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**POST PROJECT EVALUATION  
FOR THE  
UNITED NATIONS DEMOCRACY FUND**

**EVALUATION REPORT**

**UDF-16-707-LEB**  
**Towards strengthening fair legislation for women affected by sexual violence and  
exploitation in Lebanon**

**24-04-2020**



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**Disclaimer**

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluator. They do not represent those of UNDEF or any of the institutions referred to in the report.

All errors and omissions remain the responsibility of the authors.

**Authors**

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## I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

### **(i) Project data**

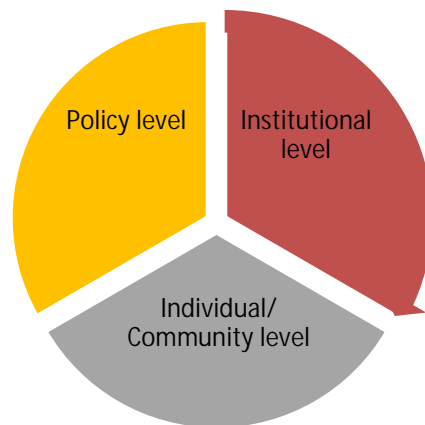
The project “Towards strengthening fair legislation for women affected by sexual violence and exploitation in Lebanon” started on 15 January 2018 and was originally planned to end 14 July 2019. Although designed for a period of 18 months, it was extended for 4 months. Therefore, the end date of the project was 31 October 2019.

With a total grant of USD 220,000 it was implemented by ABAAD– Resource Center for Gender Equality.

This project is a continuation of ABAAD's legal reform and public campaigning efforts started in 2016 to ensure women and girls are legally protected from sexual and gender-based violence.

The project worked on three levels: the individual/community, the institutional, and the policy level. It had two major objectives: (i) creating an enabling environment for women-survivors of sexual violence by empowering women to develop a community-based and context-specific Information and Education Communication (IEC) tool, and to lead peer-to-peer awareness and sensitization sessions, and (ii) strengthening fair legislation through capacity building with security providers, advocacy meetings with key actors in the field of protection of women and girls from violence, and a regional conference with women’s rights organizations.

The project intervenes through different levels, aimed at reaching the following groups of beneficiaries:



The main outcomes identified in the Project Document were:

**Outcome 1:**

Women and men from both refugee and host communities (including university students, right-holders and the general public) are actively engaged in campaigning against sexual exploitation and rape-marriage laws in Lebanon.

**Outcome 2:**

Key decision makers in Lebanon are actively engaged in efforts to effectively and fairly implement the amended penal code after the abolition of article 522 in the Lebanese Penal Code.

**Outcome 3:**

Increase in knowledge for advocacy efforts among Women Rights activists with regard to rape laws in the MENA region through regional discussions and coordination.

***(ii) Evaluation Findings***

ABAAD have an intricate internal strategy leading a targeted, methodical and tactical intervention in a complex and dynamic socio-political context like that of Lebanon. **The activities of this project were fully in line with the objectives set out in the internal strategic plan of ABAAD, ensuring utmost consistency with all of the organization's projects.**

ABAAD's success rests on the deep understanding of the context and the different factors influencing the change process at the political, institutional and community levels, as well as the adoption of a solid political strategy that ensures synergy and



## II. PROJECT CONTEXT AND STRATEGY

### (i) *Development context*

#### Regional context

“Rape marriage” laws that exempt the rapist from punishment if they marry the victim are considered to be among the most harmful and discriminatory laws against women in the Mena region. During the last years, civil society and human rights’ organizations in Arab countries lead a regional campaign against these “rape laws”.

In 2014, Morocco abolished similar legislation after the suicide of an adolescent girl forced to marry her rapist in 2012. In July 2017, Tunisia abolished the article 227a after a national campaign against the marriage of a 13-year-old girl with her 20-year-old rapist who made her pregnant. In August 2017, the Jordanian Parliament repealed the rape law.

