Women on Board

FINAL REPORT October till December 2022

Lebanese League for Women in Business in partnership with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

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Abstract

The purpose of this report is to serve the Women on Board initiative launched in 2016 by the Lebanese League for Women in Business to advocate for 30% women on board of companies by the year 2030. This report begins with an introduction that provides some statistics on the status of women on board in the MENA region and in Lebanon specifically. The second part of the report focuses on the background of this initiative and the previous work conducted by LLWB in terms of this advocacy plan for women on board of directors. The third part includes the scope of work of this project and summarizes the main objectives and the expected results. This is followed by the problem definition which includes a clear description on the issue provided by international organizations in addition to a reference from a previous project by LLWB called SAWI - Support and Accelerate Women Inclusion that also provides some background on the challenges faced by women in the workplace. After providing all the introductory input and background, the report includes the implementation phase of the project which began with conducting a desk review on 3 selected companies: FMPS, ProFunds, and FabricAID. This is followed by the interview results which were conducted by the gender expert with key representatives from each company, in management, junior and senior positions within the companies. The next phase of the project includes the focus group which was conducted with the companies to share the results of the desk review and interviews and discuss recommendations and action plans to be implemented within the companies to have more women representation on their board of directors. Finally, after conducting all the above, recommendations and action plans were drafted and the 5 finalized recommendations were set by priority in terms of supporting the inclusion of women in board positions.





Introduction

While there is data on the percentage of women on boards in the Arab Middle East, which has proven to be low with 0.1% in Saudi Arabia to 1.8% in Oman, there is no data on the number of women on boards in Lebanon (Sidani, Konrad, & Karam, 2015; Catalyst, 2015). We have been seeing several efforts being carried out over the past period in Lebanon, for addressing the gap in knowledge around this topic and advocating for more women in the boardroom.

According to the research study 'Women on Boards' covering a sample size of 1,600 Lebanese companies, conducted by IFC in partnership with Canada in 2019, 'companies with female board members exhibited double the return on equity (20.7 percent compared to 10.3 percent for all-male boards), and 2.3 percent higher growth in re-turn on assets.' Moreover, the study showed that 'the average equity ratio for Lebanese companies with gender-diverse boards was 14.7 percent, compared to 2.8 percent for companies without women on their boards, across the three years of the study period'.

A growing body of research shows that a broad set of business benefits is associated with gender diversity on corporate boards: improved financial performance and shareholder value; increased customer and employee satisfaction; rising investor confidence; and greater market knowledge and reputation. Women directors will bring value to boards. Women directors will bring rich and diverse perspectives to boardrooms and help companies evolve robust strategic thought and direction. Therefore, firms will naturally benefit from better decisions, because of the diversity. Companies with women on their boards positively influences board dynamics, have increased employee satisfaction and retention, improved competitive advantage for attracting young female talent, and tend to be more risk-averse.

Background

The Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB) in its turn has launched the Women on Boards (WOB) 2030 initiative in 2016 advocating for 30% women on boards of companies and organizations by 2030. Through this initiative, and in partnership with several private sector companies, public sector entities, academic institutes, and international organizations, LLWB has been working on multiple fronts for achieving this objective. Multiple activities have been carried out by the association including:

- 1. Preparing a draft law that sets a quota of 30% women on boards in organizations which has been discussed with the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs.
- 2. Drafting policy recommendations for private sector companies to have more women on their boards pre-pared in partnership with Shareholder-Rights by Capital Concept s.a.l.
- 3. Assessing the gaps in gender equal policies and practices in a pilot private sector companies through a gender diagnostic implemented in partnership with the International Labor Organization.
- 4. Implementing trainings for women on boards in partnership with IFC/ Tamayyaz EIGL and the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW).
- 5. Taking part in corporate governance trainings facilitated by IFC/ Tamayyaz EIGL.
- 6. Gathering data on the number of women on boards and in executive positions across companies in Lebanon in partnership with Khalil Masri S.a.l.
- 7. Getting the buy-in of a total of 21 signatories including private sector companies, that signed the pledge committing to the initiative's goal.





Scope of Work

LLWB in partnership with KAS launched this 3-month pilot phase as part of its Women on Board initiative which plays a major role in our aim to support women to reach board level positions in private sector companies in Lebanon, in the process of attaining the 30% women on boards goal by 2030. This project is divided into three main objectives:

- 1) Conducting an assessment in private companies on their gender policies and practices to obtain gender equality and on the status of the women on board
- 2) Conducting a focus group/ roundtable discussion with the companies
- 3) Developing a report on recommendations and action plans to move forward.

The expected results of the Women on Board initiative are to better understand the reality of companies in terms of gender policies by assessing their practices and implementation of these policies on the ground. Moreover, based on the assessment and the focus group, this report was developed in terms of addressing the gender gaps in the selected companies and includes the details of the assessment and an analysis of the roundtable discussion. The assessment included the results of a company-wide gender assessment survey to understand the employee and managers' perspectives on the extent to which their employers implement gender equal policies and practices. Moreover, a desk review was conducted on the existing policies and data from a gender perspective. The assessment also included interviews/meetings with the seniors and executives in the companies to discuss the qualifications for individuals to reach a board position and with the employees to further explore their perceptions.

Problem Definition

The first objective of the project is to understand the cause of the problem: why are there not enough women on board of directors in the companies? What are the barriers and obstacles that hinder women's ability to be on board positions?

To analyze the problem in a rational and comprehensive method, one needs to study and analyze the policies and practices within an organization or company in terms of gender equality and attaining a position in the board of directors.

According to the 'Women on Boards Research Study in Lebanon' report conducted by IFC in 2019, only about 29 percent of Lebanese women are in the labor force.¹ Another report by Expertise France in 2019 called 'Women Entrepreneurs in Lebanon: Surviving the Crisis Amidst the Challenges' mentioned that 'when it comes to exploring representation in management boards, there is unfortunately no recent data on women's representation at management levels; the only available data dates to 2007. At that time, women accounted for only 8.4 percent of all Lebanese executives which included legislators, senior

¹ Women on Boards Research Study in Lebanon, 2019, IFC. <u>https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/262ea951-a085-4468-b2c2-</u>

<u>f6132bd51987/Women on Boards Research Study in Lebanon english.pdf?MOD=AJPERES#:~:text=The%20stud y%20concluded%20that%2050,to%20four%20female%20board%20members.</u>





officials, and managers in the private sector or related'². The Central Administration of Statistics in partnership with UNDP launched Lebanon's first gender statistical report in 2021 which mentioned that only 26.5 percent of managerial positions were held by women in 2018-19³. It is also important to highlight that setback from the Lebanese Labor Law where there is a lack in laws that support and motivate women's promotion and attainment of high-level and advanced positions within the workforce and organizational hierarchy.

