



WINNING WITH
WOMEN
انجح مع النساء

WINNING WITH WOMEN

GPGF - PORTICUS
IMPACT REPORT 2024

ABOUT WINNING WITH WOMEN

Winning With Women is a Porticus-funded programme delivered in partnership with the [Lebanese Organization for Studies and Training](#). It works with a group of aspiring women candidates and their male allies to enhance women's access to local politics and decision-making positions in Lebanon. Global Partners Governance Foundation (GPGF) delivers skill-building activities in Beirut, Baalbek, Beqaa, and Saida. This support takes the shape of in-person training sessions, one-on-one mentoring, online engagement, and bespoke guidebooks and resources put together by our expert Associates.

We aim to help our women candidates and their supporters gain experience and credibility as leaders in their communities, to support their possible election to municipal levels, and to grow their ability to lead and mobilise within their communities. We work with influential men at the local and community level to establish male allies who will openly support and endorse our women participants in public and political life.

This year, the women participants transitioned from learners to leaders. They took the initiative to drive some of the project's activities, drawing on the skills and knowledge they gained from previous phases. To reflect this growth, our approach prioritised practical experience over solely relying on workshops and training session, which culminated in a successful study visit to one of the most effectively operating municipalities in Lebanon.

“ I HAVE BEEN WITH GPG AND THE WINNING WITH WOMEN PROGRAM FOR FOUR YEARS. [...] EACH TIME WE PARTICIPATE IN ANY ACTIVITY, WE RETURN WITH A BAG FULL OF INFORMATION AND NEW KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO AREAS WHERE WE HAVE GAPS, HELPING US TO RUN FOR THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

WARDA EL ROUMI - BEQAA GROUP



A WORD FROM OUR PROJECT MANAGER



The Winning with Women (WWW) project has been a remarkable journey of perseverance, collaboration, and adaptation. Thanks to the trust and ongoing support of our funders and partners, we were privileged to have this project renewed over the past four years. This continuity enabled us to capture, document, evaluate, and support the impacts we envisioned at the project's outset.

In the early stages, we began with a group of aspiring women candidates who sought to overcome barriers to political participation. Over time, male allies joined the initiative, initially motivated by their connection to specific women candidates. Through consistent project support from both the GPGF and LOST teams, and expertise shared by national and international Associates, a substantial transformation was achieved. Today, these male allies have transitioned into advocates for the broader cause of women's leadership, championing systemic change rather than focusing solely on individual candidates.

Along the iteration of the project phases, one major recurring challenge has been the postponement of municipal elections, which undeniably affected the plans of both the project and the candidates. Despite this, our mentors' strong belief in our mission and the perseverance of the candidates helped us mitigate the impact of this setback. Together, we maintained momentum by setting achievable objectives and goals, ensuring the programme concluded successfully despite these uncertainties.

The security situation in Lebanon, particularly with the recent tragic war, presented an even greater challenge. Ensuring the safety of participants and staff became a top priority. To address this, we adopted an emergency response plan developed by our local partner, LOST. This plan included situational assessments, evacuation strategies, and ongoing safety evaluations for activity locations and travel routes, ensuring the continuity of our work without compromising the well-being of those involved.

Through these challenges, the WWW project has not only persevered but evolved into a resilient and impactful initiative. It has demonstrated the power of collective effort and the unyielding commitment of individuals striving for a common goal—empowering women to take their rightful place in political leadership.

Moataz Ghaddar, Project Manager



CONTENTS

4 **SOME HIGHLIGHTS**

8 **SUSTAINABILITY**

11 **THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

SOME HIGHLIGHTS

The Training of Trainers programme

We believe it is essential to equip our participants with the skills and confidence to share and replicate their knowledge outside of the boundaries of the Winning with Women programme. To that end, with the support of our local Associate and expert Nizar Rammal, we delivered a series of Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions.



The workshops focused on tools and best practice for training others, structuring sessions, and the challenges particular to the context of women in politics. We also presented the participants with roleplay prompts and exercises to familiarise themselves with interaction scenarios and the sort of questions frequently asked in training. We adopted an intentionally holistic approach to help participants build a comprehensive toolkit to enhance their capacities as trainers and advocates.

True to themselves, the participants enthusiastically engaged with the training and shared their remarkable knowledge and experience, drawing from their expertise in their respective fields. This made for a rich exchange and discussions that surpassed GPG's planning.

“I’VE ATTEMPTED TO LEAD TRAINING SESSIONS IN THE PAST, BUT I ALWAYS FELT THAT I LACKED CERTAIN SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE [...]. THIS TRAINING WAS TRULY REMARKABLE BECAUSE IT ADDRESSED ALL THE AREAS I FELT WERE LACKING.

