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PATRIARCHY AND SECTARIANISM: A GENDERED TRAP

BASELINE OF WOMEN IN POLITICS: THE CASE OF LEBANON

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CHAPTER 6 – REVIEW OF DONOR PROGRAMS

In an effort to limit duplication of effort and promote learning from previous programs, this chapter looks at six donor programs that were implemented in the last five years and that sought to promote women's participation in politics. The following data and information was collected through a series of interviews and focus group conversations with representatives from the donor agency, as well as representatives from the implementing partner. The programs reviewed and discussed are:

	Name of Program	Date	Implementing Partner	Funders
1	"DAWRIC: Direct Action for Women:"	2016- Ongoing	British Council	European Union, British Council
2	"Strengthening women's participation in local governance and development" - Phase 1	January 2013- May 2015	MoSA	Office of Italian Development Aid
3	"Promotion of the role of political parties and trade unions in enhancing women's political participation"	2014	RDFL	EU, Oxfam Novib
4	"Promoting women's role in the political participation"	Early 2016 – ongoing	LOST	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
5	"LANA: Transformative Political Identities for Gender Equality in Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon"	End of 2015 – Early 2016	Oxfam, ABAAD, and CFUWI	OxFam, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
6	"Leadership Inside-Out Matters"	2015-2016	Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF)	Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF)

THE “DAWRIC” PROJECT

1. FUNDED AND IMPLEMENTED BY: The European Union and the British Council
2. IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: Late 2016 – Ongoing

DESCRIPTION: The British Council is currently implementing a two-year European Union funded project entitled DAWRIC (Direct Action for Women: Reform, Inclusion and Confidence). It aims to build the capacity of women and provide broad-based support for their active involvement in public life to:

- Combat poverty among Lebanese women
- Ensure gender equality in political life and decision-making processes

The DAWRIC project works to empower women to become actors of change by providing them with opportunities to benefit from various capacity building sessions in order to implement Social Action Projects that respond to the needs of their communities. The project activities focus on strengthening the capacity of women’s organizations to mobilize and advocate for change, in addition to assisting local authorities to address the needs of women, resulting in better access to livelihood opportunities and equality for women. A series of capacity building sessions are taking place in the four Lebanese governorates tackling different topics including gender sensitization, English language, vocational skills, media and communication, among others. DAWRIC provides municipalities and civil society organizations with the opportunity to establish women committees and to benefit from Social Action Projects. As a result of the British Council’s previous experience and success with the Women’s Participation in Public Life project, the project designers took the best practices and reapplied them.

CHALLENGES

- An inability to find a local partner to work with. Not having a local partner and being the only ones working on the implementation phase is a challenge
- Dealing with patriarchal ideals: There are instances where men in the municipalities initially wanted to work with the British Council then later on refused to accept projects related to women in politics. They explicitly said that they did not accept the idea of women getting to leadership positions
- Bureaucratic processes among donors, particularly when it comes to accessing funding and receiving feedback. Implementers complained about the long delay in receipts being accepted and refunded, this challenges their work as they need to issue payments and ensure procurement is happening

RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS LEARNED:

- For maximum effectiveness, it is recommended to choose local partners that are popular, known and/or liked in the area
- When choosing a local partner, it is recommended to be meticulous about their values and principles
- Communicate with other groups working on projects related to women in politics as to not duplicate work and to learn from each other's experiences, particularly with CSOs and NGOs
- Ensure proactive initiatives in order to find maximum efficiency when it comes to slow bureaucratic processes. It is also important to constantly follow up with the implementing partners
- Reach out to municipalities who are supportive of women's political participation; they can become allies and success stories to be used and given as examples in other regions
- Projects should not only focus on building the capacity of women, it is recommended to always have other incentives for participants

