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Case study report: Lebanon

**Final evaluation of UN Women’s regional MENA programme: ‘Men and Women for Gender Equality’**

14th June 2022

Submitted by Douaa Hussein, with Itad

Credit: ‘A young woman looking out over North Africa’ – David Walker

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Acronyms

3RF Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework

CBO Community-Based Organisation

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CIBL. W Centre for Inclusive Business and Leadership for Women

CO Country Office

CSO Civil Society Organisation

FGD Focus Group Discussion

GBV Gender-Based Violence

GEWE Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

GFP Gender Focal Point

GTP Gender Transformative Parenting

ICMPD International Centre for Migration Policy Development

IMAGES International Men and Gender Equality Survey

KII Key Informant Interview

LAF Lebanese Armed Forces

M&E Monitoring and Evaluation

MENA Middle East and North Africa

MOSA Ministry of Social Affairs

MWGE Men and Women for Gender Equality

NCLW National Commission for Lebanese Women

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

OECD/DAC Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee

RDFL Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering

ROAS Regional Office for the Arab States

SGBV Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Sida Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

ToC Theory of Change

TOT Training of Trainers

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNFPA United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund

UNRWA United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

UN Women United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women

USD United States Dollar

VAW Violence Against Women

Background and Context

This country case study report is presented within the framework of the final evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women’s (UN Women’s) regional programme ‘Men and Women for Gender Equality’ (MWGE), which was implemented in six Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries between the years 2015 and 2022, with funding by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The programme aimed to improve understanding of the root causes of gender inequalities in the Arab States, and to address these through a bottom-up approach to catalyse social norm change. It was implemented in two phases: Phase I from 2015 to 2019, with a budget of USD 10,386,500; and Phase II from 2019 to 2022, with a budget of USD 10,839,690. An independent programme evaluation was commissioned by UN Women. This country report presents specific evaluation findings and recommendations in consideration of the context in Lebanon.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Phase I (2015–2019)** | **Phase II (2019–2022)** |
| **Outcome statements** | Outcome 1: CSOs and other actors contribute towards legislative and policy change through evidence-based advocacy  Outcome 2: Civil society, including new and emerging movements, promotes gender equality effectively  Outcome 3: Communities engage in developing solutions to promote gender equality based on innovative approaches and best practices[[1]](#footnote-2) | Outcome 1: Communities have more gender equitable behaviours  Outcome 2: Key regional and national institutions (government, academia, faith-based institutions, media) and regional networks integrate/promote gender responsive practices  Outcome 3: Laws, policies and strategies promoting gender equality are drafted, revised and/or approved[[2]](#footnote-3)  Outcome 4: Effective management and coordination of programme |

Lebanon ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1997 with reservations on Articles 9(2) and 16(1).[[3]](#footnote-4) The government has developed a number of national strategies, plans and institutional measures to advance women’s rights and promote gender equality. This includes the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon (2011–2021),[[4]](#footnote-5) the National Action Plan for Human Rights (2014–2019), Lebanon’s National Action Plan for implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325,[[5]](#footnote-6) and the Strategy to Combat Violence against Women, in addition to the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2022–2032 (currently under development).[[6]](#footnote-7) The National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) was established in 1998 to promote women’s rights in Lebanese society and enhance gender mainstreaming in public institutions; in addition, gender focal points (GFPs) were established in each public institution under the auspices of NCLW.[[7]](#footnote-8)

Lebanon has been facing compounded crises on the economic and political fronts, including broad effects of regional conflicts and the influx of refugees, especially from Syria, while the country also continues to be managed by a caretaker government.[[8]](#footnote-9) On top of this, the country was struck by the COVID-19 pandemic and the explosion at the port of Beirut in 2020. The economic crisis has trapped 55% of the country’s population in poverty.[[9]](#footnote-10) Political, cultural, social and legal barriers continue to hinder progress on gender equality. Lebanon still ranks 132nd out of 153 on the 2021 Global Gender Gap Index.[[10]](#footnote-11)

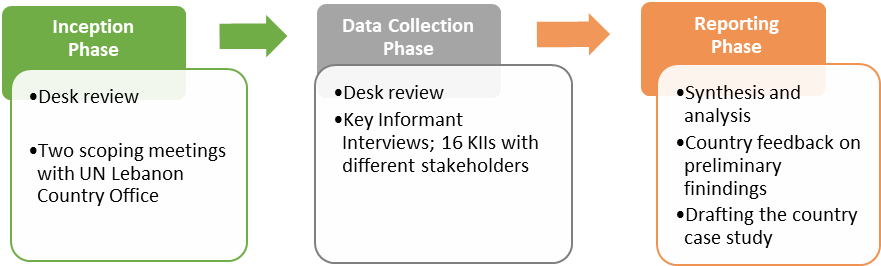
Parallel to the complicated context is the patriarchal system that shapes Lebanon’s social, legal and political structures, seeing women as subordinate to men, along with socially set roles for women in the domestic spheres, such as cooking, family care and clean-up tasks.[[11]](#footnote-12) This matches UN Women’s International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) research[[12]](#footnote-13) that confirms that women are extensively involved in household chores. IMAGES research has also highlighted the prevalence of domestic violence against women (VAW) and men since childhood, with a high number of women – 1 in 3 – experiencing gender-based violence (GBV).[[13]](#footnote-14)

Scope and Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the performance of the regional MENA programme MWGE in advancing gender equality in the target countries. The findings will be used to inform future programmatic decisions, organisational learning and accountability, as well as to strengthen UN Women’s strategies to transform negative behaviours and challenge discriminatory social norms, including through the engagement of men and boys. Besides Lebanon, the evaluation covered Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia, as well as regional-level activities. It covered both phases of the programme implemented between 2015 and 2022.

Research Methodology

This evaluation assessed the MWGE programme using four of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) criteria[[14]](#footnote-15) (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability), in addition to the criteria of gender and human rights. The evaluation used secondary data through review of available documents, in addition to primary data collected through key informant interviews (KIIs). Using a set of 10 evaluation questions corresponding to the aforementioned criteria, 16 people in total were interviewed, capturing a cross-section of stakeholders in Lebanon. The evaluation was conducted between August 2021 and April 2022 and the inception report was submitted in November 2021.



1. Evaluation phases for Lebanon

Limitations

This evaluation took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, limiting the access to the stakeholders as well as face-to-face discussions. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were not carried out, owing to the current situation in Lebanon. Moreover, two meetings with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) and Daraj Media were impossible to secure during the data collection phase.

Strength of Data

Findings are colour-coded to indicate strength of evidence; this is not a judgement of whether a particular objective was met, nor is it a performance indicator.

* **Evidence** reflects data gathered from multiple sources such as desk review, FGD and KII with key stakeholders engaged in the programme (good triangulation).
* **Evidence** comes from multiple data sources (good triangulation) of lesser quality, or the finding is supported by fewer data sources (limited triangulation, e.g. documents from or KIIs with only one stakeholder category) of decent quality.
* **Evidence** comprises few data sources across limited stakeholder groups (limited triangulation) and is perception-based, or is generally based on data sources that are viewed as being of lesser quality.

I: Relevance

The MWGE programme was coherent in general with the Lebanon Constitution, the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon (2011–2021) and the National Action Plan for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325. It contributed to UN Women’s Strategic Plan 2018–2021 and the UN Lebanon Strategic Framework 2017–2020. The programme design in Phase I was based on limited consultations with stakeholders, while in Phase II consultations took place with stakeholders at different levels, causing a shift to the feminist approach, with extended scope and a larger role for community-based organisations (CBOs) in advocacy.

EQ 1. To what extent are UN Women’s MWGE interventions aligned with regional and country contexts and addressing the priorities of stakeholders?

**Finding 1.1: The MWGE programme was coherent with the Lebanon Constitution. The programme was also in alignment with the** **National Action Plan for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325, and with the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon.**

The overall goal of the MWGE programme, centred around creating communities where women and men exercise their rights and opportunities equally, was coherent with the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2011–2021, specifically contributing to achieving full and unconditional equality between men and women in all fields and sectors and in decision-making positions (objective 6), combating all forms of violence affecting girls and women in all areas (objective 7), and protecting girls and women in situations of emergency, armed conflict, war and natural disaster (objective 11).[[15]](#footnote-16)

The MWGE was also aligned with the five strategic priorities of the Lebanese National Action Plan for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 (2019–2022).[[16]](#footnote-17) The programme contributed to its four pillars of the protection of women from violence during and after the conflict, their access to relief and recovery, the role of women in conflict prevention, and their participation in peacebuilding.

