Overview of Gender Actors & Interventions in Lebanon

BETWEEN EMANCIPATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

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SWEDEN

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Introduction

Women organisations are described in the region in general, and in Lebanon in particular, as the frontrunners of emancipatory social change. The emergence of women's movements in Lebanon[1] took place in the wake of major historical changes in the Arab world – mainly so during the times of independence and modernisation embodied by secular nationalism and Islamic modernism.[2] These historical changes paralleled similar movements that emerged in North America and Europe at the time.[3] Lebanese women's organisations peaked following the end of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). This period coincided with the end of the Cold War era in which massive external funding flooded Lebanese NGOs, seeking to implement post-cold War policies such as "democratisation"[4] and "good governance." Other tools and practices such as "empowerment" and "gender mainstreaming" were also used to measure "progress" and the democratisation of a state through the prevalence of women's rights within a state. The 1980s, in particular, ushered in a wave of women's rights dialogue and demands, while also calling for broader human rights legislation and discourse. In 1997, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was ratified by a majority of the international community, including Lebanon. This convention allowed for a substantial number of women's organisations, funded by international donors, to be integrated in international networks, in turn creating project-oriented organisations that target women by addressing their needs and rights. Feminist organisations, or organisations with a clear feminist approach, were gradually replaced with organisations targeting specific aspects of women's issues.[5]

The impact of international agendas via donors on local landscape is however nuanced. On one hand, it bred a sense of competition and rivalry between women's organisations and created unsustainable short-lived projects according to available funding. On the other hand, it professionalised former voluntary-based work, therefore having a positive impact on the quality of the projects.[6]

While there is a general consensus amongst actors and analysts that Lebanese organisations are playing or complementing the role of the state by providing services or advocating and participating in policy-making, these organisations still define themselves as highly vocal actors, rather than service providers,[7] and their claims come very politicised, as they are looking to focus on marginalised groups and issues that need to be addressed by the state and its policies.

In this context, this report aims to present a general overview of the current local gender actors and their interventions in Lebanon. It also aims to shed light on the complex relationship between women's organisations in Lebanon and their donors. In this context, it is important to ask to what extent the funding tends to shape project design at a local level? And moreover, does funding of short-term and service-oriented projects edulcorate the political change that these organisations could bring?

BOX 1

Report methodology

The methodology used in this report consists of an online survey done starting December 2014 mapping 36 women's organisations and the programmes and projects they implement.[8] A series of more than 10 in-depth interviews with significant actors, donors and local actors were also carried out in May 2015. Furthermore, 3 thematic roundtables were organised to discuss preliminary findings of this report in Spring and Fall 2015. The analysis draws on local actors' narratives collected via interviews and roundtables, and also on survey findings as well as desktop review of the literature produced by gender actors in Lebanon.

1 The evolution of women's movements in Lebanon, as described by Bernadette Daou came in four successive waves. First was the mobilisation of the upper-classes in the framework of the struggle for independence. The creation of an independent Lebanon was then followed by the rise of leftist movements, closer to Marxist ideas, after the defeat of 1967. Then everything came to a halt during the civil war. A new wave emerged in the post-civil war period (coinciding with the Beijing conference, the adoption of CEDAW, the multiplication of NGOs, etc). In the past decade, a new radical model of leftist feminist organisation was born within the framework of the anti-globalisation movement. Bernadette Daou, "Feminisms in Lebanon; after proving loyalty to the "Nation", will the "Body" rise within the "Arab Spring"?", *Civil Society Review*, Lebanon Support, Issue 1, 2015.

2 See for example, Mounia Bennani-Chraïbi, Olivier Fillieule, *Résistances et protestations dans les sociétés musulmanes*, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris, 2003.

3 Lucy Earl, "Social Movements and NGOs: A Preliminary Investigation", International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC), 2004, available at: http://www.intrac. org/resources.php?action=resource&id=31 [last accessed 20 November 2014].

4 Nadje al-Ali, "Gender & Civil Society in the Middle East", *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 2003, Vol. 5 (2). pp. 216-232.

5 The Beijing conference in 1995 put what had been formerly considered as "women's issues" on the global agendas of other UN conferences, coining the term and the subsequent global policy that "women's rights are human rights".

6 Dalya Mitri, "From public space to office space: the professionalization/NGOisation of the feminist movement associations in Lebanon and its impact on mobilisation and achieving social change", *Civil Society Review*, Lebanon Support, Issue 1, 2015.

7 Marie-Noëlle AbiYaghi, *L'altermondialisme au Liban: un militantisme de passage. Logiques d'engagement et reconfiguration de l'espace militant (de gauche) au Liban*, Université de Paris 1-La Sorbonne, doctorat de science politique, 2013.

8 Surveyed gender actors are listed in Lebanon Support's "Gender Actors Map" part of the "Gender Equity Information and Research Network", on the Civil Society Knowledge Centre.

1

Overview of the projects targeting women in Lebanon

Data collected through our survey allowed us to have an overview of the main gender actors, their areas of focus as well as their approaches and modes of intervention.

Gender: a catch-all term?

Until the middle of the 20th century, "gender" was used to name only the grammatical category that classifies nouns into feminine, masculine and neutral or distinguishes animate from inanimate objects. Currently, "gender" is used when referring to social identities such as "woman", "trans", "man" or "other". Although the same word "**jins**" is used to denote both gender and sex in Arabic (as well as "sexual act"), the modern differentiation between sex (male-female; مذكر-مؤنث) and gender (man-woman; رجل-أمرأة) exists today [...]. In English, a common way to define gender is by distinguishing it from sex: whereas sex is understood as biological, gender is socially constructed.[9] However for some analysts the widespread use of the term "gender" in development may have contributed to dilute its political edge. Gender has become a catch-all term for a plethora of competing meanings, agendas and actors. This can be especially verifiable since "gender" is used as an umbrella term for all programs related to women and LGBTIQs. For some observers, the term, traveling from social movement to development, has lost the critical force to express thoughts about rights and power, and also the ability to highlight the inequalities in the lives of those affected by the work of development agencies. The feminist and transformative aspect of gender is thus softened, as we can see in programmes of economic empowerment focusing on "liberating" women through skills training and employment without taking into account the structural causes of oppression.

1.1.
Main organisations targeting women and gender issues today in Lebanon

36 women's organisations working on women/gender issues filled out Lebanon Support's questionnaire survey. It is important to note here that this number does not imply that these 36 organisations are the only or main organisations working in the field, but rather, these organisations were the ones responsive to Lebanon Support's survey.

These actors are very heterogeneous in terms of size, type and scope of implemented projects, as well as funding structures and policies. The vast majority of these organisations (31 out of 36) identify themselves as a local Civil Society organisation. The remaining stakeholders of the Lebanese women's rights landscape are collectives and coalitions.

