screened offered a glimpse of what women all over the world are going through. They depicted the lives of women in patriarchal societies, and the various forms of exploitation, discrimination, and violence they are subjected to in such societies. Major themes addressed included crimes of honor, disability, polygamy and polyandry, the stigma surrounding breast cancer, veiling/unveiling, queer identity, etc.

Catinca Tabacaru, Director and General Counsel of Women's Voices Now along with Suzie Abdou, Director of Global Programs at Women's Voices Now, were present during the screening and participated in the panel discussion that took place along with IWSAW Director Dima Dabbous-Sensenig and Ghida Anani, Director of ABAAD Resource Center for Gender Equality. The panel discussion raised very important points related to the power of films in raising awareness about GBV and other gender-related issues. The panel discussion also triggered many insightful interventions from the audience - which included LAU students, faculty, and staff as well as journalists, human rights and women's rights activists. A lively debate ensued with respect to women's empowerment, and the importance of engaging men in the fight to end gender-based discrimination.

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WORKSHOP AT THE 45th MIDDLE EAST MEDICAL ASSEMBLY

The 45th Middle East Medical Assembly, organized by the Continuing Medical Education Office at the American University of Beirut May 3 - 6, 2012, included 2 sessions on Domestic Violence (DV) as well as a workshop that aimed at improving the health care response to DV. The workshop was conducted by Dr. Jinan Usta and Dr. Gene Feder, from Bristol University in the United Kingdom and included a number of interventions. Dr. Alissar Rady from World Health Organization (WHO) Lebanon office outlined the WHO recommendations in addressing violence, namely primary prevention, empowerment of abused women, establishment of a database and exchanging ideas. Ms Leila Awada from KAFA (Enough) Violence and Exploitation highlighted the need for a national strategy that would help safeguard abused women's rights. Dr. Faysal El Kak, President of the Lebanese Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology, noted the absence of curriculum addressing DV in medical schools. The workshop focused on the importance of asking women patients about their experiences of abuse, and included a role play of a scenario illustrating how to properly ask while showing care, providing non-judgmental support, being empathetic and offering a safe response to the disclosure.

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ADDRESSING GBV AMONG SYRIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

The Syrian crisis that fired off in April 2011, have had many repercussions among which is displacement of Syrians to Lebanon, a situation that progressed rapidly over the past few months after the security situation deteriorated in various parts of Syria particularly those areas close to the Lebanese borders. The Syrian refugee population, concentrated in North Lebanon and the Bekaa, is composed mostly of women and children and resides primarily in various communities that are hosting them. In order to meet the needs of the displaced Syrians as well as hosting communities, a wide spectrum of stakeholders including local authorities, international and national development actors have been working together under the overall coordination of UNHCR in various areas including health, protection, food and non-food items, etc.

Though a number of partners are working on Gender Based Violence (GBV) prevention, protection and response, at the field level UNFPA has been playing an active role in this respect. Specifically, UNFPA initiated the undertaking of a study which aims at assessing the reproductive health (RH) and GBV condition of an estimated 500 Syrian refugee women and girls who have fled from the current conflict in Syria to Lebanon. This study will identify problems, gaps, and unmet needs of the targeted population and will include information about their reproductive health, such as availability of medical and psychosocial services, the quality of these services, and general information about protection/security risks women are facing. More so, the study will provide RH and GBV actors with necessary information to better determine how they should respond to the emergency and launch appropriate interventions to support women and girls.

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PRODUCTIVE DESPITE THE BARS

Since 1998 Mouvement Social has been working in Barbar al Khazen prison with women in conflict with the law and implementing professional, social and psychological trainings, in order to make their period in prison a fundamental phase of reflection and analysis, a phase where they draw their future plan, paving the way for a better reintegration in society. Mouvement Social provides continuous workshops of sewing and embroidery to women inmates as a mean to enhance their skills for becoming productive in and outside prison. During the first half of 2012, they embroidered many towels following several customers' orders and the sale of the customized towels provided the women inmates with consistent revenue and allowed them to buy some of their daily needs and to save the rest for the period after they are released from prison. More importantly this activity helped them gain confidence and self-respect: "I felt like a useful and productive person who can move forward, hoping to repair what happened... I move forward feeling proud of myself... and people around me are proud of me" (B.).

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OPENING OF MEN CENTER, ENHANCING QUALITY SERVICE PROVISION, AND WOMEN QUOTA

The stream of women organizations has always restricted Listening and Counseling Services (LCC) to women for raising their awareness, empowering them, and offering them psycho-social and legal support. These services, among other strategies, aim at warding off the worsening effects of domestic violence. While men have long been addressed as “perpetrators”, today they are also being addressed as “partners” in prevention. All scientific approaches nowadays refer to the importance of partnering with men as a main condition to sustain efforts of combating violence. Hence, International Medical Corps and ABAAD-Resource Center for Gender Equality took the initiative to establish a “Men’s Center” as a space where trained professionals treat men with respect, anonymity, and confidentiality. Through its specialized support, the center’s team provides men with ways for relieving stress, identifying stimuli that trigger anger, discovering possible alternatives of self-control, learning new behaviors, and engaging with their loved ones in a less aggressive manner.