The MWGE programme was aligned with UN policies and strategies. It responded to Outcome 4 of the UN Women’s Strategic Plan 2018–2021: all women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence.[[17]](#footnote-18) It contributed to progress towards SDG 5/Target 5.1: ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls. It also contributed to the UN Strategic Framework 2017–2020, Core Priority 2: Lebanon enjoys domestic stability and practices effective governance.[[18]](#footnote-19)

**Finding 1.2:** **In Phase I of the MWGE, intervention design was based on limited consultations; in Phase II, consultations took place with stakeholders at different levels.**

The midterm evaluation of Phase I highlighted that, despite the fact there was no office for UN Women in Lebanon at the onset of the programme, there were consultations with CBOs during capacity building assessment and planning.[[19]](#footnote-20) This was preceded also by a mapping study conducted by the Resource Center for Gender Equality, ABAAD.[[20]](#footnote-21) In Phase II there was substantive consultation with all stakeholders, members of the advisory committee and national partners, through which the programme identified learning, contextual issues and needs that paved the way for the implementation. This included consultations with the Centre for Inclusive Business and Leadership for Women (CIBL.W) and NCLW on the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law; with security, military forces and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) on training for staff of these forces; and later with Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) on the establishment of a Gender Unit. Meanwhile, UN Women Lebanon Office maintained communication and consultations with the main partners of the programme, as in the case of ABAAD for Program P and Kafa[[21]](#footnote-22) for the implementation of on-the-ground and advocacy campaigns.

**Finding 1.3: Phase II of the MWGE programme shifted to a feminist approach to take in the strong feminist movement in Lebanon, extending the scope on women’s issues in most cases.**

In line with IMAGES, which provided a solid base during Phase I for identifying priorities on changing traditional roles within the family and on fatherhood, along with violence against women and girls, the programme built a niche in the area of men’s engagement and masculinities.[[22]](#footnote-23) However, based on the learning events conducted by Save the Children in Phase I and consultation with CBOs, UN Women Lebanon office identified new priorities for Phase II, the foremost being to move from partnering with an international umbrella non-governmental organisation (NGO) to a local NGO familiar with the context in Lebanon.[[23]](#footnote-24) Another criterion for the umbrella NGO is to select a feminist NGO to align with the strong feminist movement that dominates the scene in Lebanon.[[24]](#footnote-25) In doing so, the programme is yet to maintain using the engagement of men as one of the strategies, but this is no longer the main focus as in Phase I. Another related shift in Phase II is to enhance the role of CBOs in national advocacy campaigns, along with allocating budget for gender training.

EQ 2. To what extent did UN Women’s MWGE programme adapt to respond to changing contexts?

**Finding 2.1: The MWGE Programme was responsive to the multiple crises in Lebanon over the past few years. Adaptation of interventions and partnership were more opportunistic in some cases and responsive in others.**

Two main unexpected changes took place during Phase II of the programme – the protests in October 2019 and the blast in Beirut in 2020 – along with the economic crisis that hit the country, making it difficult to ensure relevance of the MWGE’s agenda to these increasingly desperate communities. However, the broad framework of the programme allowed for it to adapt its approach to one that kept women at the centre, even if it stretched the scope of the programme.

First, the October 2019 protests in Lebanon were a demonstration of people’s distress owing to the political establishment’s failure to find long-term structural and sustainable solutions to the underlying weaknesses of the economy. The political instability has affected outreach to target groups, especially because of roadblocks, and the economic situation limited participation of target groups in programme activities that entailed use of transportation. Nevertheless, the programme built on the momentum that women were active participants in the protests.[[25]](#footnote-26) The programme developed a study on violence against women journalists who were engaged in covering the protest.[[26]](#footnote-27) The programme also supported the Kafa campaign on advocating and raising awareness on the importance of having a unified personal status law through moving with the protests in six locations.[[27]](#footnote-28) While these interventions fit into the broad theory of change of MWGE and were able to respond to a local need, they were somewhat an outlier compared to the programmatic interventions of the rest of MWGE, especially in that no anticipated utilisation was expected at the time. However, later the programme will use the findings of the female journalists study in supporting a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) study on women running for the elections in May 2022.[[28]](#footnote-29)

Following the 2019 protests, and even more so after the Beirut blast, the political and security crises halted the work at policy level because of the change in the government, parliament and cabinet. UN Women Lebanon convened 46 feminist civil society actors, including the four CBOs of Phase II along with other activists forming Lebanon’s Feminist Civil Society Platform, and issued the ‘Feminist Charter of Demands’[[29]](#footnote-30) to put women’s issues at the centre of the disaster response plan. Since then, the Feminist Civil Society Platform has conducted advocacy efforts, including a contribution to the development of the Lebanon Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF) plans.[[30]](#footnote-31) The 3RF framework, jointly developed by the UN, World Bank, European Union and national authorities, included important gender considerations, such as women’s equal participation in economic recovery, access to services for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and protection against sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as addressing the increased unpaid care burden on women.[[31]](#footnote-32) The programme was also able to allocate a small fund, from the small savings that resulted from cancelling physical activities of the MWGE, for the well-being of those traumatised by the situation.[[32]](#footnote-33)

The need to respond to the changed environment in Lebanon led to a programmatic deviation from the broader regional approach of MWGE, though it still remained under the rather broad framework of the overall Theory of Change (ToC). While this allowed MWGE to effectively influence and support processes at the national level, capitalise on opportunities and become a relevant actor in these, while maintaining an internal cohesion and logic, it did also mean that the regional approach was diluted.

**Finding 2.2: During the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme focused on addressing two rising priorities that fitted well into the programme focus: one was the rising incidents of domestic violence; the other was the increased burden on women of household chores and caregiving.**

With health systems overloaded and children at home owing to school closures, women across the country were picking up the burden – from home schooling to caring for family members and ensuring high levels of cleanliness.[[33]](#footnote-34) This was a moment when the unpaid care burden was greater on women; hence the programme aimed to call for men to take on more of these responsibilities. UN Women and Kafa initiated the *#ViolenceDistancing بكفي\_عنف#* campaign, and the UNDP Innovation Lab launched the *#TogetherAndEqual* campaign, using IMAGES research[[34]](#footnote-35) data on men sharing unpaid care. Both campaigns received massive attention on social media.[[35]](#footnote-36)

The programme funded campaigns in response to the increased risk and incidents of GBV induced by COVID-19 lockdowns, drawing on savings created by the shift to online activities. UN Women and Kafa collaborated in a campaign on the importance of reporting GBV during the pandemic, though this was not directly funded from MWGE.[[36]](#footnote-37)

‘The campaign went to be massive, and they doubled or tripled the number of women, calling them to the point that they couldn’t cope with the demands’.[[37]](#footnote-38)

The change of modalities of implementation as a result of lockdown and economic crisis has resulted in several adaptation measures from CBOs, including support with Internet cards and incentives to youth to attend the face-to-face activities. Fe-Male provided an Internet venue at the feminist clubs for young men and women as the power was cut in some places for 18 hours.[[38]](#footnote-39)

‘At Abnaa Saida CBO, they changed the activity of Open Day to a digital campaign on VAW. Meanwhile, in one of the events taking place when the economic crises hit the country, only [a] few people attended. Kafa advised the CBO to pay transportation allowances for participants, along with adding a condition for [those] who would like to attend to register online, to enhance the commitment and accountability of people’. [[39]](#footnote-40)

EQ 3. What is the comparative advantage of UN Women in leading the MWGE programme?

**Finding 3.1: UN Women Lebanon generated evidence and expertise for the implementation of the MWGE programme in Lebanon, and developed meaningful partnerships with local entities.**

Despite its recent presence in the country, UN Women has acquired a unique positioning in advancing women’s rights and gender equality, with strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and evidence generation.The knowledge products, communication materials and research produced under MWGE have positioned UN Women as a lead actor in tackling gender social norms and masculinities in Lebanon. This included the IMAGES research, gender alerts during COVID-19, media campaigns and messaging that were accessed by the public, CBOs and local and national partners. UN Women engaged to varying degrees with state institutions under the umbrella of the MWGE Programme, such as working with NCLW on the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law, and supporting the military and in establishing a Gender Unit. The NCL is also part of the MWGE national Advisory Committee. More broadly, state institutions and ministries reverted to UN Women for high-quality technical expertise and guidance on advancing gender equality and women’s rights in their institutions.[[40]](#footnote-41) This was also applicable to other UN agencies. UN Women knowledge products were the basis for the training of trainers (TOT) provided to the General Security, LAF and Internal Security Forces.[[41]](#footnote-42) UN Women also supported the establishment of gender equality units within the LAF.