THE ‘PROMOTING WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT’ PROGRAM

1. FUNDED BY: The Office of Italian Development Aid
2. IMPLEMENTED BY: Ministry of Social Affairs in Lebanon
3. IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: Phase One took place January 2013-May 2015, the project then ceased for two years, Phase Two began in February 2017 and is still ongoing

DESCRIPTION

The Promoting Women’s Participation in Local Governance and Development project aims at strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) to reduce and deal with the social exclusion of women in Lebanon. It seeks to empower Lebanese women to have a more influential and continuous part in local governance, enabling them to participate actively and effectively in governance and thus increase their representation at decision-making levels and in public spheres. This is to be achieved through adoption of gender mainstreaming strategies at the ministerial level. It includes policies and plans and programs, which ensure the coherent, uniform and effective implementation at the local level through its national network of Social Development Centers (SDCs).

Specific outcomes of the project are:⁹⁹

- The enhancement of the understanding of gender concepts/mainstreaming
- To advocate for women’s participation in decision-making at the local and national levels
- To strengthen the capacities of women, particularly those who are politically active
- To promote women’s roles in politics and their implications on the national level

There were several aspects of this project that had successful outcomes, and that was reflected through the increased participation of women in municipal elections in 2015. The project also resulted in innovative ideas suggested by the women themselves and which were largely based on community needs. Another success was the ability to have women from different parties sit down together and work without tension and hostility.

CHALLENGES

- Resistance from local communities, as they were not supportive or encouraging of women’s participation in politics
- The challenge of recruiting independent women as opposed to

⁹⁹Ministry of Social Affairs. Promoting Women’s Participation in Local Governance and Development. Retrieved from: http://www.socialaffairs.gov.lb/admin/Uploads/296_2.pdf

partisan women

- Managing the expectations of the communities
- Sudden external factors that forced a redesign of the project: In this case, the parliamentary elections were postponed, so the focus had to be shifted to local elections
- Lack of transparency from the implementing partners, which necessitated greater monitoring and supervision, as well as more unplanned field days

RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS LEARNED

- Local communities, especially rural ones, need a lot of support and a lot of opportunities, the recommendation is to focus on small local communities when targeting women's participation in politics
- Avoid focusing on recruiting women who are affiliated with political parties, as this automatically excludes independent women who recently entered the field
- Encourage projects and programs that are flexible by nature
- Ensure awareness and mutual understanding of the objectives and timeline of the project
- Make sure the implementing team is extremely knowledgeable about the area, its politics and the type of conflicts prior to going to the field
- Avoid setting objectives related to information technology, websites and social media, as the resources are limited, unless the team can provide material assistance

THE ‘PROMOTION OF THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND TRADE UNIONS IN ENHANCING WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION’ study

1. FUNDED BY: EU, Oxfam Novib
2. IMPLEMENTED BY: The Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering
3. IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: 2014 – 2015.

DESCRIPTION:

The overall objective of the Regional Study about “Strengthening the role of political parties and trade unions in promoting women’s political participation” “” is to contribute to strengthening democratic practices and respect for human rights in five Arab countries through the promotion of equitable political participation for men and women. The project is funded by the European Union in partnership with Oxfam Novib and implemented in five Arab countries through the following organizations: Women’s Studies Center (Occupied Palestine Territory), Centre for Egyptian Women Legal assistance (Egypt), Arab Institute for Human Rights (Tunisia and Morocco), Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering (Lebanon). The transitions and democratic transformations stemming from the Arab revolutions have challenged the role of current political parties and prompted the creation of new ones. Similarly, existing political parties and trade unions have been offered the opportunity to revive their roles as platforms for socio-political change, and develop democratic political and social structures that are based on rights, in order to promote women’s effective participation, to shed light on their causes and to defend them. Therefore, this project aimed to:

- Promote and enhance the equal access and participation of women in political parties and trade unions, in addition to empowering and motivating women to become effective actors in the decision-making process
- Integrate gender equality principles within the work of political parties and trade unions
- Dismantle gender stereotypes
- Strengthen partnerships between women and men
- Create a support network among women and build regional and international alliances to face all the forms of abuse directed against them

Some of the individuals who participated in capacity building trainings also participated in the elections of their respective groups. A few individuals reached the politburo of their respective political parties through elections, and one in particular, Nawal Mdallaleh, whose election speech revolved around women’s rights and women’s political participation. Those who ran and did not attain leadership positions were still motivated to continue and try again. In addition, the discourse of some of the individual participants also

shifted following their participation in these workshops.

