

## FIELD RESEARCH

### Interviews – Focus Groups March-June 2017 Lebanon.

#### Lebanese Civil Society, NGOs, Government & Political Parties:

1) ABAAD <http://www.abaadmena.org/>

With Roula Masri

On 12 May 2017

#### a) Challenges: Root causes of Gender Inequalities / Patriarchal system in Lebanon

The situation of women should be seen under a pure gender perspective. analyzing gender roles and how are being reflected and translated where. between private vs and public sphere. The social perception of women in Lebanon are patriarchal based and very much linked in to the roles of the private sphere, (child breeding, taking care of the children, taking care of the elderly, taking care of the families, including the husbands, ct) how women are perceived, their "natural roles".

How women perceive their role: ??? (if you asked Women in Lebanon, the ones who do not have a job in the public sphere / social, political and religious participation is in the public sphere) do not see they are doing a role. Private sphere has also an economic value, even if is not paid. They believe that they are doing nothing, important perception and how they were educated to believe that this role in the private sphere has not value. When women say that, they do not acknowledge their role, as valuable and that needs to be paid, they do not recognize the economic value.

Instead when men starting to ask more time in the private sphere, they “acknowledge” this role. to have more systemic support. This is where is related also with patriarchy notion and gender dynamics, patriarchy it is a very conceptual notion, which only in this way does not mean anything, it is a monolithic concept that needs to be deconstructed it in a more tangible way to assess the gender relations. Relations between men and women, women and women, since women and men are taken by this point of view of patriarchy. Many times the patriarchal structure are perpetrated by women themselves. Since the patriarchal concept it is mainstreamed in both women and men mindset.

#### **Roles: Assessing objectively: Which are the mayor roles women in Lebanon are playing and the perception towards these roles?**

Public sphere: More productive role. Productive role in the economy, as meaning and assuming the role in the workforce which is paid, the number of women in the workforce is increasing so far (27%).

But looking in depth: 29% of women in the workforce, are jobs related to the role of women in the private sphere: education, nursery, caretakers, care economy.

Or: public relations, tourism, jobs based in the high value on the appearance of women, fashion, like "decorative jobs" in which women are seen and showed as objects.

This means that also women are inserted in the workforce mirrored and comes from patriarchal structure and it is framed by an androcentrism system.

**Another angle:** when men in the public sphere assume roles related with the private sphere or similar

in they are acknowledged, fashion designers, chefs are paid. It is not the problem of the specific role or duty, it is where is done, if is in the public sphere or in the private one!

As if they do those roles in the household /private sphere it is a shame. If instead are performed in the public sphere, then it is ok, if it is not, it is diminishing.

Everything in the public sphere it is controlled by men, social aspect, and how men and where men socialize, which is in the urban settings. In the streets, which are still dominated by men, the social leisure kind of things. Social aspect is still dominated by men.

Instead for women the public space give them lack of confidence and lack of safety among women, they are not sure they can hang around in the streets at certain hours. Even being afraid of being harassed

**Religious aspect** or everything with is enrollment in the community and charity work, it is the same, in the political parties when and If women assumes roles in committees are charitable roles, social and care roles, administrative roles.

All levels of high hierarchy is still dominated by men, religious leaders.

**But this cannot be seen only from a political participation of women,** it should be seen from holistic overall point of view on where are women in the society. How they are perceived, what they do, how men perceive what women do vs. how women perceive how men do.

### **Political Aspect: Assessed in two levels:**

Objective factors: it you assess what a women does in 24 hs you see that women do the households, if women is enrolled in a job which is generated income, (9 hs per day in the working sphere/economically productive paid job) so this other role in the private sphere needs to be assumed by another woman, mother, domestic worker, not never is assumed by another men.! So either by women doing it themselves or by reproducing these roles by another women, women still work a lot, as they work in both spheres, instead men only work in the public sphere in this way women end up working 14 or 16 or even more hours per day, as they work in both spheres.

How this is reflected in the political participation.

Root causes: TIME ALLOCATION: As political job required that persons are available at different times, and women do not have that time (for going to the meetings, etc) as they need to used that time to working the private sphere. so they end up feeling guilty. Psychological implications of the role that women should do! are women available because of time to full-fill these roles in an efficient way, in a manner they can attend all meetings and commitments, without needing to be apologetic, without feeling women are compromising other things.

Women before going to the national political sphere, they want to do something for their community, villages and at municipal level, but what are the options: feeling of guilt of compromising their families and they children, Because inside themselves they believe this -household- is their role!!Women That feel they are leaving off family in order to prioritize something it is not natural or normally her role, this is a super patriarchal feature.

TIME AND THE OUTLOOK AND HOW SHE PERCEIVES!! AS SOMETHING SHE IS ENTITLED TO.

**1) Community Level:** Assuming that women has the time, they feel they are entitle, they feel they deserve it and they can do this. Women are self-confidence feeling they have a role to play in the community. How this situation will be perceived by others and reflected in the gender dynamics...in the household and the community?

TIME OK. Assuming that the partner takes care of the household or tasks are equally shared, so women have time participate in the public sphere.

**other root cause.**

COMMUNITY: She has a voice to be raised and this will be a threat in the committee, in the political party positions, or in the political context because their masculinity.

How women and empowered women are perceived by men in the communities / public sphere ?

Men challenge women and ask to women, why they are there in first place, harassment, so you are a women you do not have a voice, diminishing behaviors towards women.

What are the costs? If women rise their voice, they will suffer threats by men, as there is not a supportive environment, as men will feel insecure and threatened by women who are rising voices, taking public space. It is a matter of masculinity and virility as they men believe it is "their space", "not womens space" as it is public space.

**Root causes many hidden challenges to take political,** public positions as if they want to (women) they will be challenged, stop by men as there is not supporting environment, it should be in a collective level.

2) National level: Women access to resources and control over resources. Resources: time, financial, skills, education, public exposure, etc, that women would lack, just because these are elements that need experience. you are not born a leader, it is a process of socialization to build up a leader, (women are not born they become S de Beauvoir), all these patriarchal mentality helped women to confine them and alienated them from these resources.

Women were confined and imposed, like a cocoon in few certain roles, in a "womens cage". What is available for women, was defined by men, these are the only resources and spaces allocated for you. So all of these behaviors and alienating process suffered by women, is being reflected as a result in political arena

Thus political participation (realm need experience) could not be seen as a separated topic, it is the peak, the top of the iceberg, it is the manifestation. As all of these things have being building up though times (could be translated assuming leadership positions)

Women need to overcome all these obstacles and complex situations to escalate, to reach that level, of leadership and political positions, there are some individuals who are capable to overcome all this but Gender deals with the majority not the minority.

The system in itself is being patriarchal against women and the **Political system is an expression** of that.