1.2.
Main areas of focus

Women's Rights are by far the biggest focus of the majority of the surveyed actors (27). It is followed by gender equity (13) and early marriage (5). LGBTIQ is an area of focus for 4 organisations.[10]

Women' rights can be considered as an umbrella term for all projects including women as their main beneficiaries. This can be seen as an indicator of the influence of the gender-mainstreaming components existing within the vast majority of donors' policies.

While surveyed organisations have indicated "women's rights" as their main area of focus in the survey questionnaire, in-depth interviews carried out tend to nuance this finding.

Interviewees maintained that there is a lack of global understanding of issues pertaining to "women's rights" and that fragmentation and specialisation of the organisations' views on this topic are blurring the picture of women's rights in Lebanon. Interviews also highlighted that "gender equity" tends to be used as a generic term to encompass various

[9] "Gender" entry in *Gender Dictionary. Travelling concepts and local usages in Lebanon*, Lebanon Support, December 2015.

[10] Organisations could choose to list multiple areas of focus.

activities and projects, as well as women's political and economic empowerment.

This discrepancy between the organisations' and the activists' discourses concerning topics like women's rights and gender equity raises questions on the influence of donors and international language on how organisations describe their work.

Areas of focus of surveyed gender actors

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **27**

GENDER EQUITY ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **13**

LGBTIQ ⚥⚥⚥⚥ **4**

GBV ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **6**

EARLY MARRIAGE ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **5**

SEXUAL & BODILY ⚥⚥⚥⚥ **4**
RIGHTS

SEXUAL HEALTH ⚥⚥⚥ **3**

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ⚥⚥⚥ **3**
& FAMILY PLANNING

FEMINIST THOUGHT ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **5**
& EXPERIENCES

⚥ = gender actor

Gender mainstreaming

"Gender mainstreaming" refers to the assessment of the gender component of legislation, policies and programmes in all their inherent components and processes, from the design to the implementation of policies and programmes, in order to attain gender equality. It emerged in the wake of feminist movements in North American and European countries with the objective of attaining equality through public policies. Today, it generally refers to donor policy and how it inherently shapes organisations' agendas.

This has led to a certain controversy around the term as it can be seen as a gendered political and policy practice. Criticism surrounding the concept of gender mainstreaming is that ownership of the concept lies in institutions rather than civil society organisations and activists.

The concept also raises the question of how donors' gender equality vision tackles other factors of inequality, such as class, ethnicity and faith, and how this vision of gender equality could differ from the strategies adopted to achieve true equality for all, regardless of background.

This has led some critics to consider that gender mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving equality has failed for various reasons: the lack of understanding of the concept and its implementation strategies before the adoption by governments, intergovernmental bodies and NGOs; the lack of funding due to lack of serious commitment; and a lack of understanding of how gender mainstreaming should affect the policies and daily practice of development practitioners. Furthermore, gender mainstreaming was unable to transform existing power structures, and by putting women on all agendas, has paradoxically helped in rendering women less visible.

1.3.
Types of approaches and interventions

The different implications in sectors of intervention draw an interesting picture of women's organisations in the field. Awareness raising and social development constitute the main sectors of intervention, indicated by 27 (awareness raising) and 22 (social development) organisations, respectively[11]. Notably, economic support and medical services were only indicated as a concern by 10 (economic support) and 6 (medical services) organisations, respectively. This indicates an important level of professionalisation among the staff of these organisations as these activities require highly-skilled personnel. Moreover, it shows the global trend of NGOisation within civil society organisations in Lebanon.
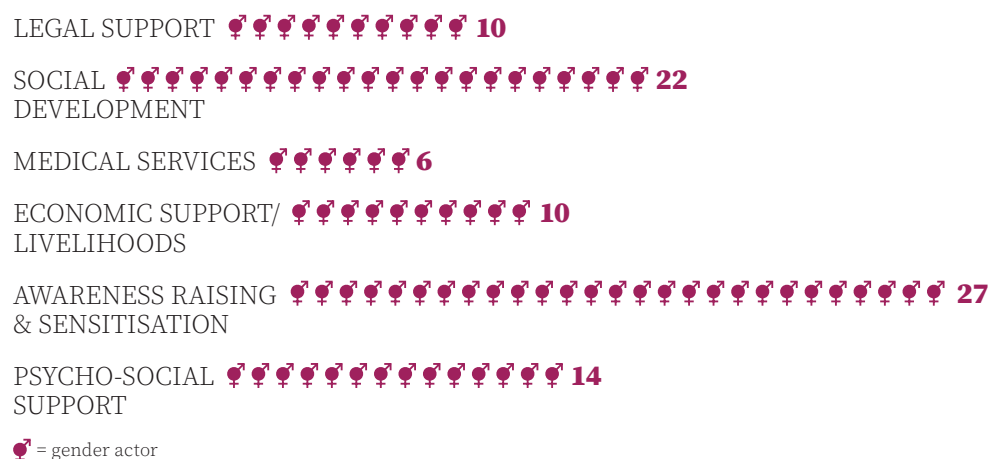
The survey also allowed a brief glimpse of the main donors in the field of women-related issues, as well as the funding structures of women's organisations in Lebanon.

11 Organisations could choose to list multiple sectors of intervention.

12 Interview with a NGO worker, May 8th, 2015.

TABLE 2

Sectors of intervention of surveyed actors

LEGAL SUPPORT ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **10**

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **22**

MEDICAL SERVICES ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **6**

ECONOMIC SUPPORT/ LIVELIHOODS ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **10**

AWARENESS RAISING & SENSITISATION ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **27**

PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **14**

⚥ = gender actor

1.4.
Main donors and funding structures of local organisations

Within this field, various kinds of donors are represented, mainly UN agencies, European embassies, International foundations, International NGOs and foreign private companies (such as Roche for Health), as well as Lebanese private companies.

When it comes to analysing the funding structures of Women's organisations in Lebanon, it appears that Lebanese women's organisations heavily rely on international funding. In fact, 29 out of the surveyed organisations are partially or fully funded from abroad. Many others rely on membership, service fees, and own funds to partially or fully fund their activities. Only 1 organisation stated it was exclusively funded nationally along with donations (without specifying the source of the national fund, and in a context where public funding to local civil society organisations is quasi inexistent). It is also worth mentioning that only one organisation is self-sustainable, as it is funded by its own economic strategy.