WARDA EL ROUMI - BEQAA GROUP”

Throughout the workshop, the women collaborated to design numerous mock training events covering a wide range of topics relevant to their circumstances. By the end of the last session, they delivered detailed training proposals and material centred around a variety of topics, such as electoral law, voter contact, campaign volunteers, and more.

Many participants expressed newfound confidence and drive to take it upon themselves to organise and lead training sessions for the women within the network, leveraging their diversity of backgrounds and skills. The training workshop served as a catalyst for the participants' expertise and motivation and as a stepping stone for their future knowledge-sharing.

The study visit

The growth in knowledge and confidence we observed in our participants in this fourth year of implementation pushed us to adapt our delivery. We sought to present them with new activities that would go further than just training workshops. To that end, we organised a large study visit to Kfardibian, which is one of the most successful municipalities of Lebanon, as well as the locality of our Associate Josephine Zgheib.



“YOU NATURALLY START COMPARING HER MUNICIPALITY WITH YOUR OWN, SEEING WHERE THEY SUCCEEDED. IT WAS VERY INFLUENTIAL FOR ALL THE ATTENDEES, ESPECIALLY FOR ME.

REINE YAGHI - BEIRUT GROUP”

Josephine shared insights into the council and the critical contributions by women to municipal governance. She outlined strategy and priorities for the board, and facilitated discussions with local government officials, including the municipal treasurer, the secretary, and the mayor, as well as with local industry leaders and community representatives. Our participants made the most of these networking opportunities, and the conversations instigated during the visit laid the groundwork for potential fruitful collaborations and partnerships.

“THIS PROJECT HAS STRENGTHENED THE BONDS AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE WOMEN AND MEN PARTICIPANTS. [...] WE DISCUSSED [JOSEPHINE'S] EXAMPLE TO MAKE WOMEN INFLUENTIAL IN SOCIETY AND IN ANY DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES.

DR ALI HAJ HASAN - MALE ALLY, BAALBEK GROUP”

The Lebanese Red Cross also led a session on community mobilisation in crises and emergency planning. The session shared insights in navigating disaster, and risks, understanding the elements of IRR, and the importance of preparedness and prevention. It also shared guidelines for emergency response, contingency planning, early warning systems, and the roles of various entities in disaster risk management, providing a thorough understanding of effective crisis response and planning.

The participants came out of the visit excited about the knowledge gained and happy for the opportunity to meet and network with each other. The event aimed to empower them to replicate the lessons learned in Kfardibian in their own communities and to encourage them to exchange about their own local experiences and solutions. Crucially, the visit showcased successful instances of women’s participation to local governance and confirmed that the programme’s principles hold true in practice.

Mentoring

This year, we provided mentoring for 18 aspiring women candidates, of which 4 are already municipal council members. This was a continuation of the support we provided in the previous year, with similar objectives, including:

- Communication, lobbying, and personal branding
- Defining their vision and strategy
- Community engagement
- Navigating municipal councils

We built on our learning from the previous phase and mentees to select their mentors and introduced new mentors to the programme based on the needs expresses by our participants.

We supported the mentees to build their session facilitation and chairing skills, and some mentee/mentor pairings worked towards developing training sessions for the project’s women participants and male allies in order to empower the mentees to share their knowledge and skills with confidence.



Putting training into practice

In July 2024, we gathered the women and male allies of all four of the project's regions for a conference in Beirut. This was the culmination of a year of sustained support provided to the project's potential candidates through training and one-on-one mentoring, which saw them grow from learners to leaders.

The conference began with a series of panel discussion which addressed the ramifications of the postponement of the municipal elections from the combined perspectives of two parliamentary and municipal officials, a male ally, and an organisational body: local Associate and MP Dr. Halimah Kaakour, local Associate and Vice Mayor of Kfardibian's municipality Josephine Zgheib, local Associate and advocate for women's political participation Nizar Rammal, and the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections' Chair Ammar Aboud.

The discussion was moderated by potential candidate Rouba Makarem, drawing on principles she'd gathered from her involvement with the programme, and which she later described as an overwhelmingly positive experience.

“ I FEEL THAT I SUCCEEDED IN THIS SESSION, WHICH ADDS TO MY PRIDE AND CONFIDENCE IN BEING PART OF A PROGRAMME THAT HIGHLIGHTS THE STRENGTHS OF INDIVIDUALS.

ROUBA MAKAREM - BEIRUT GROUP ”

Three training sessions were then delivered by potential women candidates of the project to the remaining women candidates and male allies. The three trainers drew on knowledge they acquired in our ToT workshops and one-on-one mentoring. The sessions were met with a lot of enthusiasm from the audience, who asked the trainers to deliver them again in their respective municipalities.