According to the research conducted under LLWB's project 'Support and Accelerate Women Inclusion – SAWI ' in collaboration with AUB from 2021 till 2022:

- Lebanese women tend to be employed in lower paying jobs on a fixed contract basis, noting that they are less likely to attain management or senior positions.
- The main challenges for women to enter and remain in the labor market are two-folds:
 - home responsibilities: child and elderly care, housework
 - societal pressures: attitudes of her family, especially male relatives, and being married, which points to the importance of non-wage related factors (working hours/flexibility, work conditions).
- All this affects women's recruitment, retention, and promotion at work. In a country where the woman is viewed as the primary childcare responsible, how can she aim to be recruited and work hard for the job she wants; retained in a job she works hard at, and promoted to seniority positions, which no doubt requires more time and effort investment.
- There seemed to be a mentality and socio-cultural mindset and attitude towards Lebanese women's image in the eyes of society, whereby she is still viewed as a housewife and/or medium to low-income earner, not capable of attaining a senior position or being present in certain sectors.

Desk Review Results

Below is the list of documents collected from the companies:

- General Administration:
 - Board members list with the gender percentage
 - The current strategic plan
 - The previous strategic plan
 - The internal regulation or mechanism of governance
 - Three samples of the minutes of board meetings (recent)

² Women Entrepreneurs in Lebanon: Surviving the Crisis Amidst the Challenges, 2019, Expertise France. <u>https://expertisefrance.fr/documents/20182/795307/WOMEN+ENTREPRENEURS+IN+LEBANON-</u> <u>+FULL+STUDY/9169804b-f567-42bd-904f-ed9a3cb1f849</u>

³The Central Administration of Statistics in partnership with UNDP launched Lebanon's first gender statistical report, 2021, UNDP.

https://www.undp.org/lebanon/press-releases/central-administration-statistics-partnership-undp-launcheslebanons-first-gender-statistical-report





- Finance
 - Company budget/Financial statements for the years 2018 to 2022
 - o Budget allocated for training and development
- Human Resources
 - o Organizational Chart
 - List of staff with gender percentage
 - Job Description of all the staff
 - o Recruitment, promotion and evaluation mechanism
 - Three samples of minutes of meeting with the staff
 - Code of conduct, rights and obligations for employees, board members, and for beneficiaries and partners
 - Calculation of leaves (family leave, annual leave, paternal leave)
 - Job description of the person in charge of women's issues, gender mainstreaming or gender equality (if there is)
 - List of trainings provided to the staff, sorted by type of training and level, and whether it was conducted locally or internationally
- Programs, interventions, and Initiatives
 - Description of all initiatives done by the company, especially those related to women and gender equality
 - Case studies samples related to women and gender equality
 - Reports on achieved programs and initiatives
- Complaints Unit (if there is)
 - Mechanism for receiving complaints
 - Mechanism for handling complaints and data preservation
- Partners
 - List of active partners since 2018, and the focal point of each partner institution
 - o Selection mechanism of the work with partners
 - Examples of national initiatives taken with partners
 - Four samples of MOUs with national, regional, and international partners
- Communication, outreach, and social media
 - Communication and outreach strategy
 - Selection mechanism of the topics shared on the company web site and the social media channels

All 3 companies have provided the requested documents, and below is an analysis of each company:

FMPS

FMPS (<u>https://www.fmpsholding.com</u>) are in the health sector. The company was created in 1992. They have 7 board members, out of which 20% are women, and a total of 120 employees, out of which 75 are women. They have 2 executives, and both of them are women, and they have 17 managers, out of which 8 are women.





The company values include: "Commitment," "Excellence," "Social Responsibility," "Integrity," and "Trust."

They have also conducted several scientific campaigns on women's rights, on breast cancer awareness, on HIV awareness, on prostate cancer awareness, on cholera, and many other similar campaigns related to health awareness. They have also done the "Speak up" campaign for the anti-harassment and anti-discrimination.

Also, and in alignment with their compliance program, and their no discrimination policy, they have implemented the "Equality Impact Assessment Policy" to be applicable with every policy or procedure issued by the company. This is to make sure that all policies and procedures are applied fairly and equally without any discrimination of any sort.

They also have a robust reporting mechanism operating under the whistleblowing policy. They have 4 channels to speak up, while awareness and training are continuous.

They have a mechanism for receiving complaints, which will be received by the compliance department, and which is treated with confidentiality and transparency, and under the GDPR policy, they secure and preserve the personal information.

This company has the most advanced set of clear mention of procedures to fight all sorts of discrimination, gender biases. Starting with the Organization chart, we can tell that the company is well structured, with clear hierarchy for each department, and yet it shows that they have flexibility for cooperation whenever the business functionalities require it.

As for their "Code of Conduct document," there are clear mentions regarding their anti-discrimination policy of all sorts, gender, among others, Also, as being a certified partner by Mecomed for their compliance program, they do strive to do always the right thing on daily basis.

As for their training programs, it is very rich and intense, and it covers a wide variety of subjects, and it includes members from different departments, and from different teams. The yearly budget is 300,000 USD, allocated between local and international, for all employees, depending on their functions and needs, and without any discrimination of any kind.

All their Standard Operating Procedures are well structured and well utilized as well.

We can conclude that FMPS is a veteran company with a highly professional approach and a lot of ambition to seek greatness at all levels. They currently have a good representation of women on board; however, they are continuously aiming to reach a higher percentage.

FabricAID

FabricAID (https://www.fabricaid.me) was created in December 2016, when its founder Omar Itani started a social media experiment, collecting clothes from friends, sorting through them, and giving to disadvantaged families, and with the overwhelming response, FabricAID was launched.

FabricAID's values include "Integrity," "collaboration," "Purpose," "Courage," "Transparency," and "Perseverance."