**Religion is a manifestation of patriarchal** attitudes and it feed up the patriarchal system, "it is mutual feedback between both structures" it is something that is in the core of patriarchal mentality

**Decoding what does it mean to be in a patriarchal mentality:** it means all and it included of these aspects mentioned here:

But how in a tangible ways we can pin-point and highlight these aspects in order to address it, to see what could be done, to tackle this in a practical way in order to see women in such positions and address women issues.

**Position on Quota System in Lebanon:** The quota is an affirmative measure to breach this gap. between women and men in the private sphere, it will accelerate women political. Participation, but still it is controversial issue among women organizations: some believe, women should earn the position not to be secured by mandatory measures.

Others instead think that women should have this accelerating measure to guarantee the seats. Quota will not guarantee that all women in Lebanon will become leaders.

**The current situation in Lebanon: who are the women now in power? Only** individuals, luck or particular characters, we would not guarantee that women ipso facto will be leaders., it will only paving the way for one or two, in rounds, until other women will see there are other women that are able, so "I can do it", It will take several rounds and terms, 10 to 15 years, clearly generations until the time this is seen as a natural role.

We do not judge what women do, what options women have, women should be able as a women that they have other options, not that women only have one option it should be free of choice. To be sure that women have access to all the resources for taking a free decision, having the total accessibility to powers, resources, until they perceive the have the same opportunities as men, that is only a matter of choice, not a matter of not alternative of coercion choice.

**Having a fast change in the system like the implementation of quotas which means Quantity** will not have an impact in the short term. It is not automatic, it is just the first step, but for achieving quality we would need to wait longer, until it comes naturally.

**Initiatives of ABAAD:** All of these root-causes (gender, masculinity) are treated and decoded by Abaad in their projects. to tackle the patriarchal mentality which is manifested in all of these aspects organizations working in manifestations of these features and root causes, Abaad is addressing the issue directly and indirectly, with different projects. Dealing with the role in the private sphere, the empowerment process to say not to violence, giving them options to be equipped with skills and knowledge, opening up opportunities, acquiring skills, knowledge sharing, services provision, working with men redefining masculinities. It is a way of dealing with patriarchy from different aspects, it is long term way. it is a slow change but sustainable. Resources, and studies and pillars.

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**2) MARAYA / LEAD ONG – <http://www.maraya.org>**

With Camale Cherfon

On 17 May 2017.

**a) Challenges: Root causes of Gender Inequalities / Patriarchal system in Lebanon**

She believes that the economic and human development is the key for equality, in an integral and participative manner.

The problem in the democratic process for women is still very low 20%.

**Root causes patriarchal system.**

The problem started within the culture, the fact that there were and still are matriarchal social system, proves that the main obstacle and problem is within the social entanglement, social-cultural system non in the religion/s.

The inception of inequality is found in the diverse cultural systems, in this case the patriarchal one.

Concerning the definition of Gender, it is a concept which is acquired, built by social norms, it is not

natural. As the cultural change takes generations, the cultural question has many things that are not quantifiable, that is why she believes that the modern use of statistics and numbers it is very helpful to show and measure social changes and trend. Normally when a social-cultural change starts, it takes around three generations to see concrete results in the society.

The Masculine denomination and Patriarchy is the first cause and base of the social-cultural relationship and structure. Women are part of this structure, and it is the education one of the main tools to change attitudes and societies.

Before back in the days, women never used to think about working in the public sphere, as their role was already pre-established and defined. In some countries and some societies this dynamic changed after wars and economic crisis, since women were forces in order to survive and bring income to their families to go out and start working, out of the home and private space (men were in war). The role of men were also pre-established and defined, so the masculine role is also on stake.

### **Position on Quota System in Lebanon.**

Concerning this particular issue, she believe that the current Lebanese political system is unequal to young men and women. There is a lack of space to add new actors in the political system.

New system should be created to implement and add new actors, a system in which everyone could have access to, based on meritocracy and competences, a system that is reachable to everyone willing and aiming to occupy political and leadership positions. A system that is flexible enough to give equal opportunities to everyone in society.

So far the political system and the decision-makers are always part of a closed circle, the same families and the power it is always preserved by them and by the political and religious loop they lead. Basically, in the Lebanese context, when it comes to political participation there is not space for new actors without resources or without networks.

Searching the implementation of the Quota System it is not a good option, as it is a discriminatory measure, it is not a good representation. Also the CEDAW convention should be applied at all levels, in an integral and holistic way, not only at political one.

Moreover, if the Quota is implemented, they same oligarchy will remain in power, it will not change anything, since individuals who arrive to that parliamentary positions they do only because of families ties, and corruption, political lobby, not merit not career, not even conviction. Only to preserve the situation how it is now, the stato quo.

The role of the State must be responsible to create a collective system with voluntary quota to the political parties, in which they will encourage women, but only qualified women in their political parties lists.

The Quota system it is not enough without any global social construction, including an integral cultural change.

**Situation of women:** Progress and economic development helped a lot to improve the situation of women. The considers that there are not obstacles at economic level for women, instead it is the culture and the system of lobby and this elites circles, (oligarchy) that makes they prefer men than women, it is the elitist culture.

Women must be an ACTOR.

The economic development and financial independence of women should be encourages and supported. Since the “economical and financial powers rules the world”. So, if women reach economic

independence, will eventually break the male dominant system and reach equal rights through development and financial independence, not by the implementation of the Quota System.

Using the theory Triangle of Maslow's hierarchy<sup>1</sup>, in which men first need to satisfy their basic and fundamental human needs (“deficiency needs”: esteem, friendship and love, security, physical needs which are in the base of the pyramid) in order to achieve higher levels of human realization which are self-actualization and self-transcendence, these two higher levels are developed in the public sphere when basic needs are fully satisfied. So, women in order to go out and to participate into the public sphere, first need to satisfy their basic and fundamental needs, and here it is where education and economic independence play a priority role.

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### 3) KAFA – <http://www.kafa.org.lb>

With Fatem Abouchacra

On May 22 2017

#### **Some Kafa Initiatives:**

Kafa has the first program center for victims of GBSV, including a call center. To provide psychological support to women at the end they help others as well. Also several partnership with other actors, politicians as also part of a coalition of Organization of the Civil Society, working in a coordination way.

Kafa has a structure of several interrelated units, it is main goal it is to empower and help women, advocacy campaign/victims/survival, organizing protests, public statement and letter to politicians, awareness and media campaigns, training materials, trainings and capacity building the creation of safe places in Bekaa.

Concerning the implementation of CEDAW, there is a regional projects aiming at training and developing a manual, guidelines of procedures in how to use the CEDAW for to judges and courts.

At the present Kafa carry on legal studies how to implement the CEDAW, particular the Article 16. with the coordination of the different ministries in Lebanon. (Women Affairs, Justice ministry. etc)

Kafa also was part of the shadows report prepared by the civil society organizations presented for the universal periodic review of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> CEDAW in Lebanon.