#### Focus on Lebanon

Violence against women in Lebanon is still widespread and systemic, with a legal framework that contains certain discriminatory provisions against women, especially the rape marriage article. In 2016, ABAAD led a nation-wide campaign aiming to abolish rape marriage laws, namely article 522 of the Lebanese Penal Code. The advocacy efforts led to the decision of the Parliamentary Justice and Administration Committee to abolish article 522 on 16 December 2016, and the Lebanese Parliament formally abolished article 522 of the Penal Code on 16 August 2017.

### (ii) *Project objective and intervention rationale*

#### Problem statement

Generally, law amendment or abolishment does not automatically result in effective and fair implementation. Thus, the abolition of article 522 in Lebanon wouldn’t be effective without tackling the existing survivor-blaming norms, and increasing awareness and knowledge about women’s rights and GBV at both the institutional and community levels.

In this respect, the project based its strategy on three main areas of intervention:

#### **Influence public opinion or community beliefs**

- Organize 4 community engagement workshops (of 5 sessions each) with 10 women survivors of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in each (a total of 40 women) to engage them in identifying the key messages that should be communicated through the development of an Information and Education Communication (IEC) tool;



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## Logical Framework Matrix

***Outcome1: Women and men from both refugee and host communities (including university students, right-holders and the general public) are actively engaged in campaigning against sexual exploitation and rape-marriage laws in Lebanon.***

Output 1.1: Relevant and culturally sensitive IEC tools developed.

1.1.1: Organize four community engagement workshops with 40 women

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### ***(i) Purpose and objectives of the evaluation***

This evaluation is intended to assist UNDEF with devising future projects and with project-short listing for future funding rounds by building on the experience, achievements and lessons learned from project implementation, and to propose recommendations for continued interventions.

Moreover, it aims to:

- Answer the mean evaluation criteria;
- Capture lessons learned and best practices from the implementation of the project; and
- Provide clear recommendations for future UNDEF interventions.

The evaluation rationale was inspired by the ‘People-Centred Evaluation’ (PCE) approach and conducted in accordance with the Norms and Standards for Evaluations developed by the United Nations Evaluation Group and the OECD criteria of evaluation.

It took place from February to April 2020, with the fieldwork in Lebanon conducted from 24 to 29 February, and the evaluator reviewed available project documentation and contextual/background materials prior to the field trip (**Annex 2**). The schedule was set by the ABAAD team, it included workshop participants, consultants, facilitators, religious leaders, ABAAD team program officers, and ABAAD’s senior management.

The evaluation was carried out in a very participative manner with the ABAAD team, all available project staff were interviewed, and a final debriefing was held at ABAAD’s Lebanon office.

The evaluation methodology aimed to seed the evaluation thinking within ABAAD’s team members and to empower them to capture main lessons learned by themselves.

For the evaluator, the contribution of the ABAAD team was considerable, thanks to their availability and significant involvement in arranging and facilitating meetings, and to their input in contributing to and discussing feedback on the most important conclusions and lessons learned.

This made it possible to target and approach key stakeholders and to cross opinions from different participants in the different project phases so as to finally have a contextualized and realistic vision on what was achieved through the project, how the program generated and contributed to change, and what lessons were learned to improve programming and empower ABAAD’s capacity.

The evaluator was able to hold focus groups with direct beneficiaries in Jbail, but it was difficult to reach beneficiaries who participated in the full process of creating the IEC tools.

#### ***(ii) Limitations of the evaluation***

**Limited time to conduct field work:** The fieldwork timeframe was relatively tight given the very tense political context in Lebanon, the unavailability of several stakeholders, and the absence of the implementation team, with one passing away and the other being on travel abroad. The mission did however go very smoothly, thanks to the invaluable support of the ABAAD team in coordinating meetings and facilitating contact with beneficiaries.



exploitation in Lebanon, is very relevant and fully meets the needs of target groups. The project is also part of the continuity of extensive advocacy and communication work started by the organization since 2016.