FabricAID is the youngest in the number of years (since early 2017), yet with a great vision and for sure great achievements. FabricAID starts with a shareholder structure and a board member structure where women are a majority. With this, the company has the right ingredients to support women in all the aspects of the business.

Although a young company, they have all the procedures in place, their organizational chart is very clear, and they have clear recruitment policies where they show no discrimination of any sort, be it gender, race,





religion, ... They also have all types of anti-harassments procedures, with a clear system for receiving all sorts of complaints. On the other hand, they clearly encourage diversity among their team. They have a good training budget as well.

As a conclusion, FabricAID is a young, dynamic, and very professional team. They have a great leader, and they are on the right track to achieve their ambitious goals.

ProFunds

ProFunds (<u>https://profunds.com.lb</u>) is a Lebanese lending institution, established and operating since 2011. They provide financial solutions by offering micro-credit loans for micro and small businesses. They encourage and guide businesses to help them flourish in their business.

Profunds is a rather small company family owned and managed. ProFunds have a majority of women in the shareholding structure (mother, daughter, and son), in the board, and in the management & the team. The company is run by good ethics, striving to attract the competent team members with leadership skills.

They have a clear anti-harassment policy and they are very supportive of mothers during the early age of their child, and also during their pregnancy. ProFunds were also part of the SAWI project, and they actively participate in any women empowerment project. They have a modest budget for training, which is efficient at the same time. ProFunds have had their share of problems due to the fact that their license from the BDL (Banque Du Liban) allows them for a loan of up to 10 million LBP, which now, with the devaluation of the local currency, are worth only 3% of what it was before. Therefore, they are struggling to have their business survive, knowing that it requires a change in policy from the BDL to increase this value, and this requires a lot of politics and lobbying. They are however surviving this difficult period and working on getting those problems resolved.

Interview Results

We have conducted a qualitative survey (questionnaire) and a quantitative survey (interview). The participants from the 3 companies conducted the interview. The Questionnaire and the Interview are in Annex 1.

Questionnaire (Qualitative):

Findings from the questionnaire are as follows:

"Equal access to the resources for men and women within and outside the company"

In Lebanon, even-though there are policies that encourage equal access there remains **many barriers** to access these resources. As such, **predisposed gender inequality** thought forms as well as **cultural/religious norms negatively affect the opportunities offered to women** in our country and region.

"Equal access to participation in any new project or new activity? Would unequal access interfere with successful achievement of project goals?"

Unequal access would definitely **hinder the successful achievements of project goals**, as it might **exclude the right qualified individuals** based on gender bias.





"Gender stereotypes: facilitator or a barrier for men or women?"

- Stereotypes could sometimes function as a barrier
- In Lebanon particularly and in the region generally, women have been deeply affected by gender stereotypes which affected many aspects of their life in terms of employment opportunities, freedom and independence as well as carrier advancement. These stereotypes are mainly based on social and religious norms which separated and divided men and women into different categories as to what they should and should not be doing.
- The men are more often asked to help in the heavy labor than women simply for **physical capability** reasons.
- The general idea that we "think manager, think male" seems to live on. The perceived lack of correspondence between female stereotypic attributes and male gender-typed job requirements is likely to lead to the conclusion that women are not equipped to handle these jobs and consequently produce negative expectations about their likely success. This is the logic of the Lack of Fit model. The model further proposes that these stereotype-based negative performance expectations have a profound effect on information processing, prompting cognitive distortions that form the basis of gender bias in performance evaluation

Men or women's self-perceptions or levels of self-confidence function as either a facilitator or a barrier for any new promotion?

• Men have always tended to rate themselves higher on self-concept measures of giftedness, power, and invulnerability, and women have rated themselves higher on self-concept measures of likability and morality and definitely can be a barrier for promotion

Will gender awareness training be required in order to ensure that husbands, families, and communities support women in the workforce?

- Awareness is always a plus
- Yes, even though we do not suffer from gender inequalities at the workplace, we do hear about experiences like that at home
- Employees that come different backgrounds & cultures; gender awareness trainings might be beneficial to certain employees if their families or spouses are willing to participate.
- Yes, especially in a country like Lebanon
- Yes, if there is a need
- Definitely it is important to conduct these gender awareness trainings but **the man stereotype** and the culture still creates barriers and do not support women in their work

"Will the overall of any new project be designed in a way that facilitates active participation from both men and women?"

• In some specific cases, certain **projects that are funded by donors** might have certain requirements related to gender preference, age group aiming to focus on a specific vulnerable group in these projects.





• But it may depend also on project nature

"What are men and women's responsibilities in terms of child care and housework? Are there any cultural norms such that women do the majority of this work and men do little or none?"

- Yes, the majority of work is considered to be for women
- Women do a lot more when it comes to child care and housework, but both men and women are equally responsible
- Women have more responsibility in terms of child care and housework. There are a lot of norms imposed on women
- In Lebanon women do the majority of work in terms of child care and housework
- Referring to the gender stereotype, women are for cooking, raise the children (Being a mom is hard) and do all the home stuff. Nowadays, working Moms are handling lots of tasks inside the house and at their work. Men cannot handle the in-house jobs because they cannot and because women are multitasking.

"If women have greater responsibilities in these areas, do they have enough time to also engage in the work place? Will their participation increase women's workload to an unsustainable level?"

- It may be **overwhelming** to juggle though
- Yes, mothers usually suffer from added pressure from juggling the workplace and the home chores.
- A person should always try to seek a work-life balance, however with the rise of women in the workforce and considering the initial load of responsibilities required by a woman at home, this can affect and overwhelm some working moms. In this case, mothers should be supported by their spouse whereby house chores can be divided. Also, workplaces can be better equipped for working moms by including a day care or work from home opportunities.
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- In general, women are more multi-taskers and can be productive in both areas but she cannot handle this all times and will surely require help to maintain her mental health.
- In certain cases, such as maternity and breastfeeding, women do not have enough time to be totally engaged in the workplace, **their participation should be limited to avoid an unsustainable level**.

"Would it be possible for women to participate in any new project that is being designed or to open a new line of business if support services (e.g., child care) are not made available to them?"

