

JULY 2022



IMPACT REPORT

2021-2022

GPGF - LEBANON
WINNING WITH WOMEN PROJECT
PORTICUS

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ABOUT WINNING WITH WOMEN

This technical programme works on supporting women's access to local politics and decision-making positions, gaining experience and credibility as leaders in their communities. Campaigning and winning municipal elections provides women with solid foundations for future national-level political roles

A WORD FROM OUR DIRECTOR

I want to thank the brilliant 47 women of our Winning with Women programme. Women coming from all over Lebanon, North, South, East, West, from different backgrounds and walks of life. All of them incredible activists and leaders within their own communities. Seeing their commitment, their courage, and their creativity makes us believe in a bright future for Lebanon.

We had the incredible fortune to visit several of our female candidates and such a diverse range of projects they have built, all with the common aim of helping people – women and men, boys and girls – and improving their local communities in their daily lives, and this is what we mean by politics in this project.

We have worked with many women during our project so far. At one point we started to hear the same comment from many of the women, they said we are ready, but what about the men who still dominate politics and public spaces? So, we realised we could no longer have a conversation about women's political participation without having men in the room.

This couldn't be possible without the entire GPGF team including our inspirational Lebanese Associates; and Porticus, especially our Programme Manager Sara Habachi for her interest, analysis, enthusiasm, and support.

Winning With Women – looking ahead to the next phase!



SUMMARY

The impact report shows how the Winning With Women project has benefited local communities in Lebanon through its impact on participants.

1. Creating networks

2. Nurturing confidence

3. Fostering local change

4. Transforming masculinities

5. Adapting to the needs

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CREATING NETWORKS

A system of like-minded women candidates who are eager to share learnings through their communities

The WWW project has brought together women from a range of different backgrounds, sects, social classes, beliefs, ages, and political affiliations... Understanding the common and differing barriers facing women in various regions was frequently cited as one of the most enriching experiences for the participants.

73.2% of participants declared having built a network of allies, which is still active today and will go on to be of great benefit to the women during the challenging days of their campaigns.

These networks also developed out beyond the project's beneficiaries as some candidates organised cascading trainings on women political participation in their own communities.

Our participants reflect on working with groups of like-minded women and the benefits and strengths of building networks for women in politics.



59,4 %
of the participants would share their learnings into their communities

NURTURING CONFIDENCE

68% OF PARTICIPANTS SAID THEY GAINED CONFIDENCE DURING THE PROJECT

Dr. Mona Akel, municipal council member in the municipality of Alay, discusses the importance of nurturing confidence in women to empower them to enact change.



Women candidates are already hard-working and visible members of their communities. Several of them are engaged in providing public services through local NGOs. For years, they have spent time understanding the needs of their communities and building initiatives to respond to issues.

The work of GPGF has focused on transferring these skills to the political domain, and creating self-confidence for those women whose voices should be legitimately heard. Recognition is an essential driver for their political ambition. The continuous support of our local Associates to raise the candidates' awareness of their own potential has been vital.

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FOSTERING LOCAL CHANGE

Our participants discuss local change and their involvement in the programme.



We are currently thinking about the possibility of installing solar energy system to provide power to all appliances with minimum cost. Because of the difficult conditions, we aim to enable those who want to use this centre, to use it without paying any fees

Mona A, Project participant

Supporting women in Lebanon at the municipal level means, by extension, supporting the initiatives they are implementing in their communities. Initiatives which have increased in value in the face of the multiple economic and political crises facing the country.

Many of our project participants have designed and implemented initiatives in their communities, responding to specific needs and lack of state intervention in particular areas.

Rasha opened a safe space for homeless orphans in Tripoli, with a psychological assistance and a specific training for police staff to teach them how to behave and react with children.

Mona in Alay, opened a cultural centre with multiple activities as well as a computing room which is used by the youth of the area to get specific trainings and look for jobs.

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TRANSFORMING MASCULINITIES

"Men are major partners and supporters of women in politics, and a society and a nation does not rise without participation and alliance"

Project participant statement, post-survey training

Our Male Allies explain their experience supporting women and how taking part to the programme changed their vision of women's political engagement.



Masculinity in the Lebanese society is often being expressed at the expense of women. In politics, this **patriarchal system** translates into, not only gender-specific barriers, but also discrimination and even violence against women.

In this context, being able to **identify and enrol male allies** to support them in their campaigns is crucial for the future women candidates. The WWW project has sought to gather men and women together to facilitate conversations around these gendered issues, and to **stimulate partnerships in a safe space where synergies would be unleashed** to find solutions for their communities.

The new methodology has shown that it is time to make a change in gender programming and integrate men as they are often the power-holders. The male project participants have recognised they started thinking differently about having women leaders by being involved in practical activities with them.

ADAPTING TO THE NEEDS

Moataz Ghaddar, Local Coordinator

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How did you manage to respond to the needs of the four groups, which are so different?

The most significant difference was between rural areas and urban areas. The same concepts and skills were developed, but based on our expertise and our knowledge of the needs of each region, we illustrated them with different examples in each group, with case studies that took place in the corresponding region. We also had online reflection meetings after the workshops to collect feedback and prepare the next topics. The material used and discussed was tailored to the participants' comments, meaning that a specific element could be mentioned in one group only as per their request.

What was the most useful tool to understand the participants?

The most useful tool was bonding and building strong relationships with the participants. In fact, the "trust" we established was the secret driving element behind the openness and the candid discussions that we had. The women felt free to talk about their weaknesses without being judged. Reassurance that they were speaking with an ally, combined with their trust in our expertise, allowed them to confidently ask about issues they would not have brought up otherwise.

What are the key lessons learned for implementing such projects in Lebanon?

*First, providing the participants with transportation allowance was essential to the project's success, especially with the difficult economic context and the soaring prices of fuel. This gave the participants a sense of independence to attend the training sessions. Second, integrating male allies, which has been compared to walking on a minefield, is an essential step forward in programming. Despite the hindrances faced in regions dominated by strong masculinities, the male participants' attendance proves the strong impact of the project. Strong bonds were formed between the allies and the women participants. **In Baalbek, a party coordinator supported a woman in her policy project and promised to support her campaign. In Beirut, a male candidate leading a list formed an alliance with two participants.***

*Finally, having created a network of women revealed its importance and proved to be a success. They considered themselves a "committee" sharing their problems, ideas and projects. **A policy developed in the Beirut group was adopted by a participant who is part of a municipal council in Alay. The next step is to link the Beirut and Alay Municipalities through one public transport policy.***

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ADVANCING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN LEBANON انجح مع النساء تعزيز المشاركة السياسية للمرأة في لبنان

CONCLUSIONS AND AMBITIONS

Through Winning With Women, GPGF has started building a pool of women candidates for the municipal elections in Lebanon, currently scheduled for May 2023.

In the lead-up to the elections, there is still significant support to be provided to these women who are fighting to break the social, political, and economic barriers they face in Lebanon.

We hope to be on their side to lead this battle and to promote this new generation of leaders for a new Lebanon.