This was the first time that the women in the project took the lead in our activities. The clear success of each event is proof that they were fully equipped to begin driving sessions of their own, and to take this skill into their own communities.

SUSTAINABILITY

A central goal of the Winning with Women programme is sustainability. It is essential to us to equip our participants with the skills and knowledge they need to keep implementing the training's recommendations even without GPGF's input, and that they are able to replicate the sessions in their own municipalities and communities. For that reason, our planning and delivery is very purposefully catered towards empowering our participants, boosting their expertise and confidence, and encouraging them to take initiatives both within and outside the project.

Cascading knowledge



This was a key driver behind the development of our Training of Trainers component this year. In previous phases of the project, the participants had reported that they appreciated how the different iterations of the training built on top of each other; to then empower the project's women to own the training's knowledge and share it with their networks was the next logical step. We worked to share practical and applicable advice on organising and delivering training events, and we monitored knowledge retention coming out of the ToT sessions.

Twenty women from the program have successfully conducted training sessions beyond the project's scope, addressing topics like municipal law, gender-based violence, life skills, and community engagement. These sessions targeted diverse groups, including rural women, displaced women, youth, older individuals, and community leaders, demonstrating their ability to drive positive change and contribute to local development in various contexts.

Mentoring booklet

Drawing on our experiences of the mentoring programme, with the support of our Associates we produced a mentoring booklet, a key resource for sustaining the project's impact in favour of women's political empowerment in Lebanon.

The resource covers the key definitions and concepts of mentoring, its benefits and importance, as well as the challenges that may arise in political mentoring, and strategies to address them. It also provides a step-by-step guide for designing mentorship programmes, and a practical framework for building successful mentoring relationships. It is a comprehensive resource that aims to serve as a valuable tool for mentors, mentees, and organisations working in the political context.



By making this adaptable and replicable resource widely accessible, the mentoring booklet enables the project's participants to apply its recommendations in their own circles and extend Winning With Women's impact beyond our initial network.

Male allies

Early in the design phase of the programme, it became evident that our mission could not solely focus on women, but that sustainable impact came from addressing attitudes among those who hold power. In the context of Lebanon's political landscape, those power-holder are men.

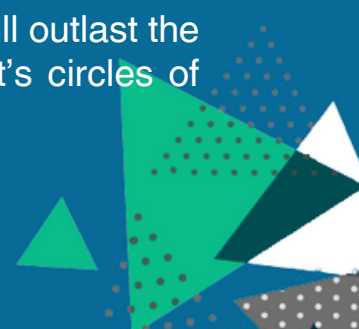
We decided to make engagement with and support from male allies an integral component of our approach. We identified male politicians, decision makers, and community leaders who showed willingness to drive change, and delivered training sessions to sensitise them to the issues and challenges women face in politics and public life. We invited the male allies to join workshops and events held for our women participants. This was an opportunity for them to converse and to learn directly from the lived experience of women. Early on, these male allies reported strong changes to their attitudes and quickly grew into advocates for women's representation in their own circles of influence.

We later recruited some of the male allies to mentor our potential women candidates and share their own insight and expertise to support their mentees' political journey. This fostered a close relationship between the men and women of our mentoring programme and only bolstered the male allies' faith in our participants' potential. Commenting on his mentee, one of our mentors said:

“ THE WOMAN I AM SUPPORTING IN HER POLITICAL JOURNEY HAS FAR SURPASSED ME.

BILLAL SLEIMAN, MALE ALLY AND MENTOR ”

As the project continues, we are proud of the way our male allies have worked to expand their viewpoints and leverage their power to support women's access to politics. We are confident that this change in attitude will outlast the project's lifetime and will have echoes across all our participant's circles of influence.



Women's Network

While we designed our intervention to foster networking and conversation between our participants, the relationships built between the project's women exceeded our hopes. In between in-person sessions, the participants have taken to remaining in contact, checking up on each other, and sharing advice, support, and resources to contribute to their respective personal or professional needs. This is especially remarkable when accounting for the diversity of women represented in our programme: the Winning With Women's network surpasses sectarian, political, and geographical divides.