The lack of public state support serving to ensure a certain degree of stability and sustainability is a concern voiced by many organisations. As one NGO representative expressed his frustrations: "Sometimes it [feels like] a loss of time and energy to ensure funding given that [organisations] don't receive any kind of state support at least for running costs".[12]

Survey findings show a gap in public funding of organisations working on promoting women's rights leading to a dependency

TABLE 3

Funding structures of surveyed actors

INTERNATIONAL ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **29**
FUNDS & GRANTS

NATIONAL FUNDS ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **9**
& GRANTS

SERVICE FEES ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **8**

DONATIONS ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **13**

MEMBERSHIP FEES ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **11**

VOLUNTEERS ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **9**
CONTRIBUTIONS

OWN FUNDS ⚥⚥⚥⚥⚥ **5**

⚥ = gender actor

BOX 4

Some of the funding sources of surveyed gender actors

Organisations that stated they solely rely on international funds and grants:
Mashrou Alef (The A project), ABAAD (Dimensions) Resource Center For Gender Equality, Women in Front, Centre for research and training development action /CRTDA, MOSAIC, Palestinian Arab Women League (PAWL), The Arab foundation for freedoms and equality, Justice Without Frontiers, SHIELD, Kafa (enough)-Violence and Exploitation.

Only one organisation stated it relies on national funds and grants and donations alone:
Lebanese Council for Women (LCW).

While two other organisations stated they relied on national grants and funds, and membership fees and/or donations:
Young Women Moslem Association, BAHITHAT – Lebanese Association for Women Researchers

Organisation that stated it is self - sustainable:
The Women's Renaissance Gathering.

on international funds that contributes to shaping the donors/local actors dynamics.

The high reliance of local organisation on international funding highlights that the relationship between the international donors and the local actors are intricate. This, in turn, raises the question of the alleged influence of donors' policies and language on how these organisations define themselves and the scope of their work.

Furthermore, cross-sectional analysis of survey data focusing on actors' sectors of interventions and the funding structures tends to show a high level of professionalisation as seen in the above section. This can be linked to donor constraints (logistical, administrative, skilled staff and salaries) and to the broader issue of the continuous necessity to look for funds in order to support the existing structures and staff. A high level of dependency on international funding further confirms the assumptions.

Analysis of the survey as well as in-depth interviews and roundtable discussions invite to question the correlation between donor policies and the shaping of the projects implemented by our sample of local actors, organisations and collectives. More specifically: How do local actors define their relationships with donors? How do these organisations deal with donors' constraints, such as logistical and administrative constraints? Can one confirm the much

13 Interview with a feminist activist, May 7th, 2015.

14 One organisation is currently running projects covered by fifteen different donors.

15 Willem Elbers, Bas Arts, "Keeping body and soul together: southern NGOs' strategic responses to donor constraints", *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 77, 2011, pp. 713-73.

BOX 5

The downside of professionalisation?

Donors' demands regarding logistics, financial reports, and impact-measuring indicators have raised the need for extended and qualified staff, making organisations more logistically rigid. This therefore created a need for sustainable funding in order to keep the organisation running. The dependency of local organisations on donors thus creates a lack of creativity and flexibility in proposing and implementing projects targeting women's issues. This also affects the relationship of organisations with the community of women they are helping or representing. Rather than working with women as equal partners, organisations act as service providers with women as their beneficiaries, encouraging the idea of a hierarchy.

circulated assumption among local actors that the "usual suspects"[13] are "getting all the funds"?[14]

Despite being aware of the limitations imposed by the "fund hunt" realities, and the competition amongst NGOs stirred by fund competition, a number of NGOs remain strongly committed to drafting projects according to the core values and aims of their original political commitment. Nevertheless, some donors may have a tendency to approach NGOs they know, often the most institutionalised ones, headed by well-known figures. These realities also have consequences on the relationships among women's organisations in Lebanon: the rivalry and competition for funds hamper any effort towards coordination, not to mention concerted collective action.

BOX 6

Navigating the relationship with "the donor"

Authors have categorised the ways in which NGOs develop different strategies in order to manage donor constraints:

avoiding
(in order to prevent exposure to donors conditions by engaging compatible donors or turning down specific funding offers);

influencing
(changing the content of conditions, using mutual dependence as leverage in negotiations, persuading, engaging donor representatives);

buffering
(mitigating the impact of donor conditions) and

portraying
(pretending to comply with conditions, superficial conforming, selective information).[15]
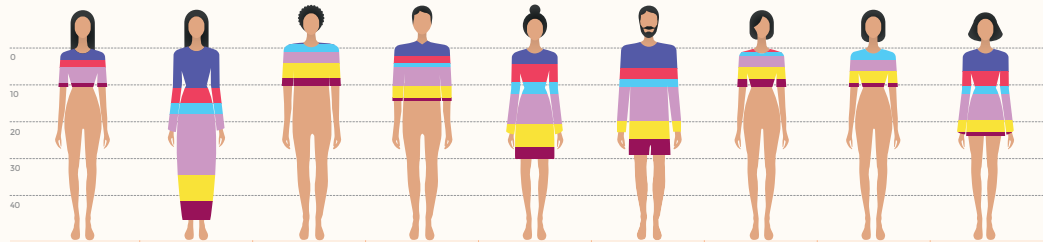
FIGURE 1

Gender actors and interventions in Lebanon

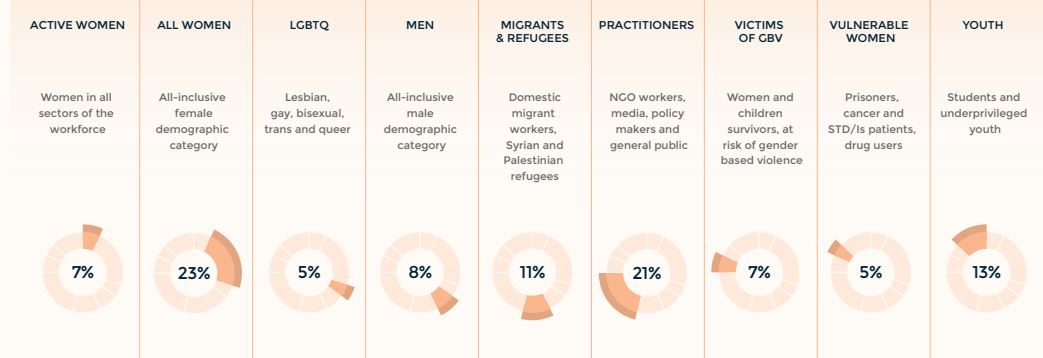**GENDER ACTORS & INTERVENTIONS IN LEBANON**

Part of its **Gender Equity Network** project, in partnership with **Diakonia, Lebanon Support** carried out a mapping to profile and compile comprehensive information about actors working on gender and women's issues in Lebanon. This was based on a survey sent out to 36 local actors between the years 2014 and 2015. Data collected gives an overview of main gender actors, their areas of focus, as well as their approaches and modes of intervention. The visualisation below highlights the populations targeted by these interventions. Data collected relied on information given directly by actors and organisations.