The ‘masculinities and engaging men and boys’ approach was seen as a niche area for UN Women in Lebanon that distinguished its work, supported existing efforts by NGOs and provided further expertise. Both the IMAGES research and the work with emerging organisations were viewed as providing an excellent basis for future strategies and programmes.[[42]](#footnote-43) Feedback from interviewed CBOs showed specific benefit from MWGE-organisedcross-learning events, regional networks, participation in international conferences and exchanges that took place during the MWGE programme.

‘The inclusion and engagement of men strategy is an added value for our work that focused on women and girls only in the past. MWGE, supported by UN Women, has allowed Fe-Male to stretch its work to outside Beirut for the first time to marginalised areas’.[[43]](#footnote-44)

EQ 4. How relevant were the programme intervention logic and Theory of Change (ToC)?

**Finding 4.1: The ToC and intervention logic of the programme are partially valid.**

The ToC of the MWGE programme indicated that a meaningful change should be brought at the micro, meso and macro-levels. The fact that the programme has a framework of outcomes and assumptions that the six countries should have the same paths of change proved not to be true in the case of Lebanon.

The ToC’s assumption that “the political system continues to be stable and conducive to policy change” was stretched to its limits in Lebanon, which suffered a volatile political environment and continuous government change during Phase II. However, the programme was nonetheless able to work successfully with civil society organisations (CSOs) and state structures, e.g. LAF and ISF, and affect policy change.

In Phase II, the programme shifted focus to an approach more aligned with the strong feminist movement active in Lebanon already prior to the formulation of the programme. The interventions of MWGE in Lebanon were adaptive and responsive, capitalising on opportunities, with an extensive scope and sometimes being fragmented. While these activities did fit under the broad parameters of the overall ToC, many of them did stand out in terms being quite different thematically and in terms of their target beneficiaries from the other approaches of MWGE regionally and at country-level in Egypt, Morocco and Palestine.

However, while this shift was taking place, the programme was able to keep the validity of the intervention logic when building and enhancing the capacities of CBOs to complement the work at national level around the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law as a result of unified efforts between CEBEL and NCLW. This resulted in strong linkages between the micro, meso and micro-levels.

Another example is where the programme managed to build a strong foundation with the LAF and ISF (meso-level), which was an unexpected result but which reflected the seizing of opportunities by the programme to engage with government institutions to promote and integrate gender equality strategies when these arose. Again, however, these activities were something of an outlier when examining the overall regional approach and logic of MWGE.

On the other side, the four interviewed CBOs involved in Phase II demonstrated evidence of changing knowledge and attitude through the engagement of initiatives (outcome 1), proving the assumptions about capacities and commitment to promote gender equality. This was very clear in the 16 days’ activism activities that CBOs are engaged in and which they led after the end of the funding. Meanwhile, Abna Saidaa integrated gender into education projects.[[44]](#footnote-45) Al Jalil has become well known in the Rashideya Palestinian refugee camp as a gender equality CBO.[[45]](#footnote-46) The engagement with MWGE has broadened the networking reach and the scope of working of the CBOs. Thus, those CBOs who had previously not been engaged with the feminist movement more broadly were able to connect with these networks, while others, such as Fe-Male, changed their approach to working on gender equality to include working with men, something they had previously been resistant to.[[46]](#footnote-47)

II: Efficiency

EQ 6. Has MWGE been efficient, achieving high-impact work in a cost-effective way, while using processes and systems to enable sufficient resources to be made available in a timely manner to achieve planned results?

**Finding 6.1: Unified regional monitoring was cost-effective and time-saving, and adaptations had to be made at the regional and country levels in response to COVID-19 and the multiple crises affecting Lebanon.**

The M&E framework encompassed a number of systematic activities that assessed the baseline of the different target groups within the context of Lebanon. This started with IMAGES research in Phase I and baseline and endline in Phase II. A midterm evaluation for Phase I was conducted in 2017 and a formative evaluation in 2019, setting solid information on what worked and what not, lessons learned, and recommendations for Phase II. Parallel to these tools, UN Women Lebanon systematically reported to ROAS annually against the set baseline and targets. All local partners reported on a quarterly basis.[[47]](#footnote-48)

A unified M&E framework developed for Phase I and II was useful and saved effort and resources; however, the multiple crises, along with COVID-19 restrictions, did not allow for frequent visits to CBOs – a constraint that was mitigated by virtual monitoring. However, this has been seen by the programme as insufficient, as interventions on the ground have layers of processes that need more rigorous field monitoring and site visits.[[48]](#footnote-49) To mitigate this gap, the programme conducted extra regular FGDs with youth members of critical mass to capture the changes, opportunities and challenges that face youth advocates. The programme also holds learning events with CBOs to identify lessons learned after each phase.

**Finding 6.2: The Advisory Committee was functional in Phase I but of limited value to the programme in Phase II.**

According to the midterm evaluation of Phase I, the advisory group was established with the objective of facilitating dissemination of the research findings and advising on advocacy and related interventions.[[49]](#footnote-50) In Phase II, the objective of the Advisory Committee was to provide ‘strategic guidance, review the programme’s progress against annual work plans; review and approve any deviation from plans; support and/or review the development of a communications plan for the program the objective of setting up and reviewing the strategic direction of the implementation’.[[50]](#footnote-51) It included key stakeholders, such as NCLW, MOSA, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the Arab Institute for Women. The Committee met once during the duration of Phase II, with almost no decision-making power.[[51]](#footnote-52) The UN Women team engaged the committee on some implementation aspects, such as the selection criteria of CBOs and the 16 days of activism campaign. For the anti-taxi harassment campaign, the committee also reviewed and validated knowledge products and the data collection tool used. The work with the committee was disrupted owing to COVID-19 and the Beirut blast. In Phase II, the Committee only met once in 2019 to review the achievements of Phase I, and gave input on implementing Program P and integrating working with men into gender equality work. For future programming, it might be worth considering having a technical committee to support on technical matters of the programme.[[52]](#footnote-53)

**Finding 6.3: The country office felt that financial and human resources were not adequate to the magnitude of the programme interventions or to respond to the needs that emerged of the multiple crises witnessed by Lebanon.**

The budget formulation in general is good, though while the funds were divided between all three outcomes, Outcome 1 received the lion’s share, with a deficit for the other two outcomes.[[53]](#footnote-54) The financial allocations to the Lebanon Office, which comprised 15% of the total programme budget in Phase I and 14% in Phase II, were seen as not being proportionate to the unforeseen crises in Lebanon during the past few years.[[54]](#footnote-55) In terms of funding, Lebanon received the same funding as other countries, which was competitively lower in value given the cost of living and latest developments in Lebanon, including staff salaries that did not allow them to cope up with the unexpected economic crisis.[[55]](#footnote-56) Hence the programme team put a lot of extra effort across programmes to ensure the survival and sustainability of the programme.