Kafa in cooperation with other ONGs partners is developing in parallel two processes to change the laws and raising awareness at two levels, in society and the institutions and political parties at the same time on the ground and the legal framework. In same ways the civil society in Lebanon is fulfilling the role that should be done by the state.

Kafa also considers that the civil society organizations in an integrated system should continue to the advocacy campaigns, studies, data collection, monitoring and follow up system, to eventually remove corruption, dealing with cased will be professional and effective.

The objective of Kafa it is to have a civil equal, law code, state should control the religious courts, religious status law should be allowed and limited according to civil code.

For Kafa the main source of inequality in Lebanon is the personal status law as the core of the problem women, women are a cage, a prison, and clearly they are victims and discriminated they are just surviving. Kafa tries always to use different tactics to tackle the religious and confessional system.

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1 Triangle of Maslow's Hierachy. Of needs: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s\\_hierarchy\\_of\\_needs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s_hierarchy_of_needs) (accessed 05 June 2017).

### **Concerning the Quota System and the situation of the political participation of women in Lebanon.**

In Lebanon the head of political parties are religious leaders, since already the Lebanese system it is based in a religious quota.

The situation in the parliament is controlled as in general all positions in the country, by corruption and a clientelism system, parliamentary do not do a legislative work, these groups only try to keep the support of their voters. So, Kafa as organization need to work with them closely and to “convince” them to push law modifications.

It is not easy for women to play their role in politics, if family and domestic violence does not end and the patriarchal dynamics is breached, as so far it has being always perpetuated by system. The causes are always found in the personal status law, which is approved by religious political parties. Unfortunately, due to the patriarchal and male dominated system even if there are many high educated, strong and qualified women, the decision making is always on men, which are the head of political parties deciding “who” to place as candidates.

As the state, is one the main source of power, politics and the Lebanese state, is a patriarchal one.

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#### **4) Women In Front - <http://www.womeninfront.org/>**

With Joelle Rizkallah / Nada Saleh Anid and Media/PIO officer

On 19 May 2017

#### **a) Challenges: Root causes of Gender Inequalities / Patriarchal system in Lebanon.**

Agreed that patriarchy ways of thinking it is one of the main causes of inequalities.

Resulting among many issues in women lack of self-esteem, women need to be given tools, empower them. For the same reason there is structural ignorance and misconception of what does it means freedom and having rights, awareness should be done in the sine of the family, unfortunately until women face the real problem, concerning inheritance distribution, divorce, loosing the custody of their children, nationality, etc. Clearly there is not equality in the laws, the lack of civil code is one of the main problems, thus the implementation of a civil code will accelerate the process, in this order WIF believes that when equal laws are enforced, mentality will change at the long run.

The economically independence of women it is only one important part in women's development, since even if women reach economic independence there are discriminative laws that place them in an inferior and diminished situation (personal status law). Moreover, women have different relation with money are more familiar oriented, invest more in the protection of families. Instead men will have more initiatives and activities related with their ego, with their own interest, to get more power and influence.

WIF believe that the only way to tackle the patriarchal system is political and public participation of women in the public space, political and leadership positions, such as head of firms, head of unions, only placing women in the public eye, public space to get used to see women in the public, so they start to dominate and to “own” the public space, as normal and natural. Families should be targeted as a whole, to make the presence of women normal.

#### **b) Position on Quota System in Lebanon.**

The clientelistic and corrupted political life in Lebanon along with the patriarchal system are the main challenges and causes hindering women political participation.

It is clear If women participate in political parties have more changes to win than running as

independent candidates. WIF supports both initiatives.

WIF consider that women once are in parliament, they can work in women lobbies on common ground on things interested for women; women in parliament, would work for the whole country, to promote gender equality and represent the entire country and range of voters, not only work for women issues.

In order to do that, women also need to be trained and should be aware about laws with attacks all women interests and rights in Lebanon, since sometimes women do not believe some laws are targeting them, and discriminate them. WIF is working in all these aspects to try to make them understand that women even from political parties, can also work in women common interests.

The current situation it is also that in Lebanon women do not want to participate in politics, because they do not see any good example, instead men do, clearly women and men have different ambitions and perception about politics..

Actually women in parliament and in political parties, can and should somehow do both, working within political parties and on women issues. Indeed, WIF though their initiatives empower women in political parties to entitle them to demand from their own political parties to be nominated and to fight for the quota and place the issue on the political party in the agenda.

WIF consider that one of the role of women in the political parties should be push to force political candidates to nominate them, to support them and to be put on the candidate lists. Important to note that 53% of voters in Lebanon are women.

So far the first challenge it is to have elections in Lebanon, since normally electoral lists are done at very last moment, and political parties tend to do changes and nominate their candidates at last time.

Perspectives of women as interests in the political arena/public sphere:

- fighting corruption.
- changing the personal status law, for the implementation of a civil law/code. (ex. Nationality issue)
- ecological topic
- taxes and economic topics.
- Secular State.

Women in Lebanon, have not history of political participation or activism, usually political parties, nominate old well-known men, someone who provided services in the villages, someone they know, they trust, voters are treated as clients. In remote areas where there is not presence of the state, very strong people is needed, since if population do not trust them, if they do not know them, community and parties will not support you. It is the always same vicious circle. For these reasons system needs to be changed. Lebanese society do not have faith in the country, there is a lack of motivation.

### **c) Some general initiatives.**

WIF develops several types of initiatives as projects, all of the could be found in their website. For example some in coordination with politician and different ministries, doing lobbying for the implementation go the quota.

Another projects such as "women do politics" in the media on the LBC channel (lebanese TV) aiming at debating and encourage potential political candidates between men and women candidates.

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## **5) Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Beirut - <http://www.lebanonywca.org/beirut/>**

With Samira Maasri / Taline Torikian

On 16 May 2017.

### **a) Challenges: Root causes of Gender Inequalities / Patriarchal system in Lebanon.**

Patriarchal is system one leader for this sects, one president, one man, who should initiate and leading the structure, one men leading the family, one man leading the country and the political party.

“One Men head of the family, head of the party and the head of the state”.

Another problem is the confessional system and religions, there is already a quota system which is for confessions.

Women are always judged was more than men for not being qualified for political positions.

In Lebanon women comes in general from political families with power and money, not because of their have careers and qualifications, interestingly enough men believes they were born politician.

Still the CSO are doing awareness campaigns to reach the equality, even within the family fighting gender stereotypes, in the working context, schools, etc.

Lebanon has to change the gender stereotypes and the sectarian law should be abolished to implement the civil law.

### **b) Position on Quota System in Lebanon.**

The only solution is the law and the implementation of quota system in order to reach some equality over time.