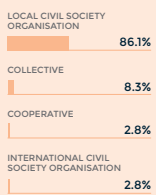**TYPE OF INTERVENTION PER TARGET POPULATION**

- SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
- ECONOMIC SUPPORT AND LIVELIHOODS
- MEDICAL SERVICES
- AWARENESS-RAISING AND SENSITISATION
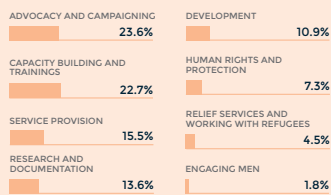- PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT
- LEGAL SUPPORT

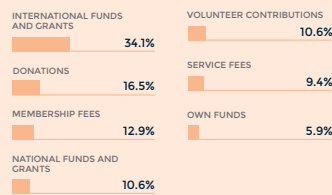|	ACTIVE WOMEN	ALL WOMEN	LGBTQ	MEN	MIGRANTS & REFUGEES	PRACTITIONERS	VICTIMS OF GBV	VULNERABLE WOMEN	YOUTH
POPULATION TARGETS	Women in all sectors of the workforce	All-inclusive female demographic category	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer	All-inclusive male demographic category	Domestic migrant workers, Syrian and Palestinian refugees	NGO workers, media, policy makers and general public	Women and children survivors, at risk of gender based violence	Prisoners, cancer and STD/Is patients, drug users	Students and underprivileged youth
INTERVENTION REACH	7%	23%	5%	8%	11%	21%	7%	5%	13%

TYPE OF ACTOR

LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION — 86.1%
COLLECTIVE — 8.3%
COOPERATIVE — 2.8%
INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION — 2.8%

APPROACH

ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNING — 23.6%
CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAININGS — 22.7%
SERVICE PROVISION — 15.5%
RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION — 13.6%
DEVELOPMENT — 10.9%
HUMAN RIGHTS AND PROTECTION — 7.3%
RELIEF SERVICES AND WORKING WITH REFUGEES — 4.5%
ENGAGING MEN — 1.8%

FUNDING STRUCTURE

INTERNATIONAL FUNDS AND GRANTS — 34.1%
DONATIONS — 16.5%
MEMBERSHIP FEES — 12.9%
NATIONAL FUNDS AND GRANTS — 10.6%
VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS — 10.6%
SERVICE FEES — 9.4%
OWN FUNDS — 5.9%

SWEDEN — diakonia
دعم لبنان LEBANON SUPPORT

Information architecture and design: Diala Lteif and Patil Tchilinguirian.

2

Main research findings

Two main research findings can be drawn based on the survey and fieldwork: gender actors voiced concern regarding unbalanced relationships with their funders, additionally, they all criticised the negative consequences of short term projects on their work, sustainability and collaboration.

2.1.
Unbalanced partnerships

Findings suggest that the financial dependency of local NGOs on donors results in power asymmetries. Given that funding agencies usually develop their policies with a limited participation from local partners, donor conditions are not always adapted to the way NGOs are working.[16] This in turn has an impact on NGOs' strategies to manage donor constraints.

Fieldwork findings show that professional requirements can contribute to transforming a grassroots-oriented organisation with an activist outlook into a professional service provision organisation. Donor constraints can likewise undermine local organisations' autonomy and ownership of interventions.[17]

Emphasis on outputs and deliverables is also hindering the NGOs ability to re-evaluate local needs, and has an impact on processes and sustainability of outcomes.[18] This has led some interviewees to describe their own organisations and initiatives as mere "implementers of donor policies".[19]

Here, we are also reminded of the influence of buzzwords and trends (such as "engaging men" and "sexual health") that could lead some NGOs to hop on the donor bandwagon and modify the core values of their organisation, even at the risk of being seen as a mere implementer of projects. Furthermore, the role of what is commonly qualified as development policy "buzzwords" in shaping these policies is also to be noted, since these words are used in the discourse of the organisations and collectives themselves, and in the way they communicate about their projects. They not only frame the actions of NGOs and development agencies, but also lend the legitimacy the development actors need to justify their interventions.[20] One can also add the importance of how different keywords are always jointly used such as the use of the word "sexual" with "health," or the use of "violence" with "gender" and/or "women". Because of this, new meanings emerge through the connections built between words. These meanings desensitise NGOs to gender issues and cause them

to see gender through an already donor tailored lens, that is a lens that focuses on women and violence instead of perhaps, men and violence, being that men are most likely to be the perpetrators of violence against women.

In addition, many interviewees converged to stress that the surplus time and effort spent with the donor and its respective requirements has negative effects on work effectiveness.

Donor constraints in terms of technical demands are multiple and vary from designing and planning the project in a logical framework (including a definition of target groups, indicators of progress and success, and predictable outcomes) to detailing a narrative and financial report (to ensure accountability and performance). Also, an organisation may not use earmarked funds to cover overhead costs, as mentioned by a majority of interviewees. The lack of core-funding has led to a scattered distribution of resources over time in order to ensure the sustainability of funds and projects, and sometimes, even the organisations themselves. Another concern that has been voiced during interviews was the time and resources spent on donor requirements, at the expense of the organisation's other activities. The deep impact of donor constraints on NGOs and their activities reveals that by trying to improve effectiveness, donor conditions are actually hindering organisation practices.

While some actors interviewed highlighted their role as "translators of local needs in international language and jargon", others describe time on donor negotiation and requirements as "playing the game of donors which contributes to deepen the gap between them and their beneficiaries needs."[21] Some interviewed activists stated that UN agencies are the most "rigid" in the logistic dimension, with a rather inflexible and complex structure and administrative system, in addition to favouring their own agenda, using specific terminology and jargon to shape a project. This is often justified by donors since they themselves are accountable for their own donor countries: "Donors sometimes have a result-based

16 As mentioned by several NGO workers during fieldwork interviews.

17 Interview with a women's rights NGO worker, May 8th, 2015.

18 Several interviewees complained about the time-consuming constraints that did not allow them to do further research on the needs. They feel that they do not have the time to reflect on what they are doing.

19 Some organisations are considered by other actors as a "*creation*" of international donors without a "*real grip*" on the actual issues pertaining to women's rights in Lebanon.

20 Andrea Cornwall, Karen Brock, "What does Buzzwords to for Development Policy? A critical look at 'participation', 'empowerment' and 'poverty reduction'", 2005.