• Women are given flexibility to work from home and participate if they need to. However, weekend activities can be more difficult for them





- Working women are very much supported as they get six months of maternity leave and remote working opportunities. That being said, additional support services like a day-care center would greatly improve & support both spouses post-maternity leave; especially that men unfortunately get much less time for a paternity leave in Lebanon and the world.
- No, help is required from a family member or from work colleagues. Flexibility is a must to achieve objectives in both areas.
- No, it will be complicated for them to combine the two tasks in such situations

"Would women's home responsibilities preclude them from participating in any new project at certain times of day or on certain days of the week?"

- Staying added hours poses a difficulty for mothers
- if the woman is handling alone the home responsibilities, she will surely not be able to participate in the work life. However, if a family member (husband or other) will help, she can succeed.
- This depends on the character of the woman, if she is willing to participate in any project and be able to give time or not, because definitely the project has a plan to be completed, it cannot wait for a woman to finish her home staff and proceed at her time and convenience, this will jeopardize the project, the performance and the business. Projects need full dedication and commitment and time management if women cannot assure them, she cannot be part of the project

"Are there any special benefits or restrictions in the legal or regulatory framework that explicitly or indirectly target women or men?"

- Giving maternity leaves to women alone stalls them in the workplace. I believe **paternity for dads** is very important as well.
- Yes, Lebanese and several Arab mothers married to foreign spouses are unable to provide their nationalities to their husbands or children; as opposed to men. Religious norms & courts usually incline to support men against women especially during divorce or custody procedures. This not only affects the socio-economical & psycho-social conditions of women but their children as well on the long-term
- Yes, women face discrimination with regard the family law, property and inheritance rights

"Do women actively participate in formal decision-making structures or bodies that address businessrelated issues (e.g., local economic development committees, business associations, chambers of commerce, etc.)?"

• They must be **more actively participating** in formal decision-making structures since women are more collaborative in their work style





"Do women and men hold an equal number of the decision-making positions in these entities?"

- Not so far
- I believe we should, but we are not there yet
- No, i believe women in Lebanon have not yet gotten to their full potential and the strong ones are seeking potentials abroad. Few companies function like we do and specifically the public sector.
- In our region, **men mostly dominated the number of the decision-making positions**, however this predominantly depends on the entity and industry at hand. But it is important to note that **in some particular cases, women can also outnumber men in some positions or areas of work**.
- Yes, but we still have gaps especially in some areas (political, governmental institutions...)
- No unfortunately, there is still a lot to do in this field
- No, this depends on the company shareholder's culture

Summary & Analysis of Findings from the Qualitative Questionnaire

From the responses to the Questionnaire, we can conclude that there is a real frustration among women as to the different barriers preventing them from having access to, participating in, and impacting the business environment.

The predisposed gender inequality that our society suffers from, is deeply anchored due to cultural and religious norms and habits. This affects the success of the businesses as it is not benefitting from 50% of the work force.

Increased awareness for both men and women in the work place is well needed in order to overcome those biases and stereotypes.

Working mothers are the ones that need the most support, as during their peak years, they happen to be overwhelmed with raising the kids and at the same time, to excel in their demanding jobs. The support has to come from the top management of the company and has to be endorsed by all the men surrounding the women, to create a strong support system.

That is why having women on board and in decision making positions, allows to reverse the minds of all stakeholders, to provide the needed support for women at the workplace, and to finally see more successful women shining and paving the way for others.

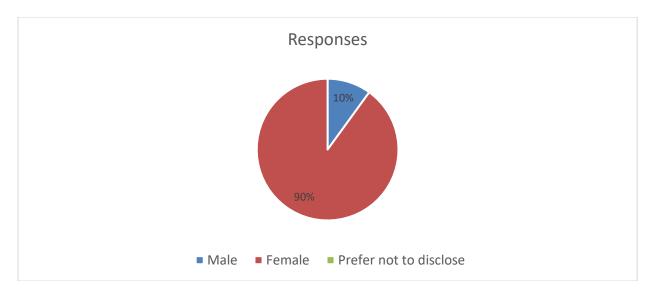




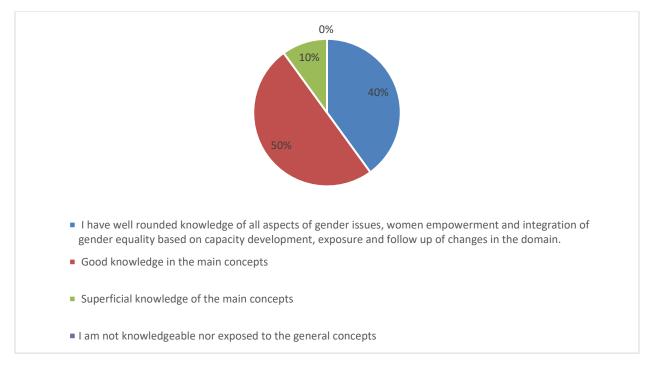
Interview (Quantitative):

Findings from interviews with senior management are as follows:

Gender



Note: There was only one male participant out of the total of 10, Mr. Omar Itani from FabricAID.



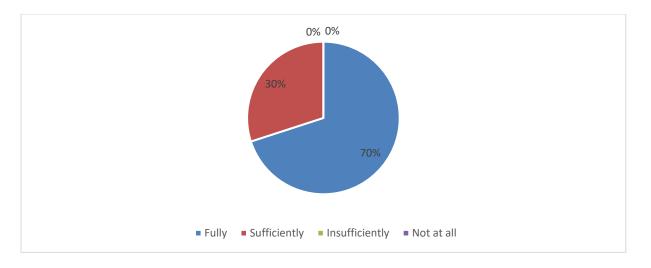
Extent of your knowledge in gender concepts and integration of gender equality

Note: There is only 40% for the Well-rounded knowledge on all aspects, which means that we need to spend time and efforts on raising the awareness on this subject.



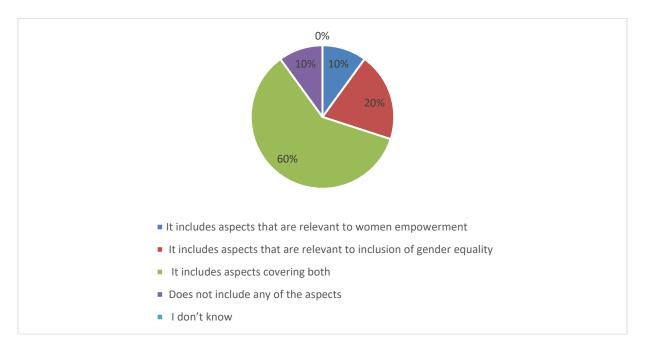


Awareness of the company vision and objectives?