The last thing political parties think is the Quota System, as they are worried about the configuration of power in the new electoral law. Political parties systematically blame other political parties, that is why the Lebanon is waiting for the electoral law to be approved yet.

Unfortunately, campaigns promoting the Quota System are not enough, law is important to enforce women.

### **c) Some general initiatives.**

The Civil Society in general have undertaken several initiatives, but without any electoral law approved so far.

YWCA coordinate the coalition of Women In Parliament (WIP-2013), coalition to have women in decision-making positions, lobbying and working with the political parties, who are the one who endorse women who are going to run as candidates and maybe headed political parties. Therefore, in working with the members of the special commission which are writing the law, women's department of the political parties, to include them encouraging them to participate at political decision-making level.

Cooperating and encouraging women in the commission, on boards, having a group in the parliament. Since women are working together, they could change law to get more women and to see more women in politics. Women should share and have a say in everything in the country.

There is a slight change in population about the quota thinking, some evolution in time, people want women in political positions and they feel that men so far have done nothing improve the situation of he communities and population and they see women as less corrupted.

Civil Society is working to fight corruption, meeting with the head of the parties, in some cases parties are showing a slight change, but it is very slow. Still everything it is only at the discourse level.

International pressure is trying to play a role in Lebanon.

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**6) The Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Woman (LECORVAW) Tripoli.**

<http://daleel-madani.org/profile/lebanese-council-resist-violence-against-woman>

With Saraa Dannawi and Dr. Ranim Osman

On 16 May 2017.

Focus Group with around 10/12 women from Tripoli some of them, were victims of violence, some of them were to the ONGs to receive psycho-social support and legal assistant in legal issues concerning their personal status law.

**a) Challenges: Root causes of Gender Inequalities / Patriarchal system in Lebanon.**

Patriarchy mentality of society, culture and social norms, retrograde and violent culture which are dangerous towards women.

Parliament which are me, are the responsible to resolve the obstacles in Lebanon, men deprive women to speak, there is a situation of domination and great corruption, at the same time lack of economic resources for accessing to politics, “is you are poor you are out”.

Men believe men in politics are one of the main obstacles for women development, they have the power, but they do not want to help women to unblock their situation

Moreover, how the sharia is implemented in Lebanon it is an obstacle due to wrong interpretation of that hinders women to develop and participate in politics. They consider the Iman and the sunna the ones to blame for the wrong and biased interpretation of the Sharia an Q'ran.

Sharia courts are also dominated not only by men but also by corruption and male-clientelism.

(all judges are men and in general they do not care about women).

Interest comment: Some Sharia lawyers and judges said they are scared and afraid of the proliferation of women movement, somehow they fear women power, they know what women can do male feel threaten by women. fears her capacities. Since also CSOs are trying to implement CEDAW, men do not want that women become strong and will put more obstacles in confessional courts, even more if they face “strong” and educate women who knows sharia law (the same judges apply the law favoring men against women) the same goes for men in the political establishment blocking very powerful and well educated women from leadership positions.

The fact that the CEDAW is not implemented therefore not domestic law so far, hinders severely the development of women in Lebanon.

Women expressed that the discrimination against women make then impossible to raise their children equally, since they have limited rights under a context of violence. They were puzzle about how women can progress in the society if women are in a violent and male dominated environments (levels of violence against women levels increased against in April 2017 in Tripoli).

They attribute this increased in violence due the extremism and radical position of some women movements, which ending up creating a bigger problem, backlash from men, instead of helping to solve the problem of violence against women.

As well, they consider that the Syrian crisis is playing a negative role in Lebanese population; men and women are lacking economic resources, increasing violence against women. men have depression because they are not able to bring money or to be the provider for the family anymore, so there is a

crisis of masculinity, and turns in more violence against women and children.

Some women of the groups perceive that women feels secured if their are surrounded by a man, at home and other contexts.

The believe the reason is that men and women are not equal, men and women are complemented. Women feels unsecured because of men in the street, since there is a physical supremacy of men over women. Thus women *“need protection from men by other men”*?? this situation limit their freedom and decisions.

How this could be changed:

Women believe that education and how they raise the next generation and raising boys and girls in the “similar” way (they are nor sure of equality)

Women and mothers perpetuated the patriarchal dynamics. The group in general believes that how mothers/women are treated within the family as an example for kids (boys / girls) is basic. But women should change their way for kids upbringing, as clearly women are replicating the oppressive system.

They consider that when people become parents they should receive trainings to change their minds and awareness on how educate children, how an equal distribution of roles in the family should be done (new model). The government and NGOS/ CSOs should do the training including and awareness campaign and sessions from and with religions leader.

Awareness sessions: should cover women rights, in general before marriage to change the mentality.

Some women in the group, think it is impossible to change and others consider the change should start from home, from house, from women itself.

In a general manner women consider that roles should be the same, interchangeable.

There is a problem of new couples: cultural background, influence of the family and relatives which is very strong, some believe that the partners are possessions. It is worse in the city and countryside

More difficult for old women to change their mentality, they said: *“each year is it a long fight, change mentality is harder than change laws!”*

#### **b) Position on Quota System in Lebanon.**

In favour of the system of quota, since they consider that it will help to the identification and understanding of women needs.

One issue among women is that not all women from political / religious party -even if they believe in political participation of women, quota, etc- do not have nor reach a common ground. because they do not trust other women, sometime it could be harmful for women rights fight, when women are applying only their political interest and party interest which create more divisions.

In Lebanon CSOs are taking the role of the political parties to empower women. instead of parliament, municipal participation of women is still very low although some increased was seen in last years.

Since 40 years the agenda of political parties is the same, nothing have changed, always the particular interests of the political party and the political scene is being dominated by the same establishment. As there are not improvement in the situation of the country, poverty, unemployment, people is getting poorer, thus it is very difficult to place women rights and issues in the political agenda when there are some other basic needs and demands to fulfill.

#### **c) Some general initiatives.**

Legal assistant in cases with religious courts (sharia courts) concerning divorces, alimony, inheritance,

children custody, etc. Trainings to empower women, advocacy, information about their rights, psychosocial support.

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### **7) Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs Lebanon.**

With Abir Chebaro (Future Movement / Advisor to the Minister), Nada Makki, Projects Coordinator & Thea Hochar Communication Assistant

On 10 May 2017.

#### **a) Challenges: Root causes of Gender Inequalities / Patriarchal system in Lebanon.**

One of the main challenges are the economic issues for running as a politician, as it is very expensive to run as a candidate without any support.

Another serious constraints for women is the personal status law, which is “a wall”

The public sphere is clearly male-dominated and man fears competency, if a women is even worse (men use the privilege and advantage of the personal status law to block women to get to power and threaten their position). That is why women need to build a strong network together

“shout to the media” what women can do, show visibility, speak in platforms, show the positiveness in being a women active in the public sphere. As “political women marketing” should be done.