21 Interview with a NGO worker, May 13th, 2015.

management focus with financial reporting and capacity-building, in order to achieve better results, but also to be accountable to taxpayers from donor countries."[22]

This results in sometimes conflicting perceptions and narratives: while local organisations seem to define their relationships with donors as constraining "burdens," donors characterise their partnerships as a relationship of interdependency. Hence, for the donors interviewed within the scope of this report, partnership could be improved by translating the international issues regarding gender and adapting them to localised contexts, in addition to including local understanding of policy development issues and "bringing them back" to the donor countries and to international platforms and conferences.[23] Moreover, donors stress that "local ownership" is necessary in achieving the goals outlined by a project. Because of this, donors always evaluate an organisation's local ownership before giving out grants so that they may fund projects based on local needs.

However, this seems to be balanced by practices on the ground. According to the director of a local NGO, very few donors allow egalitarian relationships: "The majority [of donors] does not care about field assessments", which leads to a tendency within certain NGOs to "adapt to the desires of funding agencies [...]".[24] Others interviewed stated that they never felt that the agendas of donors were bluntly imposed upon them, but rather, that donors expressed their "preference" for certain themes and approaches, hence indirectly contributing to directing the focus of local organisations' projects and interventions.

Nevertheless, some interviewed organisations claim to have a clear policy towards funding: they only present needs-based projects, do not accept funds that ask for indicators in numbers and targets, and focus on projects providing qualitative services. But the downside of adhering to this clear policy and being "radical and not flexible vis-à-vis (their) goals"[25] is to have increasing difficulties to ensure funding and sustainability.

Hence, relations with donors are not balanced thus far, although an increasing number of donors try to reach common visions through discussion and consultation. While some NGOs have expressed their willingness to modify their mission according to available funds, others have deemed consistency as a major concern and are "sticking to the cause"[26] that originally motivated them.

2.2.
Short-term projects versus long-term strategies? From specialisation to fragmentation

The issue of short-term project funding is one of the major concerns for local actors, since they fear that limited time funding lessens the impact of these projects, and projects and programmes are not usually sustainable. In fact, many interviewed local actors suggested that donor evaluations should be on long-term strategies and not on short-term project outcomes. As mentioned by several NGOs working only on project-based funds, short-term project funding leads to a certain form of instability, that not only reflects on the quality and consistency of the work, but also on the organisation as a whole.[27]

This instability contributes to nurturing a culture of competition where organisations

22 Roundtable on "Donor policies and local actors: complementarity or dependency? Women's organisations in Lebanon and their relationships with international donors", Lebanon Support, April 30th, 2015.

23 Idem.

24 Interview with the director of an NGO, May 11th, 2015.

25 Interview with an LGBTIQ organisation director, May 7th, 2015.

26 Interview with an NGO director, May 11th, 2015.

27 For example, while implementing projects including running centres, where lawyers and social workers are needed.

are seen as "enterprises" with very little interest in coordination and networking. Donor funding practices contribute to fuelling divisions between these organisations by parceling funds, projects and initiatives. These short-term projects have low-scale impact notably on societal change. A head of a local organisation compared the current situation to a corporate model: "It's a business model: find the funds, then implement a project. Local NGOs have a narrow vision, they're not part of a political and democratic process, with ideas about citizenship or change".

Project-oriented approaches focusing on one specific issue without connecting it to the broader context is pointed by several interviewees as the main factor behind the increasing gap between women's organisations' work and the broader feminist struggle.

As put by one interviewee, "there is a fear of talking about women's rights in the Arab world"[28] and this reluctance to address women's rights is voiced as both a cause and a consequence of the specialisation of donors on issues and projects.

Gender Based Violence (GBV) was given as an example by most interviewees as well as interveners in roundtable discussions: the focus of donors and organisations on GBV exemplifies how one specific topic attracts all the funding, leading to a lack of comprehensive approaches to women's rights. "It's a global struggle! We should talk about structural and state violence, not only about trendy issues such as GBV!"[29] said one activist, stressing the necessity and importance to link specific "issues" to more "structural" causes and problems.

In this vein, the lack of broad vision seems to contribute to a shift in activists' modes of action. An activist and women's rights advocate explained how in today's NGO environment, "fighting for a cause is of little concern for women's organisations" and that organisations are rather in a context characterised by the "personalisation of the cause" which ensures the visibility of a single organisation on particular issues.

An example often cited is the coalition that prepared and lobbied for the law on family violence. "While an alliance of organisations had contributed in drafting the law

on family violence, media and the wider public called the law by the name of the most visible organisation: the 'Kafa law,'" explains a member of the coalition that contributed to drafting the law.[30]

Another cited example on the "personification of the cause," as put by some interviewees, is the increased tendency to create new local organisations around a rather well-known public figure as "founder, president or director".

This tendency has been pointed by some interviewees as encouraged by donors' funding practices that sometimes tend to favour increased fragmentation among gender actors. A positive aspect of the multiplication of actors can be that each organisation uses the approach it knows best in order to provide professional services for the targeted communities. In the case of organisations working on queer sexuality and LGBTIQ issues, this fragmentation led to a redistribution of services based on the capacities, expertise, and methods of intervention each organisation possessed[31]: "expertise is better, each organisation should concentrate on what it does best."[32]

This fragmentation has been expressed in interviews as an important matter of concern of local actors with rather negative outcomes as far as women organisations are concerned: networking and coalition building constitute the stumbling blocks of organisations and collectives working on women's issues. The latter are perceived (by each other, as per fieldwork findings) as working for rather their own organisation's specific interests, with little or no efforts towards a broader or common objective. In the words of a long-time advocate for women's rights "networking should be a goal, a strategy. Networking should be a part of the struggle, a project in itself, it should be a cause worth fighting for, but NGOs are highly project-oriented."[33]

Some interviewed organisations justify the lack of collaboration because "some organisations have greater capacities than others; this renders them less likely to work collaboratively[34]. Another interviewee expresses the same sentiment through starker terms, saying, "Why work with others, when you

28 Interview with an NGO director, May 11th, 2015.

29 Interview with a long-time advocate of women's rights, May 7th, 2015.

30 While the law had been part of a long-term struggle for many feminist organisations, media and public opinion seemed to be reducing other organisations' role and emphasising the role of KAFA, which led to feelings of exclusion and sometimes resentment by the other organisations, as pointed out by several interviewees.

31 In that vein, Helem specialised in legal aspect, LebMASH in health policy, and Marsa in service provision.

32 Interview with an LGBTIQ organisation representative, May 2nd, 2015.

33 Interview with a prominent advocate for women's rights, May 8th, 2015.

34 Interview with an LGBTIQ organisation representative, May 2nd, 2015.

35 Interview with a NGO representative, May 3rd, 2015.

36 Interview with a NGO representative, May 3rd, 2015.

37 An example of a failed coalition initiated by a donor is the WMDW consortium: DRC as leading agency in charge of coordination was imposed by the donor, KAFA and ARM withdrew from the consortium since they felt that the coordinator wasn't aware of all the challenges, and they didn't benefit of enough time to set priorities or try to combine the different visions for a common goal.