Note: Also, a total of 100% between the fully and the sufficiently, indicates that the management make sure all managers and people in senior positions are aware of the company vision and objective, which both empowers and motivates them.

The vision includes aspects that support the inclusion of gender equality or just women empowerment?

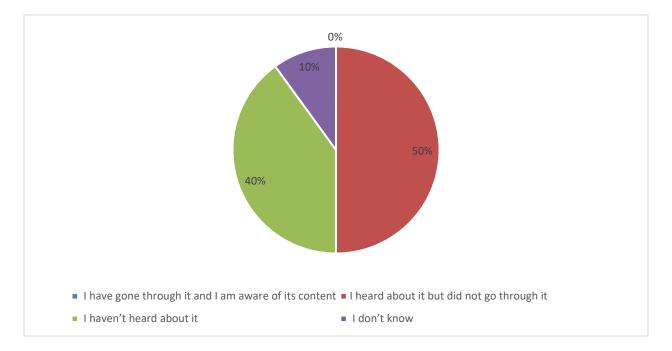


Note: The 10% for Women empowerment aspect is extremely low, and our focus should be in increasing this percentage.



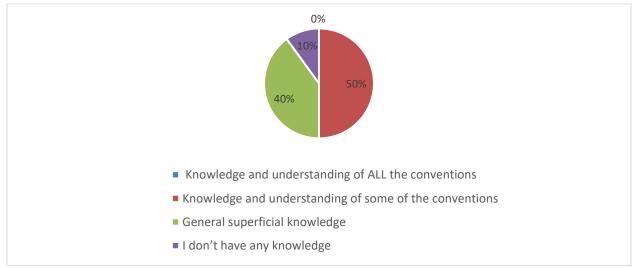


Are you aware of the National Strategy of Lebanese Women issued by the National Commission for Lebanese Women?



Note: there is not enough knowledge nor awareness of the National Strategy of Lebanese women, and therefore, we notice that there is no awareness on women-related strategies, thus more advocacy is needed along with any initiatives that support women.

Assess your knowledge in International Conventions that support the integration of gender equality in the workplace?

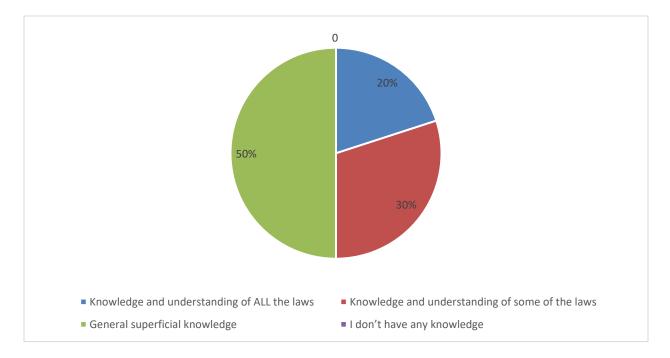


Note: There is a total of 50% knowledge on some conventions, and 40% for the superficial. There should be plans to increase the knowledge on all conventions that support the integration of gender equality in the workplace.

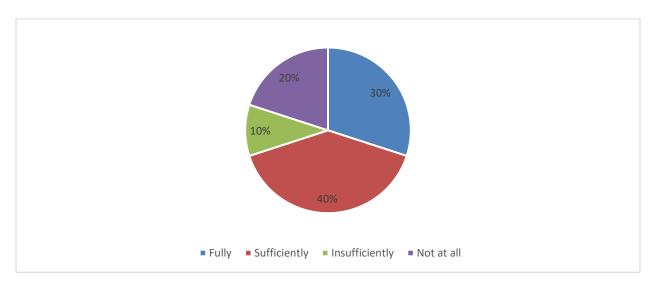




Knowledge in Lebanese Laws in general and Lebanese Labor Laws related to integration of gender equality at the workplace?



Note: Only 20% have knowledge on all the laws, and thus more awareness and workshops should be done to raise awareness on existing laws.



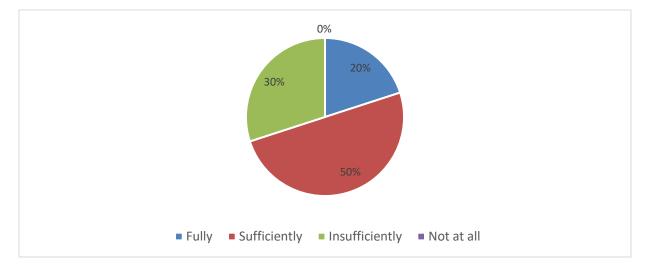
Does your company raise the awareness of its staff on the content of the National Strategy?

Note: Only 30% are fully aware, and this is a very small percentage. Our aim is to work on increasing it.

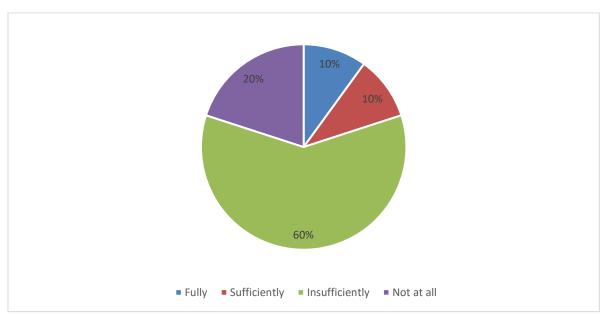




Does your company raise the awareness of its staff on the content of labor laws that impact women and men workers differently?



Note: 30% of participants answered insufficiently and this is within 3 companies and with 90% being women. Thus, taking this on a larger scale with more companies and more males, the answers might differ. This requires more initiatives to get to raising more awareness, such as special trainings on the Lebanese labor laws with emphasis on how they affect women and men.



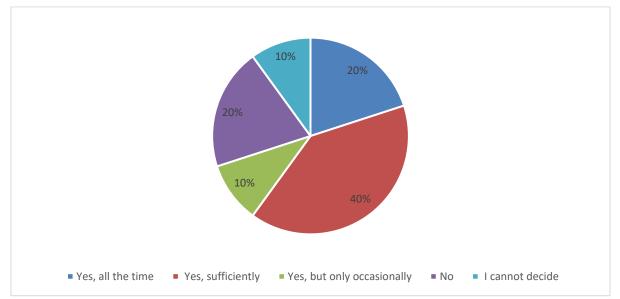
Does your company raise the awareness of its staff about the content of International Conventions and International Labor Law Standards?