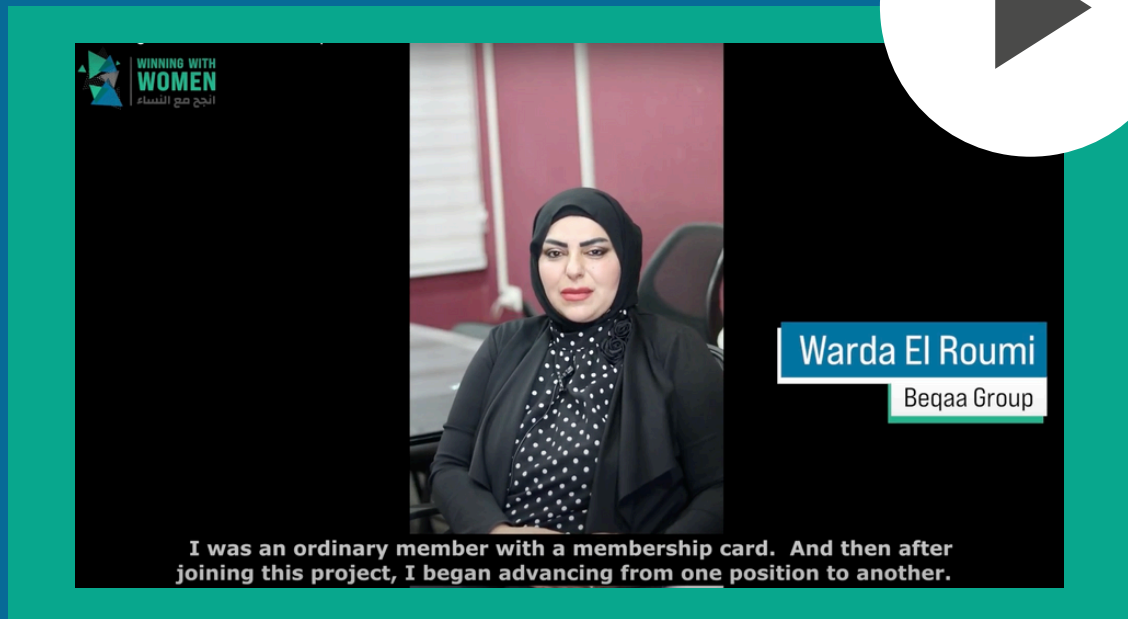


“ IT IS MORE THAN JUST TRAINING THAT WE ARE RECEIVING. [...] MY HAPPINESS IS IMMENSE FROM MEETING THE WOMEN FROM ALMOST ALL REGIONS AND THE FACT THAT WE BECAME GOOD FRIENDS. PAULA ATALLAH - BEIRUT GROUP ”

During the war, participants displayed remarkable leadership by stepping up to volunteer and initiate efforts within their communities, political parties, civil society organisations, and municipalities. Each contributed their time, expertise, and connections to support displaced individuals and aid in responding to the tragic crisis.

“ WE STARTED MEETING OUTSIDE THE TRAININGS, WORKING ON PROJECTS TOGETHER. WHENEVER ONE OF US ACHIEVED SUCCESS IN HER TOWN, WE WOULD VISIT AND CHECK IT OUT, AND IF IT WAS APPLICABLE TO OUR TOWN, WE WOULD TRY AND IMPLEMENT IT IN OUR OWN MUNICIPALITIES.

REINE YAGHI – BEIRUT GROUP ”




THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout the programme, the unwavering enthusiasm and commitment of our participants kept alive its momentum and impact. The dedication they showed to the workshops and training sessions as well as their proactive engagement outside of the programme's training days multiplied its reach and fostered the growth of an inspiring network of committed women.

We are delighted and proud to witness the transformation undertaken by our participants, and to observe the clear increase in confidence that has occurred this year and led them to take initiative across our programme and beyond. The project's ambition was always to empower our participants to become leaders in their own communities and circles. This goal is reaching fruition, and we look forward to continuing to support the women of the project in their political journey.

The Winning with Women programme has reached an exciting equilibrium: there is still more to do, while at the same time the participants are displaying a shift in attitude and are drawing on GPGF' training to converse, create, and work amongst themselves to bring about the change they want to see in their communities. Our role now is to feed this momentum and to collaborate with the project's women to address their needs and questions as they come along, and be ready when the elections do take place.



We are particularly grateful to our Associates and mentors, Dr Halimah Kaakour, Dr Josephine Zgheib, Vicky Zwein, and Nizar Rammal for their support, their expertise, and their time. Their advice and knowledge remain an invaluable resource throughout the delivery of the Winning With Women project.

We are also grateful to our funder Porticus for allowing this programme to happen and the trust they place in our team, as well as to our local partner, the Lebanese Organization for Studies and Training (LOST), whose steadfast support has been instrumental in facilitating our work, especially in the Baalbek and Beqaa regions. We are excited to continue collaborating with them to keep promoting women's political representation and engagement in Lebanon.

We also extend our thanks for the Lebanese Red Cross for the workshop they led on Emergency Planning and Crises Management, the Municipality of Kfardibain and Auberge Beity who hosted us during our study visit, and to SMEX for delivering an Online Security Training to our participants.



@gpgovernance
@WinningWWomen



gpgovernance.net



@gpgovernance
@winningwithwomenlb



[gp-governance](https://www.linkedin.com/company/gp-governance)