38 Interview with a feminist activist, May 5th, 2015.

39 Interview with Palestinian feminist activist, May 4th, 2015.

40 As an example the interviewee gave the example of the nationality campaign that excluded Palestinian, Iraqi and Syrian women.

41 Roundtable on "Rethinking labour rights interventions for women in Lebanon", Lebanon Support, May 14th, 2015.

42 Idem.

BOX 8

"There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives"

Fieldwork findings show the existence of a few organisations that stress the importance of "working on single issue projects" and thus dismiss the necessity for a global or holistic approach to the "feminist struggle". These organisations argue that "when you focus on one single issue, you have more chances of achieving your goal".**36**

However, this does not seem to represent a shared vision within gender and feminist organisations. The necessity of redefining the feminist struggle came up very often during the interviews stressing on the need to have holistic and intersectional feminist struggles, rather than sectorial projects. Interviewees maintained that a more global approach would prove to be, in the long term, more effective and impactful.

can do it alone"**35**. Thus, coalition or network building with other NGOs is not of interest to these organisations because collaboration may imply sharing funds and shaping a project according to others' input and agendas. Since there is no common or collective vision, or even an open discussion for development project approaches, many organisations find being in a coalition to be useless.**37**

According to an activist, women's organisations cannot be qualified as feminist movements because they do not take a clear stance on political issues: "They don't give importance to the economic factor, and they don't question state and government policies".**38** Rather, organisations favour relations with politicians and decision-makers than grassroots connections, as some interviewees stated.

Another consequence of increased fragmented space, specialisation, and the lack of collaboration, is the lack of inclusiveness, and more importantly a certain disconnect from the needs on the ground. As a Palestinian feminist activist puts it, "organisations focus on Lebanese women, rather than women in Lebanon".**39** According to a Palestinian NGO worker, "not all NGOs believe in the universality of women's rights" and, therefore, they only target specific groups of women based on their socio-political status while avoiding other women and their rights. The interviewee continued to note that some NGOs are excluding Palestinian women due to the concern that including them would "complicate things."**40**

While a plethora of organisations, projects and programmes have been targeting women migrant domestic workers since the years 2010, and more specifically since the launch of the ILO strategy on decent work for domestic workers that epitomised with the Convention No 189 that entered into force in 2013, the rights of other "minorities" such as Palestinian women seem to remain confined to the work and interventions of Palestinian organisations.

The round table series organised in Spring 2015 and the in-depth interviews conducted converge to highlight that existing gender actors in Lebanon face challenges when it comes to tackling the issue of social, economic and labour rights for categories that are not under the migrant domestic worker label. A participant stressed in a reflexive manner that as "feminists [we] are unable today to develop [...] a discourse, not even an intervention programme on social and labour issues." She adds: "as feminists in Lebanon, we have failed to address the issue of discrimination against women from a socioeconomic perspective."**41** While other participants seemed to converge in highlighting the role of funding in the increased attention to the issue of shaping local programmes and interventions and directing them towards their own agendas.**42**

This is further corroborated by in-depth interviews where respondents seemed to highlight the issue of the availability of funds versus the "real" needs. The discrepancies

between the actual needs of women within
Lebanon and projects implemented to
address these needs are illustrated through
two case studies.

3

Thematic cases from the field

Fieldwork (survey and in-depth interviews), roundtables discussions organised in Spring 2015, as well as a desktop review of the literature produced by gender actors show a certain gap between actual needs identified by gender actors themselves and projects implemented by the same actors.

Two main issues of concerns have been identified in the frame of the preparation of this report.

1. A lack of programmes and projects targeting women workers' rights, and related subjects such as reform of labour law or socio-economic rights (encompassing all female workers in Lebanon including foreigners, pay equity, maternity leave, including the informal sector workers in the official workforce...) have been unanimously brought up. In a context where there is a notable increase in the voicing and actions of workers' unions and civil society organisations in defence of workers and employees demanding the readjustment of low salaries, and protesting against unemployment, lack of health coverage, the rising cost of basic commodities and the general deterioration of working conditions, these demands remain unformulated for women workers.

2. In addition, while several organisations and collectives in Lebanon implement projects related to reproductive rights, or sexual health for women but also for sexual minorities, fieldwork findings highlight that issues related to sexual rights (such as choosing one's partner freely, or access to healthy sexual life) are generally not tackled by organisations working on women related issues in Lebanon.

These two issues illustrate the relationships of local organisations with donors, based, to a large extent, on funding availabilities according to donor's agendas. This, in turn, is contributing to the shaping of women's development projects and programmes in Lebanon.

3.1.
Theme 1: Labour rights and women in Lebanon

The increased focus of women's organisations on the situation of women migrant domestic workers (WMDW) has contributed to highlight the (il) legal treatment these workers undergo from state

BOX 9

The kafâla (sponsorship) system: another example of State externalisation[43]

The **kafâla** (sponsorship) system governs the foreign workers market in Lebanon as well as in other Near Eastern countries such as Syria, Jordan and Israel. It allows for the externalisation of state responsibility to NGOs and civil society actors. This is important to understand as employers and recruiters are thus able to control migrant workers in their favour.

Under the **Kafâla** system a migrant worker's immigration status is legally bound to an individual employer or sponsor (**kafeel**) for their contract period. The migrant worker cannot enter the country, transfer employment, nor leave the country for any reason without first obtaining explicit written permission from the **kafeel**. The worker must be sponsored by a **kafeel** in order to enter the destination country and remains tied to this **kafeel** throughout his or her stay. The **kafeel** must report to the immigration authorities if the migrant worker leaves his or her employment and must ensure the worker leaves the country after the contract ends, including paying for the flight home. Often the **kafeel** exerts further control over the migrant worker by confiscating his or her passport and travel documents, despite legislation in some destination countries that declares this practice illegal. This situates the migrant worker as completely dependent upon his or her **kafeel** for his or her livelihood and residency.

While actors have been very vocal in the last decade against the **kafâla** system on women migrant domestic workers, very few spoke out against the system when it was enforced in late 2014 against Syrian workers.

authorities, private employment agencies and/or their own employers. Their lack of social and health protection, often dreadful housing conditions, inhumane working conditions, and extremely low salaries (a part of which often remains in the hands of employers) are not new issues and are important to address in NGO programming.