In addition, and based on the international consensus that capacity building is key to promoting sustainable development and with the belief that the way to go about it is what matters, ABAAD-Resource Center for Gender Equality started cutting-edge approaches that reflect the specific needs and priorities of frontline personnel and care providers. For this end, ABAAD conducted many specialized workshops targeting social and health workers and counselors in all Lebanese, Palestinian as well as Iraqi communities in Lebanon with the overall aim of enhancing the quality of service provision for women survivors of GBV. Arts therapy, “Neuro-Linguistic Programming”, and drama therapy, among others, are all new techniques that are utilized in psychotherapy to enhance physical and emotional wellbeing of people. These techniques are being tailored by ABAAD to address counselors who work with women survivors of GBV at LCCs and shelters in order to strengthen their capacities in stress management techniques and better serving women survivors of domestic violence.

Moreover, ABAAD-Resource Center organized a national consultative meeting in May 2012 on “Promoting Peace, Security and Non-Discrimination against Women Agenda” in partnership with the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and in cooperation with the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL). More than 40 representatives from civil society organizations in Lebanon took part in the meeting. There was also a distinguished participation of representatives from the UNIFIL. The meeting highlighted the challenges and opportunities facing the work of women’s and feminist organizations in Lebanon, with specific emphasis on security, peace and combatting discrimination. The meeting addressed several themes located at the intersection between the agendas of women rights activism on one hand and that of rights and peace and security on the other. Examples of topics addressed consist of the following: the impact of Arab revolutions on Lebanon, the personal security and safety of female human rights defenders, the personal security of women as well as a number of key issues related to security and seen as socially acceptable for women. Participants came up with set of recommendations, which were submitted in June within the frame of the International Conference held in Geneva in conjunction with the twentieth session of the UN Human Rights Council.

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“ABOLISH THE SPONSORSHIP SYSTEM TO ABOLISH SLAVERY” FESTIVAL AND ART THERAPY IN THE LISTENING AND COUNSELING CENTERS

On the occasion of Labor Day, KAFA (Enough) Violence and Exploitation organized a festival and a march under the title: “Abolish the Sponsorship System (kafala system), Abolish Slavery” in partnership with a number of local NGOs, and with the support of the Danish Refugee Council and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The march mobilized a large number of participants, including foreign and migrant domestic workers as well as Lebanese activists who attended to show their support for the rights of domestic workers in the enjoyment of all their rights. The participants walked from Dora region down to Monot Street, where they celebrated in the form of a culture-and-food festival with more than ten music and dance shows. At the end of the festival, the participating local NGOs submitted a series of demands to the Lebanese Minister of Labour, in the light of KAFA's recommendations issued in February 2012 under the title “Reforming The Sponsorship System for Migrant Domestic Workers: Towards an Alternative Governance Scheme”. The major demands focused on the creation of an alternative migration system different than the sponsorship system (kafala system); including domestic work within the labor law; ensuring the right of domestic workers to leave the employer's house during their off duty time and to live outside the employer's house; allowing female workers to terminate the employment contract and move to another employer; providing female workers with social protection and access to the judiciary system; and tightening control and supervision on recruitment agencies.

In parallel, the Listening and Counseling Center (LCC) of KAFA (Enough) Violence and Exploitation is constantly supporting survivors of violence by providing a 24 hour helpline, social support, legal consultations and psychological assistance. As part of the activities of the LCC, KAFA organized an art therapy workshop during the months of May-July 2012. The workshop consisted of a therapeutic activity funded by DROSOS Foundation with the aim of empowering women survivors of domestic violence and who are beneficiaries of KAFA. The workshop was moderated by Ms. Mira Saad specialist in art therapy, who made use of different techniques notably recycling used materials and at the same time working on psychological wounds that are buried and need to be faced and resolved. During this art therapy workshop, trash and debris are recycled and used to create art. Such metamorphosis represents the healthy transformation of “emotional debris” into “creative expressions”. These art therapy sessions were organized and implemented on weekly basis with the participation of 15 beneficiaries.

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ONE CASE OF SGBV AMONG REFUGEES IS TOO MANY

UNHCR and its partners place special attention to address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) among over 30,000 non-Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Throughout 2012, efforts were directed to better identify and support SGBV survivors. By mid-2012, 137 survivors had approached NGO partners and refugee community outreach workers seeking help. This constituted an indication of their increased trust and knowledge of the existing support systems. Moreover, in March 2012, UNHCR supported vocational training activities to one local and well-established safe house.

UNHCR and partner organizations will continue strengthening mechanisms for identification of and coordinated support for SGBV survivors. In line with this goal, UNHCR in collaboration with partners will organize a three-day training session on SGBV prevention and response in August 2012. The workshop will entail action planning among all stakeholders on the activities for the 16 Days of Activism against GBV. UNHCR is also planning to release updated SGBV awareness pamphlets and pocket cards to the non-Palestinian refugee communities.

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