So far one important issue is that women do not know how to achieve those positions, yet women do not have political experiences and the “know-how” and the tools. Unfortunately, media is not helping and traditional stereotypes are always used by media to shape women and objectify them Media should be penalized when they show stereotypes and diminish women.

Finally, if Lebanon is a civil country needs to adapt it domestic laws to civil code and the constitution in the article n.9 (personal status laws and religious laws and courts)

#### **b) Position on Quota System in Lebanon.**

The ministry is fully supportive of the 30 % quota for the council of ministers for women in the elections.

But legal serious reforms and amendments in the electoral draft, quota law, women in municipalities (when are registered in other municipalities), should be done, such as solve the problem with names of women in the lists (use the family name, as normally have two names single and the married name), specify sex of the candidate and the obligatory of printing ballots which is very important.

#### **c) Some general initiatives.**

Pressure for the implementation of the CEDAW and Beijing Platform.

Preparation of the Action Plan of the Ministry's National Strategy with the SCOs and national and international actors.

Presentation of the electoral draft with the Quota System of 30% along with the coalition and CSOs

Advocacy initiatives, workshops to politically empower women, promotion of the quota through projects and conference at national level with the support of international donors and stakeholders, like EU, Chilean Embassy, UNDP, UN Women, etc.

The Office also aims and pushes for the establishment of National Observatory for Women to monitor the situation of women at national level.

The Ministry Jean Oghassabian, is regularly meeting political parties advocating the quota system

implementation and trying to pass the message to the political parties to include the quota and women issues on their political party agenda, even encouraging to add voluntary quota in the parties, in the case the mandatory parliamentary quota law is not approved. The Ministry stated in a conference with UNESCWA and UNIC: *“Adoption of a democratic, proportional and non-sectarian electoral law that involves young people and women; amendments to the penal code and other Lebanese laws to remove any gender discrimination; drafting legislation to address gaps in the labor law; elimination of gender discrimination and stereotyping from educational curricula; and abolition of conditions on women benefiting from family compensation for their non-working husbands. “*

**8) Dr. Marguerite Helou – National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) / International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) / Lebanese University.**

On 26 May 2017

**a) Challenges: Root causes of Gender Inequalities / Patriarchal system in Lebanon.**

There is an evident struggle for power and patriarchy attempt of creating women as they come become a potential threat to those men privileges positions.

The same happens with the personal status law, the religious/political leaders do not want to the implementation of the civil code / civil law they will lose the power. So women are perceived as enemies

The patriarchal system is more rooted in women than men and development cannot be imposed from western countries. It should be an internal growing process that it will take generations to change. It should started from family, the change will come very slowly, step by step only through an internal process the Lebanon cannot separate religion from politics.

Women are so embedded in the culture of sects that are perpetuating the survival of the patriarchal system and the sects.

The reality of Lebanon is more realistic, we should look at the depth at sectarianism and how rooted is in Lebanon.

Lebanon is has a very conflictual culture on politics, not agreement in basic issues, even the main topics are not talked are hidden. It a heterogeneous society with different levels of conflictual relations between groups and sects.

**b) Position on Quota System in Lebanon.**

She is now in favour of the quota but consider that it is almost impossible to implement it in Lebanon. Sectarianism is not bad in itself it is how is implemented in the political system.

These hidden social and cultural tension which are underneath the political struggles, affects the power relation between the groups, under a context of heterogeneity and pluralism, so any attempt to change are called: imperialist or western invasion and cultural invasion (excuses)

There is a deep fear for the existence, actually for survival and the needs of identity, this has a major impact on women in politics as men believes that women are not capable of protect and defend the interest of the political/religious parties and communities, so to assure the survival of the clan/sect.

Concerning the civil society trying to fight for equality and quota system, show many divisions, and lack of funding, not permanence not rotation of power neither in politics neither in the CSOs, new blood is not given the change to participate in the change, women or men.

Unfortunately, dominance of clientelistic relations, women are following men, in the families alliances,

since the head of families the one who negotiate everything in politics, exchanges off services, to enter into politics you need to have financial resources and social network, women is readies at the service of the men, she is supposed to be next to her men. not otherwise not other way around.

In the present women are out as they are out of the circle, out from the system of clientelism and influential network, meaning structure of the Lebanese parliament and the elites, families and in the inheritance of seats, the names are always the same, people and followers remains the same. If look into history and traditional relations in Lebanon the historical exchange of favors are the same Lebanon have not changed so far, since familiarism is the origin of clientelismn and them it changed for business clientelism in which to keep the family in power. The sectarianism power sharing formula the elites alliances and what it goes within the sects are all obstacles to the electoral law and along with the gerrymandering on the structural law.

Political parties have other priorities, first they need to solve the distribution of seats and power. women

Women CSOs in Lebanon are mirrors of the system and the ideology, following the same dynamics of domination and hierarchy, without a powerful sponsor possibility are very limited. Thus women could not chose either the political system, not the quota.

So far under this context the best chances for women to be represented it is the proportional system, rising fear among the representation of sects as it does no guarantee representation of all sects.

If we say that Lebanon is a democratic country, we should include and rise women participation in politics, it is clearly very important but it happens is that the responsible for the quota implementation of quota are men in the parliament, so how women can take the lead and push for women participation, even if the participation is increasing but very low.

Women should be united, raised awareness to form a common ground which now is non-existent to fight for women issues. At the moment, a lot of things are discussing concerning women rights, the quota is very important to build the trust on women and show the image that women can do the same as men.

### **c) Some general initiatives.**

Several studies on gender and political participation. Proposal of Quota System draft and action plan<sup>2</sup> Project Study on Advocacy for the Adoption of a Quota for Women in Electoral law” funded by EU NCLW and Eurecma. <http://whoisshe.lau.edu.lb/expert-profile/marguerite-helou>

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## **9) Wafaa Dikah Hamze — Former Minister of State / National Commission for Lebanese Women** On 31 May 2017.

### **a) Challenges: Root causes of Gender Inequalities / Patriarchal system in Lebanon.**

Patriarchy is the main causes hindering gender equality, religious in Lebanon are a factor which deepen the problem, which is dominated by very strong family relation which dominates the system that is

<sup>2</sup> M. Helou. “*Study on Advocacy for the Adoption of a Quota for Women in Electoral Law*” EU, NCLW, Eurecma, p. 39. 2016.

deeply rooted in the society. It cannot be change fast, it will be a generational change,. A well diagnosis should be done, people should be conscious about this dynamic.

There is an evident definition of gender roles, authority coming from the masculine society in which women roles are looked as secondary roles, not main nor leading ones, this scenario can be seen very clear at political roles, in the male ownership of the public sphere women will be immediately overshadowed.

These traditions in rural areas are even deeper, across the region is the same.