‘The costs are six times the cost if compared with other countries as Egypt, but every country got the same money, so Lebanon realistically had less money for carrying the programme’. [[56]](#footnote-57)

Immediately after the first wave of COVID-19 and the Beirut blast, the programme was responsive to change allocations of some financial resources to cover transportation, Internet connectivity and incentives, as some items were not used to the originally set activities.[[57]](#footnote-58)

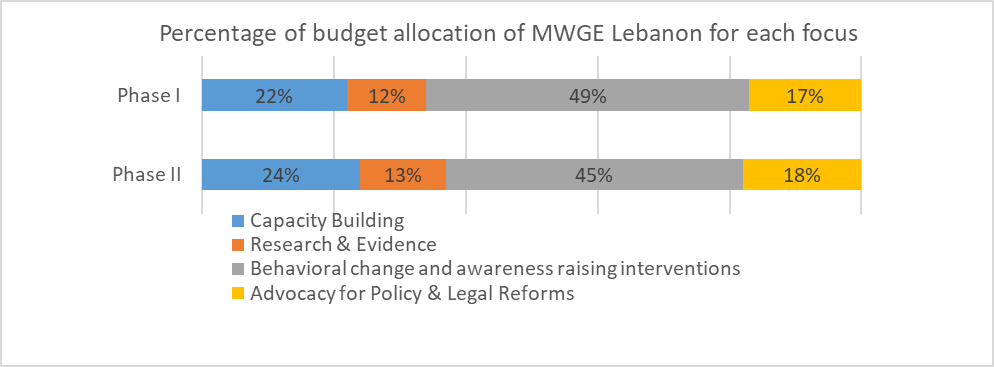
Also, thematically, and as a result of learning from Phase I, the programme allocated 24% of the budget to gender training, women’s rights and feminism and masculinity (a gap identified from Phase I). As the chart below illustrates, advocacy for legal reforms takes the biggest allocation in Lebanon (49% in Phase I and 45% in Phase II), which align with the needs for creating an enabling environment for policy change for gender equality, even in a context of political instability.[[58]](#footnote-59)

Figure 2: Percentage of budget allocation per focus area

The UN Women Lebanon national coordinator post was partially funded through MWGE and in part through other projects, including the CO’s Women, Peace and Security (WPS) programme. A benefit of this was that insights and key messages from MWGE could flow easily into WPS work. However, dividing staff resources between projects increases the risk of a blurring of responsibilities in case there are competing demands on time. The programme assigned a researcher to assist in the review process of all programme content produced. The budget could cover the salary for only one year. One way to mitigate this was to mobilise other UN Women’s programmes that cooperate with MWGE to contribute to the salary of the researcher. Meanwhile, the programme felt the need to have a gender specialist on the programme to help provide guidance on messaging, approaches and strategies.

‘There is a need to have technical staff on board of the programme and specifically related to gender, either to sit in the regional office to serve [the] CO [country office] or to have a gender specialist at the level of the office, as the work underlie [sic] by the programme is very sensitive in terms of messaging on social norms and masculinities’.[[59]](#footnote-60)

At Kafa and CBO level, the limited budget did not allow for adequate staffing. The umbrella NGO staff dedicated to the programme comprised one project manager, one financial officer and one field officer. Consultants covered other functions, such as M&E and media, that are key for the volume of follow-up and advocacy work respectively. The same applies to CBOs. Consequently, the level of effort, workload and timing became issues for them. Trainings were being carried out during weekdays while participants had other responsibilities.[[60]](#footnote-61)

‘For example, the planned interventions were extensive and a lot compared to the capacities of the CBO, who had very few staff dedicated to the programme, making it very hard for them to digest and cascade the trainings’.[[61]](#footnote-62)

While MWGE overall had a comparatively high percentage of the budget dedicated to staff costs, implementers at various levels in Lebanon (as well as in other countries) raised issues of overburdening. This points to an overall need to assess the division of tasks and responsibilities, as well as lines of accountability, both at the national level and across the programme as a whole to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.

III: Effectiveness and Impact

Reports reveal that the programme has surpassed the targets of the indicators with specific reference to advocacy through community interventions, campaigns, knowledge products, capacity building within government institutions and academia (see Table 1 for the full achievements of Phase II). Thorough review of documents and interviews accounted for the following findings.

EQ 5. To what extent has the MWGE programme contributed to behaviour and policy change, institutional and national capacity development, information and knowledge sharing, to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) across different settings?

**Finding 5.1: T****he programme advocated on a wide spectrum of women’s rights issues, calling for law reform in Phase I and II, and was able to support the issuance of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law and influence the institutional level of the armed forces.**

Through Phase I and Phase II, the programme was keen to create an enabling environment for policy change, targeting changing the law on early marriage, nationality and unified personal status law through engaging national, media and local levels in awareness raising activities, advocacy campaigns and research. However, these efforts were limited in influence because of the political situation and will (nationality law), and the fact that the there is no unified civil code in the country made the advocacy efforts challenging.

‘There are weak power structures causing policies and activities to get blocked. The government is [in] a general state of inertia, there has been no government for 16 months, leaving the armed forces, private sector and NGOs to take over many matters’.[[62]](#footnote-63)

The programme (in Phase II) was able to influence the issuance of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law in December 2019 through a coherent process that started by unifying efforts of CIBL. W, which was working on advocacy campaigns to change the law, and NCLW, which produced another proposal. UN Women supported NCLW and CIBL.W to consolidate 6 draft laws submitted since 2012 by different actors in Lebanon. The Mashreq Gender Facility at World Bank, NCLW, CIBL.W, the parliamentary committee for women and children worked together under UN Women guidance to advocate for the law passing. The two entities proposed one unified law proposal to parliament that endorsed the issuance of the law. The programme was also able to mobilise all efforts of local and national partners to raise awareness and launch advocacy campaigns around the law. CIBL.W in partnership with SEEDs initiative led 2 executive workshops with over 150 representatives from the private sector to draft and reform HR policies around sexual harassment. As a result, 13 employers adopted new anti-sexual harassment policies in their workplaces in Lebanon. The programme also conducted a study on the harassment of women by taxi drivers with the support of MOSWAT CBO. Meanwhile, sexual harassment become the main concern of the four CBOs, either at the level of awareness raising activities, mobilising municipalities to support advocacy campaigns, or at the level of 16 days of activism. This also included working with taxi drivers.

Following the endorsement of the National Action Plan to implement the UNSCR 1325, gender was identified as a topic of interest at various fronts in Lebanon that was capitalized by the MWGE programme as well. ICMPD[[63]](#footnote-64) collaborated with the MWGE programme on the provision of training to security and armed forces. This effort started with an intention to use Arabic and localised knowledge products by UN Women for awareness raising, which the evaluation found to have evolved into a recognisable capacity strengthening initiative. During Phase II of the programme, UN Women’s knowledge products – especially those based on the IMAGES research – were used as the basis for the development of training modules which were endorsed for use for the General Security and LAF. As a result of the training, the programme supported the establishment of the Gender Unit at LAF; in addition, through technical advice from UN Women, negotiations are currently under way to contribute to the furnishing and equipping of the Unit.[[64]](#footnote-65) Several factors allowed for an institutional change, foremost of which were the political will of the current leadership, the engagement of NCLW on advocacy, and training by ICMPD and UN Women. UN Women Lebanon also supported women to enrol in security sector institutions.[[65]](#footnote-66)

**Finding 5.2: Men and women reported a change in knowledge, attitude and behaviour to rights and gender roles. However, mainstreaming of new norms was not guaranteed within the current context of economic crisis, unemployment, migration and conservative norms.**

The endline study conducted by the programme’s regional monitoring advisor shows that the overall positive attitude has improved by 17.9% from the baseline of 56% to an average of 74%. The following chart shows the change among women and men.

Figure 3: Percentage of young men and women who report positive change in attitude towards gender equality[[66]](#footnote-67)

The study highlights that while the baseline shows the lowest positive attitude towards gender roles and guardianship and decision making, by the end of Phase II this has been improved to show evidence in gender roles in sharing responsibilities within the households as well as in the attitude towards tolerating VAW. This is validated through interviews with CBOs that report that there is a substantial improvement in men’s roles within the household and female participation in community activities, such as taking part in sport for the first time and attending awareness sessions. At the level of GBV there is a growing awareness among men and women about sexual harassment, as a result of extensive focus of the programme on the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law during Phase II.