Note: with 60% for Insufficiently, there has to be much more awareness on this front, especially, that the international labor law standards and international conventions, are a good indication to follow what suits the company locally.

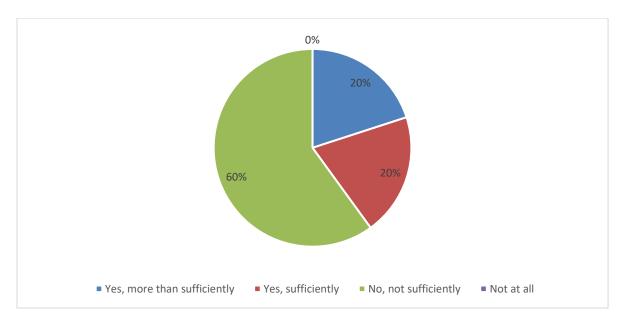




Is gender equality explicitly mentioned in specific sections within the company reports, any special reports on technical cooperation or/and any publication issued by the company?



Note: More work should be done here to increase the percentage of 'Yes, all the time', and to make sure that those who answered Sufficiently, do really understand the level of sufficiency. As for the 10% of I cannot decide, and on this front, the respective companies should have a clear statement on gender equality in their publications



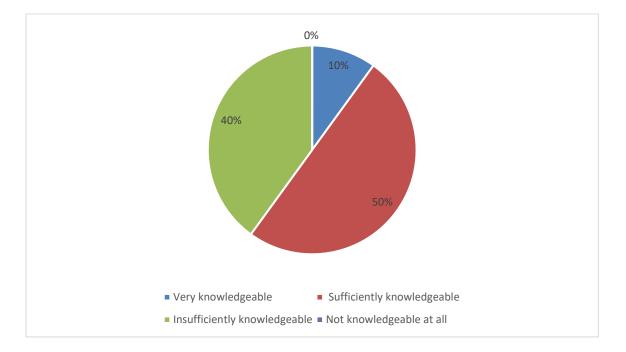
Do you have sufficient knowledge in gender mainstreaming so that you could provide pieces of advice to others?

Note: it is clear that more training should be provided to explain the Gender Mainstreaming, and on how it can be used within the company, as there is a high percentage for not sufficiently.



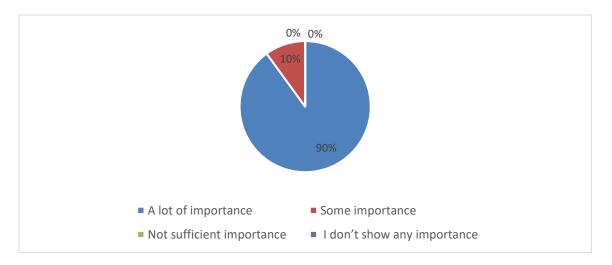


Knowledge in tools and methodologies available to gender mainstreaming in your work: gender mainstreaming in planning, in budgeting, in communication, in training, in mobilization etc.



Note: Same as above. More focus should be put on technical and practical trainings on the methodologies on how to include gender mainstreaming in these procedures.

Personally, what importance do you carry to ensure respectful working relationships between men and women in your department/unit or when working with partners?

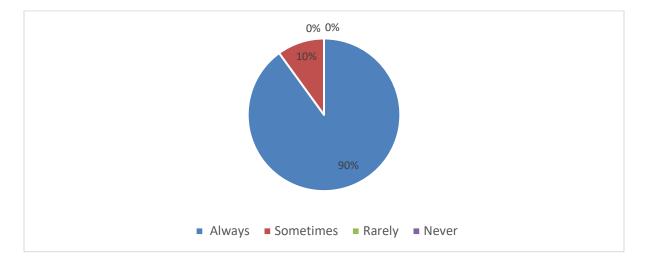


Note: 90% put a lot of importance, so their intentions are clear, however, they lack the tools and methodologies to put it in practice and ensure the proper inclusion, to be translated in practice.

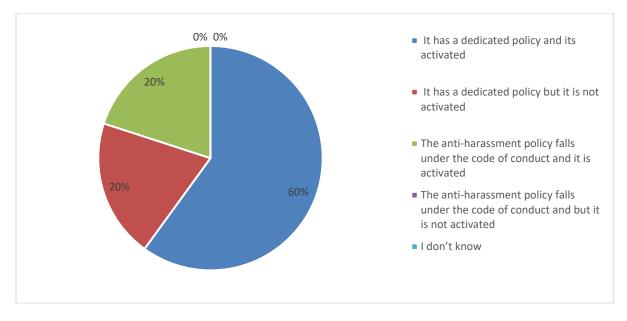




When you come to know of challenges that one of your colleagues (men or women) face at work because of their gender, do you take any action in that regard?



Note: The high percentage of 90% shows that they take actions, however, we need to ensure that they take the right and effective actions to ensure a successful outcome.



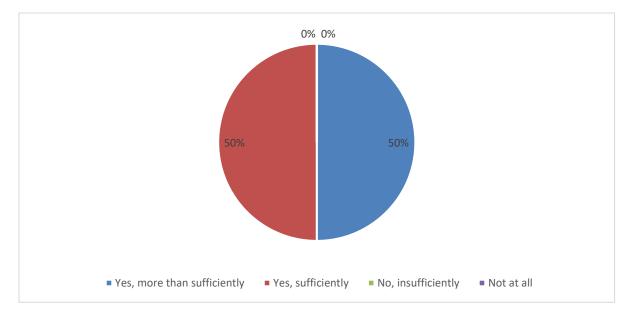
Anti-harassment policy and a mechanism to handle reported cases (as proof of its activation)?

Note: With the 60% having a dedicated policy which is activated, there definitely need to be more stress on increasing this percentage to arrive to 100%. We should also make sure that when policies are set, it is important to ensure that these policies are not simply on paper.