The confessional quota system is another factor added to the complexity of Lebanon, as the political system is based in these distribution of seats for confessions.

The gap between the economic sector/ productive forces and the university is ample, women end the university but after they are not inserted in the job market not in decision-making positions, they just disappear, where these skilled and well qualified women go? They need to become visible to have power.

This division and sharp demarcation between male and women has a huge impact on women and how society looks at women. That is why women should be proactive, be confident, aware about their role, have a strong transcendental role, aim for more, playing main roles as male (paraphrasing S. De Beauvoir), not only having reproductive functions. Women should start getting rid of fears, shyness, and establish priorities for her out of the family.

The issue of economic independence is very important, but other aspects which are related to the status personal law, indeed one of the main issue in women situations, since even having the economical means to be independent is worthless, if was do not protect nor guarantee rights (equal rights) to women, money it will only lessen the problem, but it will not solve all the issues, it will help only working toward equality. So far, women do not have full power nor control over their life which are under the personal laws status.

How to change the situation?

The way is to face the scenario from a multi-track approach: Csos are crucial lobbying, advocacy, media campaigns, rising awareness, also women in general should active themselves, State should abide their domestic law implementing the CEDAW and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, taking international responsibility.

### **b) Position on Quota System in Lebanon.**

Quota as a temporary special measures and positive discrimination should be definitely implemented, otherwise it is impossible to breach the glass ceiling.

There is a minimal participation of women in politics, the same goes for political activists. Several Lebanese women are deprived of the right to participate. In Parliament only the 3% are women (max. was almost 5%).

Legislative participation and municipalities are very low as well even if increased a bit lately. This is the same for the political parties, there are very poor representation of women. Only recently a shine representation for women in leadership levels is seen. In spite women constitute a big base for political electorate.

Political parties not encourage women, they are just using women to gain votes, not really to take into consideration women needs, parties dot not give women the space to be candidate, they are just instrumentalized for parties interests..

### **c) Some general initiatives.** <http://whoisshe.lau.edu.lb/expert-profile/wafa%E2%80%99-dikah-hamze->

[former-minister-state](#)

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**10) National Commission for Lebanese Women – <http://nclw.org.lb/en/>**

with Chantal Bou Aki and Rita Azzi

On 25 April 2017.

**a) Challenges: Root causes of Gender Inequalities / Patriarchal system in Lebanon.**

Definitely patriarchy and the confessional/ sects system. Clearly male domination and religious influence reinforce this system. That is why the change in the law and in though all the initiatives the commission is undertaking to slowly tackle the situation will not see results soon. The resistance it is very strong and the stereotypes are ingrained in the family, schools, rural areas, job market, social and cultural norms, in everything. It is also important to remark that women for this reason feels trapped by different fronts, mainly considering the personal status law which has an important negative impact in women life and in reaching equality Basically this norms alienate women, treating them as minors and second class citizens.

All types the measure should be taken to weakness the patriarchal and male dominated system. In parallel women organization and NGOs are part of the same dynamic and system, therefore behaviors and relations are replicated, in addition to the confessional divisions seen also in the NGOs since is a traversal issue. This make that women so far are not all on the same path, they are not fighting together on a common ground.

**b) Position on Quota System in Lebanon.**

In favour for the 30% of Quota system in addition the integral reform of the electoral law, since they consider the amendments should be done in a holistic and complete way to also achieve transparent and democratic values.

In parallel they consider the system of confession should be abolish, but political parties and religious leaders has so much power and influence and will not give up their privileged positions and influence in favour of a more fair and equal system in Lebanon.

**c) Some general initiatives. See <http://nclw.org.lb/en/>**

The NCLW has presented different electoral bill drafts and proposals always including the quota of 30% for women participation.

Projects with national and international donors and stakeholders concerning advocacy, empowerment and promoting women political participation. EU, UNDP, UN Women among others. Member of the different coalitions / WIP and CSOs to pressure for a women quota.

Raising awareness campaigns.

Monitoring, follow up and political pressure to the government and political parties to fully implement and abide the international treaties ratify by Lebanon like CEDAW.

Implement the National Action Strategy Plan for Women (10 years) to reach gender equality.

Advocacy and pressure to implement the civil code for the personal status of citizens.

Carried studies concerning the municipal elections and women participation.

Preparation of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> CEDAW periodic review for Lebanon among other initiatives

## 11) Joelle Choueifati American Lebanese Law. <http://www.uslebanonlaw.com/>

On 08 April 2017.

### a) Challenges: Root causes of Gender Inequalities / Patriarchal system in Lebanon.

Patriarchal and confessional system are the main causes of inequalities. Basically the system which blocks women development could be divided in: social-cultural relations, family, languages, and religious.

All the initiatives from civil society, advocacy, raising awareness, press the government with the support of the international community to abide the international instruments of women rights.

There is still the tensions as consequence of the war, women issues are not a priority, still basic services and needs should be covered and satisfied. But concerning women issues there is not political will. Politician only gives some “crumbs” of liberty to make them feel they are free, liberal, but the truth it is that women are living in a cage under a very unequal and discriminate law.

### b) Position on Quota System in Lebanon.

She is not totally in favoring the implementation of quota system

### c) Some general initiatives. See <http://www.uslebanonlaw.com/>

Advocacy campaigns for women empowerment.

Women legal assistant and workshops in personal status law.

Training and conference in the situation of women in Lebanon, mainly in the personal status law and the implementation of the CEDAW in the country.

Advocacy and raising awareness about the need of a civil code.

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## 12) Lebanese Forces Political Party

with Maya Zarghini on 29 May 2017.

### a) Challenges: Root causes of Gender Inequalities / Patriarchal system in Lebanon.

From one side, she is not agreed that patriarchy is the problem hindering women to reach equality. Women is she wants to, she can do it, that is why she consider women need to fight herself, not the men, it is her who need to go to the battle field, women should put limits to men and be strong and having determination. Thus it is up to women responsibility to change the situation and to earn rights.

The problem are women, there is an evident question of mentality, women do not want to work in politics, a change in the mentality is needed, that is why there just a few women in politics. But at the same time she explains that it is more difficult to change men mentality than women, men would think (I will make my son candidate not my daughter of wife). Women sometimes stop at the first obstacle they find and give up the political participation, because of social-culture pressure. There is a lack of political culture.

they do not want to be candidates, unless they are “forced” to participate in the political life. Probably, since they prefer dedicate time to their family, they will always prioritize family instead of public life. Reasons are unknown to her.

Women should get used to see women in politics. Genders roles should be changed in schools and families first

But first women need to receive: capacity building and political training and political, empowerment targeted also rural women to start working in their villages at lower political levels.

There are three main issues that women should achieve in order to get closer to equality.

- 1) Economic independence.
- 2) Job Market insertion.