This was done through community-based initiatives implemented by capacitated CBOs, engaging men and boys, using youth volunteers and scouts as agents of change and establishing networks with local stakeholders, in addition to several awareness raising campaigns. In time, more youths were interested in joining the programme with CBOs and trained to become gender champions, creating a critical mass for change. Examples of the implemented community-based initiatives included sport camps, cooking competitions with men and women, open discussions, arts-based activities, psychodrama and peer groups.[[67]](#footnote-68)

‘A male volunteer mentioned that in the past he believed that men are the ones who give permission for women to work. After attending the training on gender equality, he realised that it is her right to work’.[[68]](#footnote-69)

‘Abnaa Saida launched a cooking competition among families with men taking the responsibility of cooking. Then they opened discussion on “with” or “against” on the shared responsibilities within the household. The competition included elder men who participated with youth, providing an example, and convinced youth that this is normal and facilitated the change in attitude’.[[69]](#footnote-70)

‘Through the CBO Fe-Male, male volunteers designed and implemented community initiatives, including a video developed on virginity, conveying a message “virginity is a social construct”, while the other involved men distributing pads for women during the economic crisis after observing [that] the women cannot afford to buy pads. A third mixed youth calling for increasing the amount set for alimony, after the outbreak of the economic crisis that affected the value of money. They used their legal background and developed a legal perspective to the problem faced by most divorced mothers’.[[70]](#footnote-71)

Despite the improvement in attitude, CBOs were constrained by the multiple crises that affected the commitment of youth to continue advocating for gender equality and GBV – as a result of unemployment and migration – compounded by the short term of the initiatives and gap between Phase I and Phase II. However, efforts were made to mitigate these challenges. For instance, MOSAWAT CBO used scouts in formulation of the critical mass instead of the volunteer.[[71]](#footnote-72) Kafa in consultation with CBOs reached a learning that there should be monthly incentives for members of the critical mass to keep them engaged and committed during the implementation of the project.[[72]](#footnote-73)

The case of Lebanon highlights the challenges of trying to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in the midst of multiple crises, which can simultaneously open up new possibilities for action as well as constrict spaces for this work.[[73]](#footnote-74) MWGE was able to capitalise on some opportunities – such as pushing for the anti-sexual harassment law and mobilising a post-Beirut Port explosion feminist platform, but respondents also noted the reduced availability and ‘bandwidth’ of community beneficiaries for gender equality work as economic pressures as well as the personal and social impacts of the crises increased.[[74]](#footnote-75)

**Finding 5.3: Knowledge products by the MWGE programme were contextualised to generate evidence on gender inequalities, parenting and GBV, rendering them a primary contributor to advocacy campaigns and adequate for use for within national and local organisations.**

The evaluation accounted for a wide spectrum of influence of the generated programme knowledge that the programme produced at policy, institutional and community levels. The IMAGES constitutes one of the solid bases used by many institutions during training workshops (ICMPD and CIBL.W) and research papers (UN Women programmes and UN agencies). Videos out of IMAGES were also produced in the form of drama and testimonials on gender roles.[[75]](#footnote-76) The Because I am a Man campaign came as a direct result of IMAGES, with a series of activities, including videos reaching 1.5 million interactions to date.[[76]](#footnote-77)

‘The statistics included in IMAGES are very powerful and they were underused in Phase I. So there was a decision to scale up and use to the maximum the data that is available in IMAGES to influence policy to support all areas of work. So what we did during this period is really incorporate everything we know about IMAGES, and we did a massive number of publications. It has, for example, helped us develop a proposal on safe cities; we use the data that cities are not safe for women’.[[77]](#footnote-78)

**The products were deeply contextual and useful for several stakeholders in Lebanon.** In Phase I, a study on opinions related to child marriages, entitled ‘The Attitude of Lebanese Society towards Child Marriage: An Opinion Poll’,[[78]](#footnote-79) was funded by the programme and conducted by the Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering (RDFL). In Phase II, UN Women conducted a study on the harassment experienced by TV reporters during the 2019 protests; the findings will be used by UNDP to influence the May 2022 general elections.[[79]](#footnote-80) At community level, as a result of the initiative carried out by MOSAWAT to train 52 taxi drivers on the Anti- Sexual Harassment Law, the programme realised the need to include women’s perspectives on the harassment experienced by female during their taxi rides. Consequently, UN Women Lebanon – through the programme, in collaboration with MOSAWAT CBO – conducted a study on sexual harassment in taxis, showing that 54% of women experience sexual harassment in taxis.[[80]](#footnote-81) Based on findings and perspectives, a video will be created to consolidate messages on sexual harassment.

At CBO level, critical mass was involved in designing and developing messages on gender equality and sexual harassment through creating posters and films. While this has enhanced their skills, especially with the support of Kafa, there is a need to include film production among the training topics and design of local initiatives.[[81]](#footnote-82)

‘The local initiatives and campaign, young men and women developed posters and films on breaking stereotyping, GBV and nationality. They used Facebook and WhatsApp. These products are attractive and outreach people where they are’. [[82]](#footnote-83)

‘Male volunteers are using their knowledge on the new Anti-Sexual Harassment Law and talked to taxi drivers on sexual harassment in terms that it is not justifiable, not accepted and illegal’.[[83]](#footnote-84)

**Finding 5.4: Scaling up Program P through MOSA was a promising approach but adaptation/integration has been delayed due to Covid-19 and attendant counter-measures, the social, political and economic crises that have engulfed Lebanon as well as the impacts of the Beirut Port Explosion in August 2020**

During Phase I of the MWGE programme, UN Women piloted the Gender Transformative Parenting (GTP) programme, with positive results. It was then adapted to the Lebanon context, based on the IMAGES research findings, in partnership with NGO ABAAD and MOSA.[[84]](#footnote-85) The GTP programme was seen by UN Women and ABAAD as an entry point to engaging men and changing social norms. The programme went through a lengthy process of development during Phase II. ABAAD developed four policy briefs and knowledge products and conducted four closed-door stakeholder consultations for the institutionalisation of the programme. Afterwards, the technical components of the programme were reviewed, then piloted with men, women and children separately.[[85]](#footnote-86) This is in addition to designing and testing early childhood development sessions that will be integrated into the programme. For scaling up, MOSA’s staff were trained on rolling it out at Social Development Centres across the country, seeking to challenge and transform harmful notions of masculinity associated with fatherhood, and the adaptation of the toolkit by the Ministry is on-going.

Regrettably, only two rounds of trainings took place, owing to COVID-19. The Ministry then created a technical committee for the review of the programme; meetings were held for months.[[86]](#footnote-87) All of these steps caused a delay in the actual implementation of the GTP at scale in Lebanon during the lifetime of the MWGE programme. This was further aggravated by the economic crisis and high inflation rates, the introduction of roadblocks, the Beirut blast and the associated emergency response.

‘Men are interested to know how they can be good to their children. This was the “hook”. The programme has been indefinitely paused. It is on the agenda but there are other priorities. During roadblocks, review committee were not able to attend meetings and participants couldn’t attend sessions. Many factors created delays’.[[87]](#footnote-88)

**Finding 5.5: CBOs’ institutional capacities built to the degree that they were able to ‘graduate’ from the programme.**

The regional monitoring of CBO’s capacity confirmed an improvement of the capacities of three out of four CBOs in Phase II, reaching +26 % from the baseline.[[88]](#footnote-89) Fe-Male, the fourth CBO, did not improve, as it has already had high capacity in advocacy. The improvement came as a result of continuous capacity strengthening over the programme’s two phases.

In Phase I, the capacity building was carried out by Save the Children, an international organisation with a long development experience as well as a focus on child’s rights, whereas in Phase II the umbrella NGO was assigned to Kafa to reflect the shift of the programme. Each of the NGOs has its merits and influence on CBOs, reflecting the importance of having a role for an umbrella NGO in outreaching and capacitating the newly emerging CBOs.

Capacity building on gender equality concepts and masculinity have influenced the programmatic and institutional levels of small CBOs located in hard-to-reach communities. Abnaa Saida and Mosawat were able to establish partnerships with local stakeholders who implemented joint activities or supported on specific aspects. For example, MOSAWT CBO cooperated with the municipalities on the development of a code of conduct on sexual harassment that was integrated within their work.[[89]](#footnote-90)

Three out of the four CBOs reported that it was through the MWGE programme that they first received training on gender equality, GBV, masculinities and the international conventions and national laws on gender equality. They learned and applied strategies such as peer to peer, outreaching, using youth advocates, advocacy, and using social media. They were trained to cascade this package of training to the critical mass. Feedback from CBOs during the evaluation showed specific areas of capacity strengthening, including expanded knowledge on implementing gender equality programming, creating a pool of volunteers to sustain the interventions on the ground, partnership with local authorities and networking with other NGOs. They mentioned the need for more training on the production of communication material.[[90]](#footnote-91)

Three CBOs mentioned that before the programme, their mandate and interventions were not focused on gender, they never had a stand-alone programme on gender equality, and they were limited to work on children’s rights and youth only. As a result of the new knowledge and exposure on GBV, CBOs became able to refer cases of GBV to NGOs such as Kafa and ABAAD for further action. Through Kafa they became members of gender and feminist networks, which familiarised them with the wider picture of gender equality issues and forms of discrimination at national level. Interviewed CBOs mentioned further capacity building needs in the areas of communications, social media, M&E and financial grants management.[[91]](#footnote-92)

‘Our growing knowledge on gender equality allowed us to realise forms of inequality and how gender intersects with other issues. We decided to include gender in all the other CBOs’ initiatives and in awareness raising activities’.[[92]](#footnote-93)

‘Al Jalil have now strong local partnership with local committees at the level of the camps including religious leaders’. [[93]](#footnote-94)

IV: Gender and Human Rights

With regard to Leaving No One Behind, the programme targeted children, men and women of different ages in hard-to-reach geographical areas, including refugees. In spite of that, the capacity of CBOs did not allow for including people living with disability. Meanwhile, inclusion of LGBT people was recorded to be a challenge, although one CBO was able to include them in the training and MWGE was able to bring LGBT organisations onboard when the Charter of Feminist Demands was articulated after the Beirut Port explosion. The programme also contributed to advancing laws on preventing sexual harassment, on personal status and on parental leave.