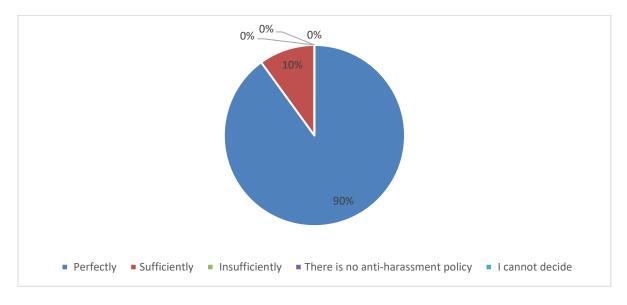


Sufficient efforts to limit any expressions of gender inequality (screensavers that are not gender sensitive, inappropriate comments and jokes)?



Note: there is 100% between more than sufficient and sufficient, which is a very good percentage. This is if the employees are aware of the discrimination in the comments and jokes.

Promoting practices and procedures that prevent harassment at the workplace and during program interventions and handles it if it were to happen?

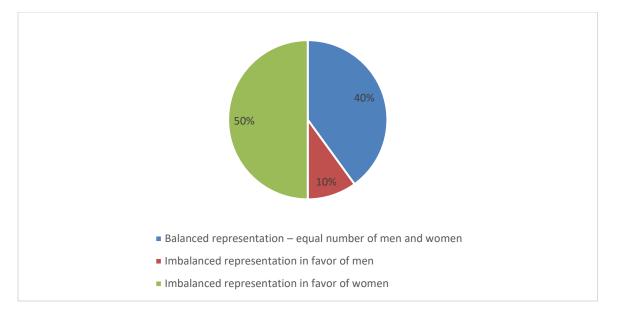


Note: Also, a 100% between Perfectly and Sufficiently, which is great.

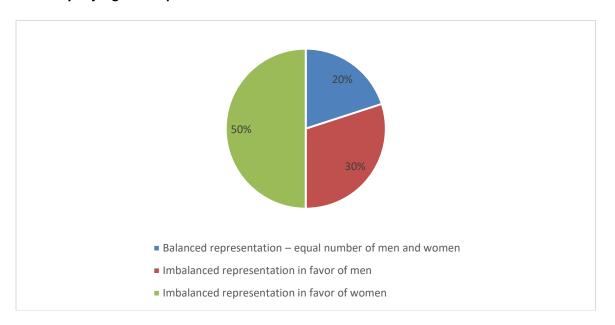




How do you judge the representation of women in the leadership positions in your company?



Note: With the 50% imbalanced in favor and the 50% equal, we notice that women representation in leadership positions is also great, and there should be more work on having them creating an impact.



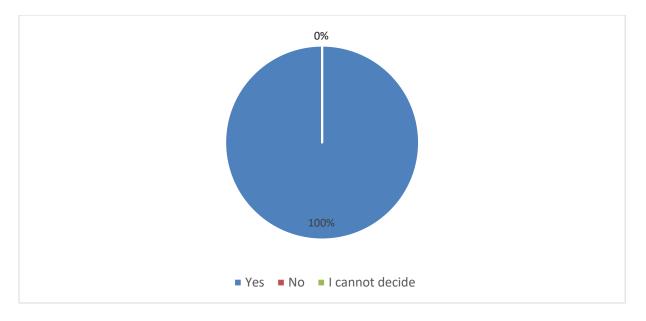
How do you judge the representation of women in the board of directors?

Note: Also here, it happens that the companies interviewed have a good representation of women on board. It remains to make sure that this is a good representation of all the companies in Lebanon. Also, and same as above, this question should be divided per company so we can have individual recommendations.





In your opinion, are women able to lead employers' organizations in Lebanon?



Note: this clearly shows the confidence in Women, by both genders due to the proven past experiences, and the support from the corporate, home, and social environment.

In your opinion, are women able to lead employers' organizations in Lebanon?

"Every woman can have a high position, she can do a lot, and we have also to think of society, because we cannot ignore it, as we are part of it. The woman can handle both home and office duties."

"I would reflect on our board members who are mainly women (60%), and who are all successful women and who have managed big companies.

Also, in the staff, women are in control, and the highest paid person is a woman."

"Women have proved that they can deliver, and their sensitivity plays a good part in the business as they sense what needs to be done.

We women support each other's; however, it is not easy to have a department fully dominated by women, however, the pros are more than the cons."

"In Lebanon, we still need to work on the gender equality. Currently, in Lebanon, when there is a job opening for either gender and with equal qualifications, they chose the man, and the man is paid more. We still have to work harder to get gender equality and equal pay. We need to overcome this thinking."

"Yes, women can lead If we can break the religious obstacles and the civil laws barriers, and if they can operate outside the frame of the political quota. I am a scientific woman and there is a proof that having women on board is valuable. Women have more organizational skills. Studies have also proven that there is a slight improvement in the private sector when there are more women in leadership positions. We need the collaboration of the private with the public sectors, and we need laws to endorse women empowerment and women civil rights. The scientific researches prove that the women can offer a plus in the managerial skills."





"I believe women are great leaders as they raise the future generations, so why not lead organizations."

"If this can happen abroad, then it can happen in Lebanon. There is a study in the USA that shows that women are more compassionate and more intelligent than men. There is also another report by McKinsey that shows that when there is a 10% increase in gender diversity, the bottom line improved by 30%."

"Every woman has the capacity within. She just needs motivation, and hard work, and some external support and rules, laws, regulations, and reforms..."

"Of course, women are able to lead, they are more organized and can bare more, they have more patience, more intelligent, ... stronger, "

"I believe women are able as they have equal qualifications and skills as men, and they should be given equal opportunities and chances. I think 30% is not enough, but it is a good start, so chances should be given due to qualifications, and not because of her gender, and she is not be prevented from any participation because she is a woman."

Focus Group Results

Companies:

- ProFunds
- FabribAID
- FMPS

Guests from LLWB:

- Nisreen Deeb
- Rachel Elmourad
- Christine Francis: Transformational Coach

 Importance of the role of organizations in the absence of the laws and policies
- Hasmig: CSR Bank Audi
 - Internal mentoring, spotlighted the successful ladies which inspired the younger generations
- Zeina Zeidan: ESG Specialist with PhD in Governance

Guests from KAS

- Nour Alwan:
 - Lobbying and sharing the reports with stakeholders





Round table and Interventions from the Companies

Below are the key findings during the discussions:

As for the interventions of the different companies, they have agreed that they need to focus first on the private sector, as it is much easier and the results can be achieved much faster, rather than on the public sector, which then can follow suit.