3) In the public and political sphere, women should join a political party not running as an independent candidate.

**b) Position on Quota System in Lebanon.**

The Quota should be implemented, it could be the 30% in the electoral law or in zebra<sup>3</sup> voluntary on the lists of the political parties.

If women arrive to politics, there are not going to change the personal status because they need to follow their parties. She will do that, if the political party agenda do not support women issues mainly which are not convenient to the party power or influence, so women issues will be out of the agenda.

Eventually with time some laws, would change, maybe one or two but not more. So far, women should run under the umbrella of a political party, otherwise will not have any change to get seat and win in the parliament as independent (lack of network and financial resources). Clearly, women have not common ground in Lebanon, they are divided by confessional divergences.

Eventually, women only will fight for their rights when it really “touch them directly” otherwise will women which are in a privileged environment, the one who are part of the elite, have not interest in changing the situation as they feel it does not concern them as they feel they are not affected by laws, since this women are part of elitist and powerful circle.

The issue of passing the nationality it is very delicate/sensitive, it is better to keep the stato quo and laws the way they are now to avoid any demographic change in the country since it is a main political question.

Concerning how to implement the quota:

- 1) If the women in the party works for the interest of the political party, so she may be placed on the list based on a voluntary internal quota.
- 2) Otherwise, the quota should be implemented in a mandatory way to eventually change the mentality.

The main point now it is that still nobody knows what will happen with the quota in the electoral law, if it will be approved or not. Women and political parties should work together at internal level to reach political positions since women cannot wait until the mandatory quota is implemented.

**c) Some general initiatives.**

In the case of Lebanese Forces (FL) the party is pushing for three laws: early marriage (art.522), domestic violence, voluntary or zebra internal quota in the party. If political parties, change at internal level adding the voluntary quota, this may trigger some changes of visions and perspectives in other political parties which could take this as a based to implement the quota at national level.

**Main International Community Actors:**

**13) European Union Delegation (EEAS) Lebanon** – [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lebanon\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lebanon_en)

With Roula Abbas – Programme Manager.

On 11 April 2017.

**a) Challenges: Root causes of Gender Inequalities / Patriarchal system in Lebanon.**

Concerning the political participation of women, will be no directly affected by the full implementation

<sup>3</sup> Zebra list: Term used mostly in west and southern Africa to describe a way in which candidates names are presented on a party's list: male and female candidates alternate, so that a male candidate comes immediately after a female candidate and vice versa. Arabic Lexicon of Electoral Terminology, 2014, p. 98, UNDP.

of CEDAW since the reservations made by Lebanon are more of social and cultural type. To reach equality unless a cultural shift from the confessional political and religious system in the country, CEDAW will never be implemented in the country and gender equality will always be incomplete.

Despite the slow pace of improvement, still some minor improvement whether in relation to the domestic law which was endorsed after more than six years of work by the Civil Society, or to amendment of some discriminatory articles in laws...etc.

**b) Position on Quota System in Lebanon.**

Actually the EU has not position on the Quota system as such in Lebanon as we consider this as a Lebanese affairs, but we of course think that this might be the start for something better.

Since Quota system might not be the best solution to increase effective women participation in governance in all countries equally. However, in Lebanon, due to the very low level of women participation in various sectors namely in the political life in comparison to other countries in the region, quota might be the “ignition or driving force” for enhancing women’s role and raising their voices in the political life and at the decision making level.

**c) Some general initiatives. See [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lebanon\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lebanon_en)**

EU has been providing support to gender mainstreaming in Lebanon since long time being among the main EU objectives and in improving situation of women, CEDAW implementation, Political participation and other women's rights that need to be addressed in the country is a long term objectives.

EU has been supporting women empowerment through its various development programmes as well as through its political dialogue with the government on various occasions.

One of the good example is that the very first draft law of "Gender Based Violence" (which was later converted into a Family Violence Law) was the main objective of an EU funded project with KAFA. Although Civil Society organisations continued the work after the project, but the first push was through an EU funded project. So since it is a long way process, we should never stop moving forward. Another project funded by EU, was “Gender Equity and Empowerment of Women in Lebanon”.

Development and Cooperation projects with other stakeholder and the bilateral programmes with the Lebanese government

Support to the Gender National Action Plan for Women in Lebanon.

Support and liaison to hold political meeting with the government. Gender is mainstreamed in all projects, messages and crosscutting issues and programmes.

Projects with CSOs to foster political participation, law amendments concerning the implementation of CEDAW, providing technical support. Training sessions with politicians among other actors.

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**14) UNDP – [www.lebanon-elections.org](http://www.lebanon-elections.org) / <http://www.lb.undp.org/>**

With Dan Radulescu Chief Technical Advisor & Nora Mourad – Research Officer from Lebanese Elections Assistance Project.

On 03 2017.

**a) Challenges: Root causes of Gender Inequalities / Patriarchal system in Lebanon.**

Patriarchy and male dominated system is one of the main reason for inequalities.

Actually it is a combination of different factors, social, religion, “machist”, cultural, economic factors. The only way to move forward for a change it is in the long term, realistic and moderate steps.

The Agency is trying to place in the government agenda the Sustainable Development Goal N5 concerning Women Equality.

**b) Position on Quota System in Lebanon.**

UNDP is supporting the implementation of Quota System in the new electoral law a 30% present o women in all bodies the agency is regularly developing and funding projects and initiatives related with women in politics, from workshop, studies, raising awareness campaign, etc.

Few aspects of the support to elections:

The Election administration, supporting ministries of interior, public servants, such as women polling officers and also in the administration of elections, female judging in tabulation, counting whole electoral process, and the supervision committee, including capacity building and coordination with stakeholders at national level.

Raising awareness and training, from the bottom, electoral education, messages gendered sensitives to the population, etc

Challenges after and before elections: the training of lawyer and councils.

Women participation in politics, capacity buildings, advocacy with political parties, NGOS, info sessions in the regions (WIF, etc). The NLCW site is the common ground with a unified demand for the first time, such as that the new electoral draft law should include the system of print ballot paper.

The role of the ballot papers is to have inclusiveness for minorities and women.

Women in municipalities are slightly better now: after the trainings, advocacy, awareness campaigns, (training in 2016 for the municipal elections, eight training sessions on what is the municipal council. legal framework, functions, how to take part in the procedures, procurements, administrations, detailed tasks, small documentary, broadcasted in the regions.

Other measures are being implemented, some women activities in judiciary sector, educators, women do not hold decision-making positions, no senior neither in unions/syndicates.

Women political parties women have little of not space so far, only in committees for social issues, like “decorative issues” or charitable activities.

Concerning the education, more than 51% of universities degrees are held by women, but as they do not are reflected in the job market, they just disappear after university. So this situation makes them not financial independence as well something which is crucial for political participation

When it comes from the only women who held parliamentary positions (four women) they came from political families and where saving the positions for her males heirs.