CHALLENGES

- The challenges of communication and taking appointments with different participants and relevant stakeholders
- Slow responses from both unions and political parties
- Safety and security threats, which in turn resulted risks for some of the participants and stopped them from participating
- The threat of the Syrian war and subsequent refugee presence influenced the willingness of some to participate
- Some parties would not allow their members to participate in trainings until they had gained approval
- Lack of continuity from some of the participants

RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS LEARNED

- Build good relationships with the different stakeholders in the community in order to work more effectively
- Approach is important, be diplomatic. Women's rights are a sensitive issue for certain groups, it is important to design the proposal in a way that is flexible and easy to adapt
- Engage journalists and the media on this topic. This will help with outreach. Media need to not only cover events, but also to feel responsible about their potential role. Only with such a degree of ownership will media be able to cover events more responsibly and to raise awareness.
- Focus on establishing a healthy relationship with the participants, while still managing expectations
- Reach out to a larger number of potential candidates than strictly required, to account for participants dropping out
- When designing the program, think about how to ensure continuity and guarantee that all participants finish the project for optimized results and impact
- Women's rights and issues are not a priority in Lebanese culture, when designing a project, the partners should take that into consideration
- Go to them. It is recommended to host meetings and events in areas that are familiar to the women, to make it easier for them to be mobile
- Have project documents ready, most parties and unions will ask for official letters and stamped faxes before they will approve for women of their group to join

THE ‘PROMOTING WOMEN’S ROLE IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION’ PROGRAM

1. FUNDED BY: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Lebanon
2. IMPLEMENTED BY: LOST, Lebanese Organization for Studies and Training
3. IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: 2016 - Ongoing

DESCRIPTION

The Promoting Women’s Role in the Political Participation project is working to raise the number of women active in politics, with a focus on the parliamentary and municipal elections, particularly in the Bekaa region. It targets 80 women and has organized workshops related to active citizenship, municipal work, human rights, needs assessment, campaigning, online forums, body language, rule of law, and other relevant topics. Those involved included individuals from political parties, mayors, and other stakeholders in Baalbek. They then continued with these women to help them become active in the election process, from nominations, to voting to holding election campaigns. There were three women who ran in the municipal elections. This was done independently without official and formal support from the implementing partners. It was the first time that five women ran for municipal elections in Baalbeck. 40 women out of the 80 were chosen to proceed to the second phase of the program.

CHALLENGES

- When an independent committee was working actively for this project the municipality kept postponing work related to the project
- Choosing the women was the first challenge. Women are often busy with family responsibilities and cannot commit for long periods of time
- The parliamentary elections were cancelled and so the objective of the project was not entirely fulfilled
- The women faced challenges as the municipality did not take them seriously, but they persisted and were able to run
- The patriarchal mentality was a real challenge, there was difficulty in convincing communities that women can participate in politics

RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS LEARNED

- Include both men and women in the trainings, it will have a bigger impact in the community
- Provide transportation and space that is relatively close to the women to ensure their participation
- Allow the participants opportunities to work with their local communities and neighbors for stronger impact
- It is important for the participants to realize that it is not only about winning, but also about participating in the entire political process