EQ 7. To what extent was a human rights-based and gender transformative approach incorporated in the design and implementation of the programme?

**Finding 7.1: The MWGE Programme paved the way for more inclusion of rights and gender equality knowledge and advocacy.**

A human rights agenda was advanced through the MWGE programme through its work on gender equality and masculinities, GBV and supporting legislation on women’s rights. Through Phases I and II the programme was keen to address human rights and gender equality issues, through working on laws such as the proposal to ban early marriage, nationality rights, unified personal status law and the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law. Meanwhile, CBOs received training on masculinities and gender equality by ABAAD in Phase I along with another training on child rights by Save the Children. In Phase II, there was more focus on gender equality through training workshops for CBOs for the first time (for three CBOs) that provided wider scope of knowledge on international conventions and declarations related to women’s rights. Inclusion of men and women together in critical mass groups was an approach to promote right to equal participation at community level. Community interventions to change gender stereotyping roles, such as inclusion of girls in sport activities and men advocating for women’s rights, have consolidated understanding to create a new attitude towards gender equality. The membership of CBOs in the national feminist platform was one of the key achievements that are valued by the CBOs. The programme was also able to integrate gender equality into the training delivered to security and military forces.

**Finding 7.2:** **With regard to Leaving No One Behind, the programme targeted children, men and women of different ages in hard-to-reach geographical areas with a challenge to include people living with disabilities and LGBT.**

Implementing the ‘Leaving No One Behind’ principle for the Lebanon MWGE programme was a challenge because of the multiple complexity of groups of refugees and the classification of different sects and religions. There is no census in Lebanon and there is a lack of baseline data on identifying the ‘excluded and left behind’ population.[[94]](#footnote-95) UN Women have reached difficult-to-reach areas and communities through selected CBOs who were operating outside of Beirut and in rural areas where poverty and inequality prevail.

‘The programme has a non-discrimination approach to the target group. We try to influence CBOS to work with people with disability, but we didn't manage because of the fact that most of the activities went online due to the different crisis’.[[95]](#footnote-96)

Almost half of the reached people targeted by the programme were refugees of different nationalities – mostly Syrians and Palestinians. As a result of changing the modalities to online, and owing to a lack of capacities, the programme could not include people living with disabilities. Abnaa Saidaa tried to link with associations specialising in target groups with special needs, but because of the COVID-19 consequences the efforts did not yield cooperation in this direction.[[96]](#footnote-97) Further, the programme’s knowledge products did not consider this target group.

Most CBOs were constrained when it came to integrating LGBT people, except for Fe-Male CBO, which was able to involve them in the training. Abnaa Saidaa CBO reflected that the cultural conservative views of the community are a constraint to talking on topics related to religion or LGBT.[[97]](#footnote-98) MWGE successfully engaged with several LGBT organisations in the aftermath of the Beirut Port Explosion, who signed on to the Charter of Feminist Demands. Although the project didn’t actively plan to target LGBTQI, the project was perceived as a safe place for this community to engage and participate.[[98]](#footnote-99)

V: Sustainability

The programme managed to influence policies and to mainstream gender equality and women’s rights within development programmes at national level. It has been influencing policies and other national programmes. Knowledge products become an asset for UN Women, national entities and CBOs, increasing prospects for sustainability. CBOs have built trust and networks with local stakeholders; they have the potential to continue working within their communities. Some of the youth targeted in Phase I became the facilitators under Phase II of the project. One CBO (Fe-Male) has strengthened its capacity and is currently a direct partner to UN Women. Nevertheless, the financial sustainability of the programme as a whole, including for CBOs, is at risk, compounded by the economic and political crisis.

EQ 8. What are the indications that MWGE’s interventions and approaches will be sustained?

**Finding 8.1: CBOs have the potential to continue promotion of gender equality and engagement of men within their communities. However, CBOs’ financial sustainability is at stake, and keeping young men and women engaged is not guaranteed.**

A methodological approach by the programme was to build local capacities of CBOs on the engagement of men for outreach and effective gender equality approaches across different geographic areas. CBOs confirmed that this has become a methodology that they adopted, and Kafa has produced a manual on engagement of men for their use. For example, CBOs continued working on 16 days of activism with no budget provided from the programme, providing evidence of their commitment and buy-in.[[99]](#footnote-100)

CBOs have built trust relationships with local stakeholders with increased capacity to advocate and connect with government entities (MOSAWAT CBO), religious leaders (Abnaa Saida) and other local CBOs (Al Jalil).

Fe-Male approached another donor, Save the Children, after the end of the contractual relationship to support the rent of the two feminist clubs they established, in Nabatiya in the south and Tripoli in the north. For the first time, Fe-Male thus extended its interventions outside Beirut.[[100]](#footnote-101)

The Feminist Network that was formed following the Beirut blast in 2020 provides a common platform for activists and NGOs to join efforts in advancing the Charter of Demands, which is operational at present.[[101]](#footnote-102)

Nevertheless, sustaining the momentum requires financial resources, especially in light of the current economic situation in Lebanon. Almost all CBOs interviewed mentioned financial resources as the key factor affecting their continuity; they are reaching out to bigger NGOs such as Kafa for other funding opportunities on GBV, which is mainstreamed within their community work now.[[102]](#footnote-103) Creating a pool of volunteers to help and sustain the interventions on the ground is another challenge, especially after the crisis in the last few years where CBOs’ volunteers dropped out after Phase I.

‘The CBO prepared a presentation on GBV and sent to Kafa to consider the organisation in their future funding opportunities’.[[103]](#footnote-104)

‘As a result of this programme, [a] gender equality approach became integrated in our work. We are partnering with UNRWA [the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East] and an Italian organisation’.[[104]](#footnote-105)

**Finding 8.2: The programme was successful in managing to mainstream social norms and behavioural change on gender equality and women’s rights within other development programmes.**

A lesson learned from Phase I is that ‘social norms’ was a stand-alone programme within UN Women that does not relate to or fall under any of the thematic areas of UN Women. As a result, in Phase II a decision was made that social norms should be mainstreamed with every single activity within the programmes at UN Women regionally and nationally, as well as being integrated within other UN agencies and other institutions.

MWGE partnered with UN Women’s programme’s Women Peace and Security on the role of women in the Lebanon protests.[[105]](#footnote-106) It also partnered with the Humanitarian response to COVID on Access to Justice and the Economy study. Moreover, the programme collaborated with the Women’s Economic Empowerment programme on childcare services for Syrian refugee women in Lebanon, and also partnered with UNFPA and WHO on a range of policy briefs to advise stakeholders on priority actions for GEWE during the COVID-19 lockdown[[106]](#footnote-107). While these collaborations broadened the scope of the work of the programme, it also constituted to a degree a shift away from the original programme logic to respond to the evolving circumstances. It also in part reflected staffing arrangements, as the MWGE national coordinator also partially works on the WPS portfolio.

UN Women, through the MWGE programme in Lebanon, has been influencing policies and other programmes, with a special emphasis on this approach in Phase II. Of note is the passing of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law, becoming a solid legal ground to build upon other reforms and changes in the country for women’s rights at community and national levels. The programme partnered with UNDP, LAF, universities and local stakeholders, institutionalising knowledge and training manuals for capacity building on gender equality.