Another issue is the personal status law, when it comes to run for municipalities, if the women marry a men from another municipality she cannot candidate herself for her municipality of origin, there is not free option to choose where a women want to candidate herself.

Parliamentary elections: UNDP is still waiting for the approval of the electoral law, but so far it is stuck in the parliament. Without any doubt the implementation of quota would be a huge step if quota toward women equality, also by having a “critical mass” of women who could make a different at legislative level.

**c) Some general initiatives. See: [www.lebanon-elections.org](http://www.lebanon-elections.org); <http://www.lb.undp.org/>**

Launching of "The Participation of Lebanese Women in Political Life"

Gender and Elections Training

The Parliamentary elections legal framework conference

Platform for the National Action Plan for Women (2011-2021)

Workshop for Elected Women Municipal Council Members and Mukhtars in South-West Lebanon.

Running for Local Elections 2016: Women's Journey towards Winning.

Arabic Lexicon of Electoral Terminology UNDP 2017.

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**16) UNDP Parliamentary Unit (implant in the Lebanese Parliament) - <http://www.lb.undp.org/>**

With Fatmeh Fakredine

On 22 May 2017.

**a) Challenges: Root causes of Gender Inequalities / Patriarchal system in Lebanon.**

The electoral law is very patriarchal as it is tailored to keep system in the way it is, and politics and religious are the same

**b) Position on Quota System in Lebanon.**

Women quota is a lost battle. Even in the constitution can not have an agreement on how to interpret it some main articles, since is read in different ways and it is contradictory itself between the article n. 7 (every Lebanese citizens is equal in front of the law/state without any distinction) and article n. 9 (sects, religious courts will be respected, etc, etc). There is not constitutional court.

In the present, women in politics are not running for women issues, are just lobbying for themselves, for power, they are not fighting for human rights or women rights. That is why population do not support them.

The change could be fighting for something small step by step something, like personal status should change first, then make a coalition with ONGs, but women should be together, women who are fighting for the quota they are fighting it now only for their own interest, not unity at all between women.

Some political parties think they do not need quota, it is not a priority, everything become first than women issues and women quota, as result all of them do not need quota and they do not care about it.

Paradoxically, Hezbollah is the only one who if they nominate a women they will win, but they do not believe in women.

System itself is paralyzing the work itself, system is stronger than people and stronger than revolution. Even, the ONGS are still not strong enough and they are part of the same system having sectarian issues within them.

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**17) UN WOMEN – [www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org)**

Several contacts were established with the office in Beirut and the regional offices in Cairo, but they were not able to meet, also as the agency considered UN Women was directly working with the Quota system. Only supporting the implementation of the CEDAW and the National Action Plan for Women related with the Beijing Declaration. The agency declared they were cooperating with projects concerning the violence against women, gender and domestic violence, and other aspects of women development and all initiatives related to Gender Equality.

They support the organization, debates and seminars of the three days conference “Images Arab Masculinity” in Beirut. May 2017.

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**18) UNIFIL – <https://unifil.unmissions.org/>**

with the Civil Affairs Section

On 10 March 2017 Tyre.

The section of Civil Affairs of UNIFIL as part of their mandate of capacity building and institutional

support with local government, political parties and CSOs regularly develop and implement different kind of projects, trainings, workshops etc, under the framework of the named Quick Impact Projects (QIPS) programme. These projects aim at provide basic services to the population in short term, and show a support from the UN mission in the filed to improve the relationship, visibility/image of the mission and the acceptance within the targeted population. At the same time, these projects have the objective to improve living conditions of the communities, that why with the support of the gender section.

The Civil Affairs Section implemented a project of capacities building, training in the format of workshop, for women candidates or women from different municipalities (Hezbollah municipalities) to train them on how to run a municipal council, functions, financial procedures, administrative issues, procurements, management, etc. Empowering them and providing them with tools to become candidates for the local governments. That is how the mission in this particular case, even if is not in the mandate of UNIFIL, support, encourage women participation and equality in the country.

### **19) Conference on Women Political Participation with Former Minister of Chilean Women Affairs – Embassy of Chile in Lebanon.**

With M. Carmen Andrade

On 16 May 2017 – Tripoli.

Case of the implementation of the Quota System in Chile.

#### **a) Challenges: Root causes of Gender Inequalities / Patriarchal system**

There is no will to resolve the barriers then the status quo is maintained.

Cultural context places women in the private sphere and structure the gender roles.

Space of political participation belongs to men given, since it was tailored for them and it fits them more concerning times and routines than for women. Unequal distribution of domestic tasks in times and tasks that make women spend more time that takes them away from political activity. Since more than 80% of these tasks are carried out by women, which means women have two works (paid jobs and household) and three jobs for the one involved in politics.

Provision of public services (child care, domestic and household support) insufficient and does not meet the necessities to provide available time for women to participate in politics

Economic and wage gaps for women is a huge barrier yest, there is a great reluctance to borrow money to women. These financial barriers difficult access to credits for women even if there are studies which show women are better payers than men, more responsible and trustworthy. Wage equality policies should be promoted.

Integral development of public policies needs to be done with and across all sectors to improve the situation of women for granting them access to participate in the public sphere.

Education has a primary role in the representations of gender roles, need to start from schools, first facing the sexism that has been in the education system including in changing school programs.

For reaching equality is needed to advance and create a new social contract that equates men and women in democracy. Reform educational and political systems, transform structure, culture and dynamics, which symbolize power as masculine.

**Reason for gender violence** has to do with inequalities and stereotypes in the system including myths about poverty, such as gender violence only are suffered by poor women from low social-economic classes.

There are also other myths, such the psychological characteristics of men, men have a particular profile, me are “like this” which makes them aggressive against women. But these men, behave

appropriate in other contexts, they only exercise violence with women. That is why male violence is culturally constructed in the system, and adapted to the system.

**b) Position on Quota System in Lebanon.**

Quotas allow to correct through temporary special measure of positive discrimination the inequalities in political participation between men and women. But Quotas automatically do not eliminate discrimination against women but places women in a position of power and decisions-makers. As there is a masculinization of the Public and political space.

It was noted that women in parliament propose laws and pass legislation in favor of women and in favor of equity.

In order to open the floor for women political participation several steps should be taken, such as modify political party cultures, creating instances and mechanisms for woman within the political parties (proportional systems as fair enough).

Implementing Quotas in laws for political participation, including defining gender quota in political parties, ensuring access to women to all positions of power serves to place the agenda of gender equality on the table.

The creation of a school of political formation for men and women with gender as theme.

2017

Improving women participation in the Lebanese political system: patriarchal culture vs women quota. If we agree that patriarchal culture is one main factor of discrimination, is the women quota political system to reduce its effect?

Ferrari, Sabrina

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