- Work with the Ministry of Education, to shift education material to include concepts of women's participation
- Be ready to have difficult and challenging conversations with individuals that represent the patriarchal structure you are trying to fight
- Work with political parties for maximum effectiveness on the ground
- Have a budget for work with the media, the media is an ally in this kind of projects
- Design programs that take into account women's potential lack of self-confidence and self-motivation
- Adapt your programs to the needs of the women, when they are available to meet, find locations close to their homes, etc., perhaps even consider securing space for children

THE LANA PROGRAM

1. FUNDED BY: OxFam, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2. IMPLEMENTED BY: OxFam, CFWI, ABAAD
3. IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: End of 2015 – Early 2016

DESCRIPTION

The LANA project followed a change maker model, where the idea was to establish a group, or hub supportive of women's rights, which would then have a snowball effect in communities. Unfortunately, the program lasted for only two years instead of five (phase 1 without phase 2) due to limited funding. The project sought to address the “increasing level of women’s disempowerment and lack of participation in social, economic and political spheres” and in particular, the perception of women’s roles, power and control, and governance systems. The project focused on building a base of male and female change-makers, to work in their respective communities to raise awareness of gender roles and women’s political participation, thus driving change one individual at a time; this would in turn increase women’s political participation by bringing men and women together and empowering them to advocate for increased political participation among women.

CHALLENGES

- Donors are output driven and want to be cost-effective in a way that can limit the scope of the work, particularly with the need to constantly seek approval for small issues or details
- Lack of motivation and follow up from the project implementers
- Resistance from local communities to foreign funding and programs
- Coalitions are very challenging to manage
- The inability to ensure funding for the second phase of project
- The Syrian War hindering the importance of women’s issues

RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS LEARNED

- Take into consideration the discrepancies between participants when giving trainings and workshops
- Design projects such that the implementing partner is able to fully-implement it independently
- Include local partners in the design of the project
- Learn about the context and specificity of the community before starting the project
- Learn about other programs working on similar objectives

THE “LEADERSHIP INSIDE-OUT MATTERS” PROGRAM

1. FUNDED BY AND IMPLEMENTED BY: Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF)
2. IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: 2015-2016

DESCRIPTION

FNF is a political foundation that works with political parties. This project aimed at working with the Future Movement’s women’s committee. The initial plan was to discuss liberalism and liberal politics with the women; the project then transitioned slowly and began to work on women’s role in politics.

CHALLENGES

- Managing expectations: Lack of clarity among the participants about the project objectives and details
- Time is a constraint, especially given the familial responsibilities that require the women to leave earlier than the trainings were scheduled to end

RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS LEARNED

- Always recruit new women, women who haven’t had access to similar opportunities before
- Be clear about the expectations and goals of the project
- Allow space for the interaction and participation of the targeted audience in the design, women know what they lack
- Target women from both rural and urban areas
- The target group should include women from all economic classes, especially from the lower economic class, as it is they with the least access to opportunities and who can least afford it
- Choose your participants, the fewer the better, then the team can observe change and monitor impact
- Invest in programs that target education and culture

ANNEX I – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMS

In addition to studying and analyzing the challenges hindering women's advancement and participation in politics, the research team looked into recommendations for future programs seeking to promote women's participation in the public and private sphere. The following recommendations are drawn from the analysis of findings, in brief:

- Complement the efforts pushing for quotas for women's participation
- Design capacity building programs for potential female candidates
- Fund projects and programs to promote the number and quality of female candidates
- Train political parties and unions and help design internal electoral systems mandating that all voters select women from among the available candidates (if placing a quota in the bylaws is not possible)
- Fund and demand media appearances for women discussing politics
- When selecting female participants for programs, disseminate the information through female networks and not through the heads or executives of the political parties and unions
- Assist political parties and unions in designing and adopting internal anti-harassment policies
- Support women's committees in political parties and unions, when they exist, with resources to influence decision-making, design political agendas for women's rights, have more visibility within the party structure, and to address other issues they may face
- Assist political parties and unions in designing and adopting clear and transparent rules to ensure internal democracy, with specific attention to gender equality