**Finding 8.3 : Knowledge products produced by UN Women Lebanon and CBOs under MWGE become a resourceful asset for learning, increasing prospects for sustainability.**

Throughout the lifetime of the MWGE programme, IMAGES research, learning toolkits, training modules, papers, articles, videos, posters and social media content were produced (as detailed under effectiveness). The umbrella NGO has created an online gender library that included all knowledge products to be used by CBOs in Arabic, helping to exchange evidence, strategies, learning, community outreach and replication of interventions.[[107]](#footnote-108) There are higher prospects for sustainability beyond the programme’s lifetime as a result of the integration of training manuals and toolkits into national institutions such as the armed forces, universities, MOSA and NCLW.

VI: Evidence, Learning and Knowledge Management

State institutions such as NCLW, the military and security sector and ministries expect high-quality technical expertise and guidance from UN Women on advancing gender equality and women’s rights in their institutions. The knowledge products, communication materials and research produced under MWGE have positioned UN Women as a lead actor in tackling gender social norms and toxic masculinities in Lebanon.

EQ 9. How is the programme generating, utilising and sharing lessons and knowledge?

**Finding 9.1: Throughout the duration of its two phases, the MWGE programme generated knowledge and evidence that contributed to policy influence, building capacities, advocacy, and community-based initiatives at local level.**

In relation to the position and conditions of women and girls, the evaluation accounted for the programme’s ability to link the knowledge and evidence generated to actions at the community, institutional and enabling environment levels with positive outcomes. Drawn from desk review and KIIs, examples include: the graduate course of Islamic and Arab feminism delivered by the Lebanese American University was informed by the research ‘Who provides? Who cares? Changing dynamics’. The evidence generated by the IMAGES research provided the basis for the UNDP Innovation Lab and used evidence from the *#TogetherAndEqual* campaign, implemented jointly with UN Women, on men sharing unpaid care. Its produced video and infographics were used by Bank Audi in a social media campaign on the occasion of the 16 days of activism. IMAGES’ evidence was also used by UN Women to team up with two online media platforms through educational videos to raise awareness on the role of fatherhood in achieving gender equality at home.[[108]](#footnote-109)

The knowledge gained from training at the community level was transformed to advocacy material, e.g. videos, social media posts and articles. This was coupled with creating a Google drive and WhatsApp groups among CBOs to share products and experiences to maximise benefits and for wider reach. The data used provided credibility during advocacy to tackle social norms at community level, realising the high prevalence of GBV and the need for referral and support services, as well as inequalities of gender roles and household dynamics.

‘In Lebanon IMAGES has been very influential in UN Women and UNDP. As a result of the lessons learnt in Phase I, they moved away from stand-alone knowledge products; they try to address social norms issues, childcare and masculinities’.[[109]](#footnote-110)

‘The local initiatives and campaign by CBOs developed posters and films on breaking stereotyping, GBV and nationality. They used Facebook and WhatsApp and awareness raising after each community activity to share the knowledge. These products are attractive and reach people where they are’.[[110]](#footnote-111)

**Finding 9.2: CBOs benefited from the South–South exchange visits. However, the regional workshop among CBOs in the four countries of Phase II, though useful, came towards the end of the CBOs contracts, due to COVID-19 restrictions.**

Three cross-learning events took place during the MWGE. The cross-learning that took place in Indonesia was beneficial because it allowed the umbrella NGO and CBOs to adopt an initiative on pre-marriage counselling, which is needed in Lebanon. The cross-learning in South Africa increased exposure to other contexts and how challenges on social norms are addressed through advocacy strategies. Moreover, the three-day cross-learning that engaged all of the programme’s CBOs and NGOs from all countries was useful, although it was carried out at the end of the programme and countries did not get the chance to apply the gained learning. Suggestions were made during the evaluation to carry out exchanges to countries within the programme in future for relevance.[[111]](#footnote-112)

‘The regional workshop among the countries participating in the programme provided a learning platform on the other countries’ experiences on the gender equality interventions’.[[112]](#footnote-113)

‘During the regional meeting in Phase I, Abnaa Saida learned about the strategy of using youth in the outreach interventions. Thus our design for Phase II is premised upon this strategy’.[[113]](#footnote-114)

‘The cross-learning that took place in Indonesia was very beneficial because we adopted the initiative of pre-marriage counselling, which is very needed here in Lebanon, despite the scarce financial resources’. [[114]](#footnote-115)

Lessons Learned

* **Shifting the focus to a feminist approach is a perquisite to the context of Lebanon, and elsewhere** The shift to a feminist approach was based on the learning from Phase I, which underscored the importance of being accountable to the feminist movement in order to consolidate the work on the women’s rights agenda in Lebanon. Phase II implementation included evidence of a wide range of uptake by feminist organisations on issues such as unified personal status law and anti-sexual harassment law. These shifts were welcomed by most of the CBOs in Phase II. However, these did also constitute a deviation from the original, regional intervention logic.
* **Knowledge products are influential in consolidating messaging around gender equality and ensure uptake by new institutions.** IMAGES’ findings and videos were a powerful instrument to alert the attention of institutions towards the root cause of inequality and help recognise forms of discrimination. Thus, producing real-time data and evidence and measuring how there is a shift in people’s perception are is salient to influence institutions as well as individuals towards gender equality and women’s rights. The regional BIAM campaign, was not seen as being relevant to the Lebanese context given the stronger feminist orientation in Phase II. However, in a regional programme, country-level messaging needs to both be adapted to the national context and be co-ordinated with the regional level, not only for purposes of quality assurance and ensuring consistency of messaging, but also for maximising impact at scale.
* **A unified focused advocacy campaign accelerates change at all levels.** The programme worked on several national advocacy campaigns in Phases I and II, extending the scope of gender equality issues, but serves the objective of keeping women’s rights in the focus and centre of the work of institutions. However, a learning emerged from Phase II that working on a unified advocacy campaign – as in the case of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law – proved to be effective and helped link the local communities with national-level efforts.
* **Partnership with local structures boosts messaging and ownership of the change.** Through Phases I and II, CBOs learned how to approach local structures and groups to facilitate cooperation and implementation on the ground. This was clear from cases that involved municipalities (Abnaa Saidaa and Mosawat), approaching religious leaders (Al Jalil and Abnaa Said) and cooperation with other small CBOs (e.g. al Jalil). For instance, the cooperation with municipalities supported the anti-sexual harassment campaign and the study conducted by Mosawat CBO.
* **Short-term funding for CBOs is not proportional to the anticipated change in gender norms.** The learning confirmed by CBOs is that short-term funding is not adequate to consolidate and sustain results on social norms to extend the influence to wider groups in the community, especially as CBOs are experiencing the challenge of scarce funding. This is also linked with the fact that with the economic crisis, youths will not be able to secure long-term commitment without having incentives**.**

Conclusions

**Conclusion 1:** The Lebanon component of the regional MWGE programme has achieved successes at the micro-level, and to a lesser degree at meso- and macro-levels in a very challenging and dynamic environment, especially in Phase II. The Programme a saw a significant change in its approaches between Phase I and Phase II due to the onset of multiple simultaneous crises and the need to respond to these. The programme had to respond to multiple challenges but was also able to capitalise on new opportunities which arose, including at the macro level in contributing to legal advances on countering sexual harassment and proposed parental leave legislation. While these allowed for increased relevance at the country level, they deviated from and risked diluting the coherence of the regional approach.

**Conclusion 2:** Linked to the above, the programme in Lebanon in Phase II struggled with rapidly rising implementation costs as well as both the emergence of new needs but also of opportunity. Here, the degree of flexibility within the programme was crucial for allowing for adjustments to be made, but again increased the risk of deviation. The multiple crises affecting Lebanon led to a decreased purchasing power for the programme, and it may be worth conducting an in-depth assessment how well the financial and human resources allocated to the programme were able to respond to this. More broadly, there is a need to assess the division of tasks and responsibilities, as well as lines of accountability, both at the national level and across the regional programme as a whole to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.

**Conclusion 3:** Some of the most successful work of the Lebanon programme was when multiple levels of influencing came together, from the micro- to the macro-level, such as in the Anti-Sexual Harassment advocacy work, which led to the passing of the country’s first anti-sexual harassment law and was complemented by meso- and micro-level activities. This process also highlighted the value of having unified advocacy campaigns to maximise their effect. However, a number of the successful national-level activities did not directly link to the other MWGE components regionally, nor were all regional level campaigns seen as relevant by the Lebanon programme. National-level activities and campaigns should be co-ordinated with the regional level to allow for overall coherence, quality assurance and maximising impact at scale.