The International Labor Organisation (ILO), within the frame of its Global Strategy for achieving decent work for domestic workers, has been pushing Lebanon for the ratification of the 2011 international Convention on Domestic Workers. On a local level, following international mobilisation, several NGOs and associations (KAFA, ARM) have been very vocal about migrant domestic workers rights, through media campaigns and the creation of migrant centres. A founding conference aimed at establishing a domestic workers' union, under the umbrella of FENASOL, was held in January 2015. ILO has a specific set of interventions tailored for MWDW, since the *kafâla* system and the exclusion from the labour law lead to legal discrimination against these women. The living arrangements of MWDW make monitoring the conditions of living almost impossible, and so, ILO is providing social workers with training sessions for home inspections in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs. A lack of official monitoring mechanism has also pushed for partnership with the private sector, via a ratification of a code of conduct for recruitment agencies. This could be an example of how donors and NGOs have to deal with the Lebanese state in finding ways to circumvent the legal void. ILO is pushing the Ministry of Labour to draft a labour law for domestic workers in order to ensure a better protection, and "still, in a policy and legislative point of view, domestic workers are workers, regardless of nationality or gender and should be included in the labour law."[44]

ILO and local organisations focusing on domestic workers, and specifically on MWDW, have left a void when it comes to women workers rights in general: this focus on the extreme ill-treatment and abuse targeting female domestic workers lies in a context where very rare voices are raised against the precarious situation of other foreign workers (Syrian, Sudanese, Iraqi, Egyptian female workers among others) or more generally the working force in Lebanon.

Women workers in Lebanon are discriminated against in terms of employment opportunities, wage gaps, benefits, and sick and maternity leave. Furthermore, the majority of working women are employed in agriculture and social work, in the informal sector. Needless to highlight, many women also undertake unwaged work in the household.

Since the majority of working women in Lebanon are employed in the informal sector or in the household, official labour statistics only report that 23% of women are active in the workforce.[45]

Hence, "invisible" women's work is not recognised, especially domestic work and work in the care sector. A significant number of women work in what is called "care services" (homecare of elderly, sick people or people with disabilities, social work) in a context where the state is not providing basic services in terms of homes for the elderly, daycares for children, maternity leave, and parental leave.

In that vein, the civil society sector employs women to a great extent.[46] This leads to forms of economic exploitation such as lack of access to social security, unpaid overtime, and forced "volunteering;" the latter often being displayed as a continuation of the "natural" role of women as "caregivers." This gender-stereotyped vision of women as caring has very concrete consequences that are still not tackled by gender actors at a local level.

 Fieldwork findings show that there is an urgent need to question, amend and revise the Labour Law for all female workers in Lebanon: Lebanese nationals but also Syrian, Iraqi and Palestinian women, as well as migrant workers, the vast majority of whom being from South East Asia and African countries. The focus on domestic work shouldn't hinder the importance of the struggle for social and economic rights.[47]

Workers rights are to be seen as a component of social justice, and an important step towards the abolition of gender inequalities. The broader concept of social justice

44 Roundtable "Rethinking labour rights interventions for women in Lebanon", Lebanon Support, May 14th, 2015.

45 Riwa Salameh, "Gender politics in Lebanon and the limits of legal reformism", *Civil Society Knowledge Center*, Lebanon Support, September 16th, 2014, available at: http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/paper/gender-politics-lebanon-and-limits-legal-reformism [last accessed 20 November 2015].

46 NGOs are regulated by the Labour law, but often rely on volunteer work or unpaid overtime for employees, and often do not legally register their employees, depriving them of social security benefits.

47 According to a prominent advocate for women's rights, May 5th, 2015.

should include all forms of discriminations (faced by Lebanese citizens, foreigners, and MDW) pertaining to equal opportunities of work. According to one interviewee, women organisations in Lebanon are weak when it comes to defending social and economic rights, and tackling cases of discrimination: they do not support trade unions, do not express any position related to economic policies, and do not address the exclusion of Palestinian, Iraqi and Syrian workers' rights from the legal debate. Activists and advocates raised other important matters, especially the fact that the lack of global vision and feminist ideals seemingly within NGOs is turning them into institutions rather than social actors. Civil society agendas are being parcelled to receive funds, and gender actors are losing their collective power to pressure policy making on a state level.

In other words, "professionalisation led to business-like organisations without any political vision, or a broader vision beyond projects implementation [and so] women's organisations have lost touch with the women they're supposed to represent. Civil society hasn't got any meaningful ways of pressuring the government because they work according to IOs and INGOs agendas,"[48] as summarised by a representative of a local organisation.

3.2.
Theme 2: Sexual and reproductive health and rights

"Approaches of local NGOs towards sexuality are flawed, they're not tackling the racism, capitalism, classism issues when it comes to sexuality. There is a need for a comprehensive approach, drawing on local legitimacy, unapologetic, but also a more political approach."[49] Sexual and reproductive rights include the option to make a decision regarding whether and when to have children, access to reproductive healthcare (birth control, safe abortion) prenatal and obstetric care and access to information, but also the free choice of a sexual partner. The international discourse, mainly in UN

48 In the words of a Women's rights advocate, Roundtable "Rethinking labour rights interventions for women in Lebanon", Lebanon Support, May 14th, 2015.

49 Interview with a long-time activist in sexual health, May 14th, 2015.

50 World Health Organization, *Human Rights, Health, and Poverty Reduction Strategies*, Health & Human Rights Publications Series, No. 5, 2008.

51 "A Ten-Year Retrospective on Reproductive Rights at the Start of the 21st Century", Center for Reproductive Rights, No Date, available at: http://www.reproductiverights.org/sites/crr.civicactions.net/files/documents/RR_10years_2010.pdf [last accessed 23.10.2015].

52 Sonia Corrêa, "From reproductive health to sexual rights, Achievements and future challenges", *Reproductive Health Matters*, Vol. 5, 1997, pp. 107-116.

53 Betsy Hartmann, *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs: The Global Politics of Population Control*, South End Press, 1995.

54 "Reproductive Health/Rights" entry in *Gender Dictionary. Travelling concepts and local usages in Lebanon*, Lebanon Support, December 2015.

BOX 10

Sexual rights?

Broadly, women's reproductive health includes the option and ability to decide whether and when to have children, to have access to reproductive healthcare including birth control and safe abortion, prenatal and obstetric care, and to have access to information. Sexual and reproductive health and rights, as a subset of human rights, were outlined at the 1968 Cairo UN conference on human rights. The term "reproductive health" in its modern form has been quickly popularised through UN channels and through transnational NGOs. The concept was further developed by family planning institutions, women's health movements and groups, and the World Health Organisation, whose definition includes "the right of all to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence".[50] The inclusion of reproductive rights within the frame of women's right to self-determination[51] was progressive in its categorisation of maternal mortality as a human rights violation, emphasising the right to family planning, and considering the lack of access to birth control as a form of discrimination. [...] In addition, the applicability of this term and its agenda has been debated among feminists, including the question whether or not to use the conception of reproductive "rights" instead of the more general reproductive "health"[52]. The former stresses health issues as a right that must be provided by the state and its institutions, while the latter leaves out accountability and may risk a disregard for the individual rights of women[53]. The same debate arises in relation to conceptions of sexual rights and sexual health; sexual rights can be favoured by feminists but official institutions mostly use the more "neutral" term of sexual health[54].

resolutions and documents, on sexuality has taken a new form with the conceptualisation of "sexual rights" terms of reproduction, health and violence. This notion of sexual rights resulted from some second-wave feminists' engagement with the UN and participation in international conferences such as the Beijing conference, but also with the contribution of LGBTIQ groups.