At the time of starting the project, the Lebanese parliament abolished the law and ended the amnesty for rape through marriage on August 17, 2018. The organization and the UNDEF decided to keep the same project activities, assuming that the abolition of Article 522 in Lebanon would not be effective without addressing the existing norms of survivor-blame and without raising awareness and knowledge of women's rights and gender-based violence at the institutional and community level. Despite the change, the project remained very relevant and in line with the needs of target groups.

In examining the relevance of the project, the evaluator distinguished between two levels of analysis: (i) the relevance of project activities in relation to the continuity of ABAAD's intervention strategy through different projects, including that of UNDEF -as discussed in the internal coherence section-, and (ii) the relevance of project activities for the achievement of a specific objective at the time of the intervention.

For the former, project activities are deemed to be valid and greatly relevant, and to be part of a political and systemic change logic. This is despite the absence, in the ABAAD strategic plan, of smart indicators to capture the results of each intervention and to illustrate the proposed scheme of change over time.

For the latter, project activities were diverse and focusing on several levels, including community, institutional, and political levels, and did not revolve around a clear theory of change. It was therefore difficult to demonstrate the relevance of certain activities, such as (i) the regional conference which brought together 10 women's rights activists from the MENA region to share lessons learned on changing adv1 (th)(h)- (m)2.6 (e)106 (e)10(a)-2 (n)

The implementing agency, ABAAD, showed a significant capacity of mobilization, with a high rate of engagement in activities and a large audience reached through the various advocacy campaigns. Overall, the project met all its targets in relation to the number of participants, trainees, and community members reached through advocacy campaigns.

On the other hand, and since 2011, ABAAD has demonstrated substantial mastery of the Lebanese legal framework and continues to gain profound expertise on campaigning and advocacy for women rights using innovative communication tools and wholistic inclusive approaches. This expertise instigated the success of the novel approaches to engage women survivors of sexual and gender-based violence who participated in the creation of IEC tools. This participation enhanced the relevance of the materials and ensured that they are context-based and culturally sensitive.

When women and men from underprivileged communities were asked about the video, they agreed that the IEC tool was very relevant and had a remarkable impact on the awareness of people like them regarding sensitive topics like periods and puberty, self-confidence, the body and the notion of “your body is yours”, as well as rape and victim-blaming, etc.

Nonetheless, the participant selection process for different activities is not delineated. The effectiveness of the Internal Security Forces training is only partially captured, as participants who do not respond to precise criteria receive training in a very specific topic such as handling GBV survivors and the Clinical Management of Rape (CMR). There was no evidence that trainees were able to transfer this knowledge to other colleagues, or that they will be the person responsible for managing rape cases in their stations.

Despite the partner’s effective implementation of the activities, there was no evidence demonstrating how these activities contributed to progress under the project objectives. As aforementioned in the coherence section, activities under this project were more oriented towards contributing to ABAAD’s strategic plan than to responding to a specific project intervention theory, making it consequently difficult to measure the effectiveness of these activities in relation to the said objectives.

#### **(iv) Efficiency**

moderate ToT workshops targeting ISF members on issues related to the Clinical Management of Rape, with the consideration that it would be very difficult for participants to duplicate such technical training.

On the other hand, it was not possible to select participants from specific ISF stations to implement the agreed standards of the hearing and investigation room to ensure an efficient application of the training.

Also, there was some concern about the proportion of funds provided to the regional conference, and the development of the learning document without any note on how this document will be used later and to what extent this activity contributed to progress under the project objectives.

**(v) Impact**

Even though the project activities were not interlinked, they did contribute, through other projects, to ensuring a tangible impact that was recognized by all interviewed stakeholders. From the project's documentation it is not clear how the project outputs had a direct impact on achieving the objectives described in the proposal. It is as such difficult to estimate the extent to

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voice the questions of young women about subjects deemed taboo in their communities. Several of them said that they feel more liberated and stronger thanks to contributing to community workshops.

Men said that the trainings they received helped them to better communicate and interact with their wives and children. Many expressed views against the amnesty of rapists and appreciated ABAAD's efforts to change mentalities.