**Conclusion 4:** Engagement with government structures and institutional uptake was mixed. While MWGE was able to seize on opportunities as they arose, a number of these were only loosely linked to the overall programme logic. There was not a sustained engagement with key government structures, in part due to the multiple crises affecting Lebanon, and this was also reflected in the Advisory Committee’s work. In the absence of national-level engagement, the partnerships with and engagement of local governmental authorities by CBOs can be a good strategy to create a consolidated local message and ownership for the community problems.

**Conclusion 5:** The programme was able to work with ‘unusual suspects’ to increase the reach of its messaging, such as the Scouts, security sector institutions such as the LAF and ISF, religious leaders, and taxi drivers.

**Conclusion 6:** In terms of LNOB, the programme did actively engage with Palestinian and Syrian refugees, as well as with LGBT organisations. However, more could have been done in terms of engaging with persons with disabilities.

**Conclusion 7:** Having a local, feminist umbrella organisation helped ensure accountability to the women’s movement, but also ensured that all CBOs embraced feminist principles and created networking opportunities for them, allowing them to link better with the women’s movement. Being part of MWGE also shifted the ways of working on gender equality of some of the CBOs who had previously not worked with men and boys on these issues. As in other countries, the capacity-building of the CBOs was largely successful and the possibility of CBOs to ‘graduate’ into playing more active roles in MWGE was appreciated.

Recommendations

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Recommendation | | Level | Linked conclusions | Directed | Ranking | How Action Can be Supported |
| 1 | The regional and country-level implementers, in particular the regional and country offices, need at the outset of the programme to decide on clear rules on how far national implementation can deviate within the overall parameters of the regional programme, what the process is, and agree these with the donor | Strategic | 1, 2 | UN Women (regional/CO), SIDA/other donors | **High** | Go through scenarios of possible needs for national-level deviation, drawing on experiences in especially Phase II, and accompany this with a **costing exercise (including human resources)**, to the degree possible |
| 2 | Enhance **institutional uptake**, in particular at national and local levels of government, work with implementing partners and other allies on developing joint and co-ordinated advocacy efforts, and ensure that these link with other programme activities as well as the regional level. | Strategic/ Programmatic | 1, 3, 4, 5 | UN Women (regional/ CO)/ Implementing partners, third parties | **Medium** | Identify key entry points, including with ‘unusual suspects,’ and ensure there is coherence in messaging and a joining up of different levels of activities, backed up with regional expertise, quality assurance and possibilities of amplifying the message |
| 3 | Further work towards integrating different levels of programming to ensure a more **comprehensive socioecological approach** involving men and women together, and supporting individual-level change at the community level and vice-versa, and linking these to regional efforts | Programmatic | 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 | UN Women (regional/CO), implementing partners | **High/ Medium** | This will require ensuring better integration of different levels of programming to ensure that these are mutually reinforcing rather than stand-alone. |
| 4 | Given the challenges of the more strategic level Advisory Committee, consider having a more working-level Technical Committee instead | Programmatic | 3, 4, 7 | UN Women CO | **Medium** | This should involve government structures but also representatives of the women’s movement |
| 5 | Continue to ensure that all implementing partners understand, incorporate and live up to core **feminist principles** in their work, and are **accountable to the women’s rights movement nationally, and are able to link up with these**. Ensure however also that approaches engage with men to transform patriarchal masculinities | Programmatic | 7 | UN Women CO, umbrella organisations, CBOs | **Medium** | Continue current model of having local feminist umbrella organisation |
| 6 | Improve integration of LNOB principle by further broadening engagement with LGBT persons as well as people living with disabilities. | Operational | 6 | UN Women CO, implementing partners, local LGBT rights and disabilities rights NGOs | **Medium** | Work with local LGBT and disabilities rights organisations to build capacity of CBOs to work more with these populations. Test, pilot and adapt some of the approaches developed in Egypt on engaging with men with disabilities. |
| 7 | **Systematically apply** agreed responsibilities, accountabilities, consultation processes and information updates between ROAS and CO levels. | Operational | 1, 2, 3, 4 | UN Women (ROAS/ country offices) | **High** | COs need to ensure that ROAS is systematically brought in for quality assurance and consistency of all external outreach products and that these reinforce messaging informed by best practice. |

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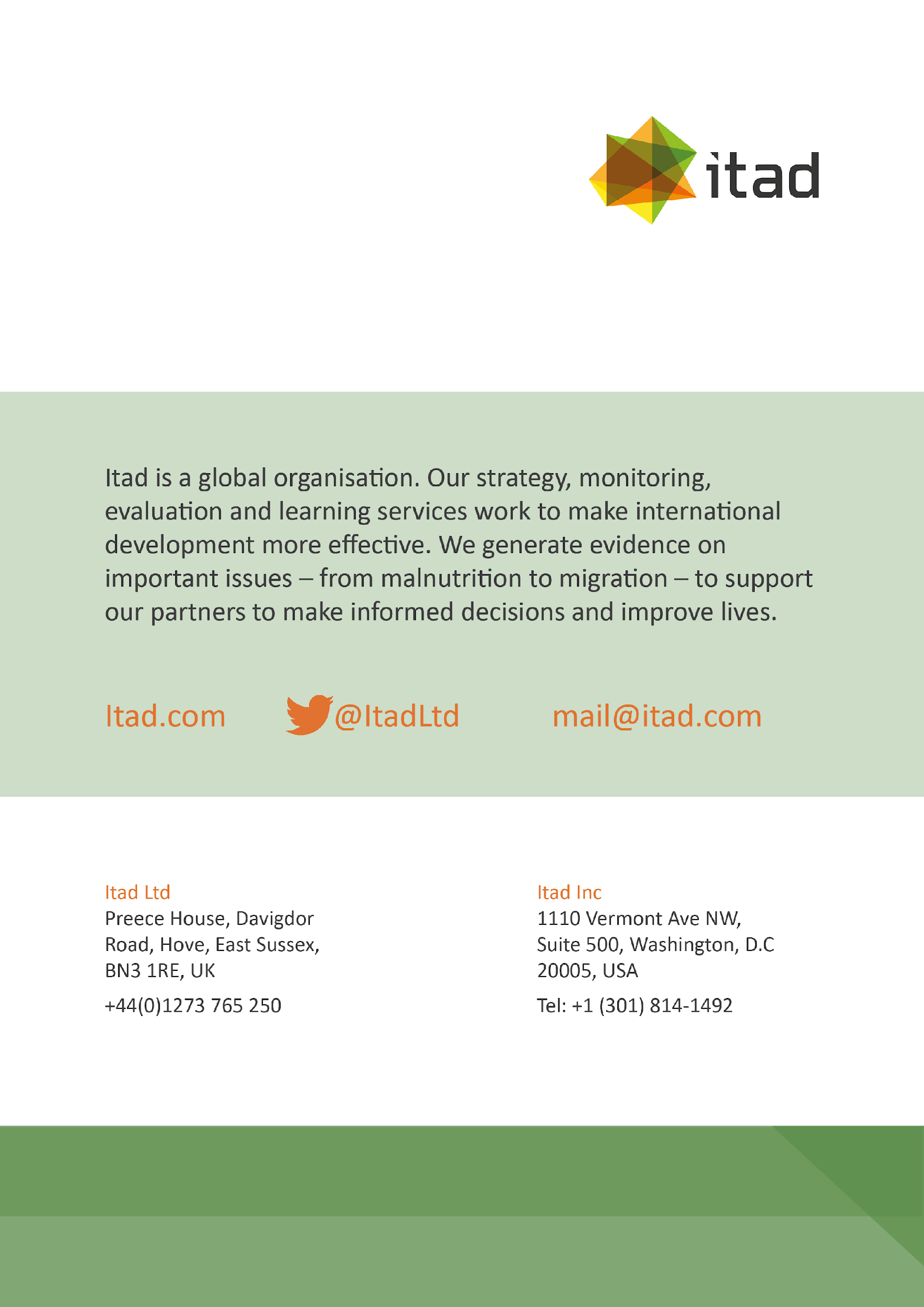
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