Agendas and policies of international organisations and INGOs are influencing the shape of the approaches and projects implemented by local actors. International organisations and local NGOs in Lebanon mainly work on reducing maternal mortality, family planning and STIs, while LGBTIQ organisations offer medical support, thus focusing on a medical aspect of reproductive and sexual health. In other words, the focus seems to favour health over rights, and the reproductive over the sexual. Sexuality is sometimes regarded as a less "serious", less urgent problem to address than those of health, violence or poverty, in both global and national policy debates. This opposition tends to minimise the links between sexual exclusion and poverty, and the issues of sexual division of labour, heteronormativity, homophobia, and various forms of violence. Donors tend to only address the issues of LGBTIQ and sexual minorities, and violence against women and sexual violence, as if they are "[picking] and [choosing] subjects that aren't debatable."[55].

Funds follow along the same guidelines and are, thus, not the result of a comprehensive debate. Questions were raised by activists and advocates on whether fund availabilities targeting LGBTIQ organisations are hampering any efforts in addressing women's sexual rights.

"Why does the queer movement alone address these issues? The majority of women are concerned, but funds target queers before women whereas all Lebanese women don't have access to rights such as being single! Is it a lost battle?"[56]

Using a "victimisation" lens in shaping the discourse on sexuality has been qualified as a trend by multiple activists and actors interviewed. As put by a long-time activist, it is as if "the discourse is apologetic,

out of fear maybe, for example we speak about sexual violence as a 'honourable' way to talk about sex via condemning violence and such."[57] A women's right advocate admitted that her organisation never organised any workshop addressing sexual rights, although they have extensively worked on sexual violence.[58]

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) programmes and policies have the tendency to approach sex as something to be tamed, in order to avoid consequences such as unwanted pregnancies and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) or Diseases (STDs) like HIV/AIDS, dismissing the positive aspects of sex such as pleasure. Women activists have expressed the need to use a more sex-positive approach, emphasising the celebratory aspect of sexuality. These international and governmental policies, considering sex as a health-related issue, give de facto power to doctors, psychotherapists and health practitioners. They hold the information, informing women on birth control or safe abortions. The "medicalisation" of sex issues in general and more specifically the medicalisation of women's bodies (birth control…) leads to a necessity, as put by an activist, to "take back the power from the doctors and give it back to women."[59]

Linking the issues of reproductive rights and access to contraception to motherhood framing motherhood as essential, natural and inherent to a woman's identity, has been also qualified as problematic by local actors since it leads to women never being considered outside of their reproductive roles.

"In the personal status law, there's always a mention of woman and child (*al mar'a wal tifl*). Is there a woman outside of motherhood? Or outside of marriage? The role of women is solely a reproductive one, there's a clear emphasis on the preeminent role of the mother."[60]

Single women are thus de facto excluded from reproductive rights programming as mentioned by an activist: "Single women living alone or single mothers, or women choosing to live in cohabitation with a partner […] [are] not targeted by health campaigns, since they live outside of marriage."[61]

55 Roundtable on "Let's Talk about Sex": Rethinking sexual rights and reproductive health programmes in Lebanon, Lebanon Support, 6th of October 2015.

56 Idem.

57 Idem.

58 She also questioned whether the Lebanese society wasn't ready to discuss the topic of sexuality, or if women's rights organisations had other priorities and urgent matters to address before tackling sexuality issues.

59 Interview with an activist in sexual health, May 14th, 2015.

60 Roundtable on "Let's Talk about Sex": Rethinking sexual rights and reproductive health programmes in Lebanon, Lebanon Support, 6th of October 2015.

61 For example, social security doesn't cover medical expenses linked to STIs for single women.

Inequalities of gender and of class are also perpetuated in terms of reproductive health. The differences between classes are expressed through the access to abortion as some women have access to private clinics in order to undergo abortion in decent conditions. The privatised health system in Lebanon further deepens the problem, as tests and screenings for STDs and STIs during pregnancy aren't covered by social security, or, as, pointed out by an activist, the morning-after pill having been recently replaced by a more expensive pill.

Also, the Lebanese context and its patriarchal structure calls for rethinking the ability of women to choose whether and when to have children free of social or familial pressure, to own her body, desires and sexual choices: "We've seen a change in the discourse regarding violence, but this change didn't happen when it comes to sex. The matter of sexuality is still dismissed because of the religious aspect of society, even if the political system is supposedly democratic. Religious institutions regulate de facto the country, and the debate on the personal status law illustrates this."[62] This advocate for women's rights also noted how organisations drafting the law about family violence have avoided talking about marital rape. The early marriage issue is also left to religious institutions to handle. Another activist questioned the hegemony of queer organisations on sexuality, thus avoiding the debate about the relationship between patriarchy on women's bodies and on sexual minorities.

[62] Roundtable on "Let's Talk about Sex": Rethinking sexual rights and reproductive health programmes in Lebanon, Lebanon Support, October 6th, 2015.

4

Recommendations for action

To local actors

- Local needs assessments should be at the core of NGO programming.

- Local actors need to focus more on socio-economic rights as well as labour rights for women and minorities (sexual, ethnic etc) residing and working on the Lebanese territory.

- Local actors should change their approach of victimising women notably when it comes to sex/sexuality issues.

- NGOs should lobby the state asking for equal rights for women and minorities, as well as provision of basic services (SRHR services, day care services for children, to cite only a few).

- There is a need for collaboration between grassroots collectives and organisations so as to set a common agenda on, at least, consensual issues.

- There is a need for organisations and collectives to try to elaborate practical guidelines for local organisations/donors partnerships.

- Gender interventions should be able to balance between targeted interventions and more holistic ones, in a twin track approach.

To the state

- A public policy for local civil society actors should exist and public funding should be ensured for local organisations to ensure the sustainability of their work.

- Rights of women and sexual minorities are to be recognised by the state and in its laws.

To donors

- Donors need to be more attentive to local needs when designing their interventions.

- Donors need to be aware of the negative repercussions of fund hunt dynamics on local organisations and mitigate them through their practices.

- Donors can provide linkages between international agendas and local needs. They should take into account local contexts and needs when designing and fundraising for their own interventions.

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