The head of the Shia religious group also praised the contribution of ABAAD in creating a space for dialogue and exchange to find common grounds between the various stakeholders on sensitive subjects such as marital rape and violence against women, etc. He explained that although the change does not affect his beliefs because they are dictated by religion, it affects his willingness to collaborate and to be open to listening to opposing opinions.

### **The community levels**

It was palpable to all those interviewed that ABAAD's strategy of carrying out mass communication for the change of beliefs and attitudes of the whole community had a positive impact on public opinion and probed the debate on several themes that were up until then deemed as taboo in the communities.

Observers considered ABAAD's communication campaigns as innovative, targeted and memorable. It is not demonstrated in the project's documentation how the project activities contributed to the "Shame\_on\_who" campaign, but numbers show that this campaign





## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### *(i) Conclusion*

1. ABAAD believes that achieving gender equality requires systemic changes in policy and modes of social interactions at all levels of the society. The project intervention falls under these 360-degree approaches, and it has benefitted from the trustworthy stakeholders interviewed. Thanks to their inclusive and pragmatic approach, ABAAD have won the trust of different actors and good, well-connected leading partners in lobbying for women rights.

### **2. A pragmatic approach can achieve results even in a fractured political landscape.**

One of the greatest challenges in supporting women rights in Lebanon and the Mena region was to navigate different sects and religious groups whose ideas of women rights are very different from the Western liberal model.

This project shows that an inclusive approach and alliances with religious leaders who are able to join forces, can create a shared purpose at the grassroots level.

3. The long-term effort of ABAAD to create partnership and mechanisms of coordination and women networks in the civil society has been a major factor in facilitating the implementation of the project's activities, in reaching and engaging women survivors of GBV, and in expanding its outreach to underprivileged communities outside of Beirut.

4. More than a technical implementation partner, ABAAD has a feminist objective and an elaborate internal strategy leading a targeted, methodical and tactical change intervention in a complex and dynamic socio-political context like that of Lebanon. They are clearly looking for several sources of funding to finance their long-term multi-level change plans described in their internal strategic plan, but the project's documentation does not explain how these different projects with different sponsors (or that are co-sponsored) are interlinked and complement each other. It is noteworthy that it's not clear how activities sponsored by the

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## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Example evaluation questions

<p><b>Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right things?</b></p> <p>The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiary, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.</p>	
<p><b>Adequacy:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Were the target groups the most appropriate?</li> <li>- Did the project address the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Design:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Were the project activities/outputs adequately linked up and did they provide the best approach to achieve the project's outcomes?</li> <li>- Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context?</li> <li>- Were risks and mitigation strategies appropriately identified?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Coherence: How well does the intervention fit?</b></p> <p>The compatibility 1-2.4 (l)8.4 6MCID ID 45 BDC -6.56 re402(i)-1.7 (a)-2 (t)-2.1 ( p)30 0 11.herencemaep (l)8.4</p>	

	avoiding the duplication of efforts?
<b>EFFECTIVENESS: is the intervention achieving its objectives?</b>	
The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups.	
Progress:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What has the project achieved? Where has it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document? Why?</li> <li>- Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? If no, why?</li> <li>- To what extent have the project objectives been reached?</li> </ul>
Monitoring Learning and Adaptation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How appropriately was progress towards results monitored?</li> <li>- How did this information feed into the project to promote learning?</li> </ul>
<b>EFFICIENCY: How well are resources used?</b>	
The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.	

Design:

- Was there a reasonable relationship between prōjaw 56 0 Tw 18 7(w)-4

- Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive



## **Annex 2: Documents Reviewed:**

All project related documents (signed project document, Annual progress reports, interim report and final narrative report, Budget, and media articles)

Human Rights Watch, 2015, the CEDAW Committee of Lebanon's Periodic Report  
Dima Dabbous, 2017, Legal Reform and Women's Rights in Lebanese Personal Status Laws, CMI report.

ABAAD strategic plan; 2018, ABAAD centre for gender equality resources

Ghanim, David. 2013. 'Gender-

**Annex 3: Persons Interviewed**