They have agreed also that it would have been more beneficial to have more males present in the focus group. It is to note that there was only one man, out of a total of 10 participants from the 3 companies.

There was a stress on a phenomenon which is the unconscious bias, and this gives preferences to men over women in considering any new task, job, or position.

One of the companies, FMPS stated that they are very flexible with mothers working from home, in providing maternity leaves, and other facilitations. As such, they do not discriminate in their recruitment.

Fabric AID have also stated that they do not discriminate in terms of gender. However, they think that putting a quota is discriminating by itself, even if it was to the advantage of women.

They have all agreed that the key to remove barriers for mothers, is, among other measures, to have nurseries at the workplace. This is a tough measure to implement for small and even to medium size companies.

With regards to sexual harassment in the workplace, and even if such an event does not occur, it is important to have such a law as it sets the base that would remain for any changes in the company management, and so that this is not left to the discretion of the current team in charge.

ProFunds, being a majority of a women led business, have faced problems in society and in the government, as they were not taken seriously. On the other hand, and according to the founder, who happens to employ only women, she states that working mothers happen to be more efficient that more committed at work. Even though they have men on their staff, 65% of the management positions are held by women. The founder also thinks that men have an issue to have a woman as their direct boss.

The 3 companies have agreed that we should not remain in our comfort zone, and that in order to achieve results, we should always reconsider our way of thinking and our way of working. Once this is done, there will be a lot of recommendations and action plans to be implemented, and then to be followed up, as a continuous effort for keep on enhancing the performance of the company.





Recommendations and Action Plans

Recommendations	Action Plan	Responsibility
Governance	Implement Governance	Board
Awareness & Knowledge in Rules, Laws,& Regulations	 Subscribe to entities providing such info Gender Awareness Training 	Management
Application of Policies, Procedures, & KPI	Monitoring the set policies	Management
Feedback from the whole company	Corrective actions to be imbedded in the By-Laws of the company	Board & Management
Unpaid Care Economy	Child Care & Support Services for Women	Management

PFRegarding **Governance**, and although this is a buzz word recently, this should be taken in the essence of all what the company plans to do in the future, and was doing in the past. The main objectives are to always act in the best interests of the business, and more specifically, it can improve the business, help it become more stable and productive, and unlock new opportunities. It can reduce risk, and enables faster and safer growth. It can also improve reputation and foster trust.

Companies showed their interest and will to improve their governance, but they don't have the technical resources in terms of human resources, time, technical resources, and funding. Here, it is recommended to provide support to the companies in implementing the right governance.

As for the **Awareness & Knowledge in Rules, Laws, & Regulations**, this allows the company to be aware of local and international laws and initiatives, allowing them to choose and apply what suits their own business and environment, to stay on the edge and to remain competitive at all aspects.

The percentages of the answers, although they are filled by 90% women, it indicates that they are not aware of the laws and procedures in place. Awareness workshops should be done regularly in the companies to emphasize on these laws and regulations, and these workshops should be included in the KPIs in order to monitor and evaluate their practice and implementation within the companies.

With the **Application of Policies**, **Procedures**, and **KPI**, the company needs to make sure that whatever was decided, this will be implemented, monitored, and evaluated.

LLWB can support these companies in terms of reviewing their policies and conducting the M&E.





Feedback from the whole company is extremely valuable, as it is coming from the main stakeholders, who are the employees and the actual persons concerned and who are concerned with the success of the company.

Companies should prioritize collecting feedback from the employees to make sure the policies are respected at all times and LLWB can support the companies in this phase as well.

Unpaid Care Economy Support is very important as to stay positive and to recuperate and not to be burned out by the job. The more balanced the employee, the more efficient at their jobs.

Policies and flexibility should be provided to women that are taking care of children or elderly at home. For example, childcare services, flexibility in terms of working hours, working from home, and other facilitations.

As for the feedback from the companies, as to the importance of each of the recommendations, the order is as follows:

Priority 1: Unpaid Care Economy Support Priority 2: Feedback from the whole company Priority 3: Awareness and Knowledge in Rules & Regulations Priority 4: Application of Policies, Procedures, & KPIs Priority 5: Governance

It is LLWB's mission to follow up on the implementation of those priorities / recommendations, and to revisit the companies in order to re-assess.





Annex

Questionnaire:

GENDER ASSESSEMENT SURVEY Women on Board Initiative

I. What is gender analysis?

Gender analysis is a systematic analytical process used to identify, understand, and describe gender differences and the relevance of gender in a specific context. Such analysis typically involves examining the differential impact of development policies and programs on women and men and may include the collection of sex-disaggregated or gender sensitive data. The purpose of this survey is to examine the different roles, rights, and opportunities of men and women as well as relations between them. It also identifies disparities, examines why such disparities exist, determines whether they are a concern, and looks at how they can be addressed.

To analyze gender roles in the context of the board participation, and to identify root causes of existing gender inequalities in that context and increase understanding about how to address them.

To identify different needs and priorities of men and women, over the short and long-term. To collect sex-disaggregated baseline data. To avoid perpetuating traditional power imbalances.

Questions:

I- Access – this refers to being able to use the resources necessary to be a fully active and productive participant (socially, economically, and politically) in society. It includes access to resources, income, services, employment, information, and benefits.

Do men and women have equal access to the resources within the company and outside the company, that are required for the individual development and the carrier advancement? Do men and women have equal access to formal or informal networks, within the company and outside the company, that share information related to the business, the industry, ... including in social settings?

Do men and women have equal access to technologies and services that are relevant to the industry, including training and other opportunities for skill development? Will men and women have equal access to participation in any new project or new activity that is being designed? Would unequal access interfere with successful achievement of project goals?

II- Knowledge, Beliefs, and Perception – this refers to the types of knowledge that men and women are privy to (who knows what), the beliefs that shape gender identities and behavior, and perceptions that guide how people interpret aspects of their lives differently depending on their gender identity.





Do gender stereotypes function as either a facilitator or a barrier for men or women? For example, do such stereotypes depict that any give task as being something that men do more than women? Are their views about the size of projects within the company (micro, small, medium, large) or types of new activities (different products or services) that are considered more appropriate for women or men? If yes, do these stereotypes contribute to women being considered to participate in those new projects and / or activities, or will women be only considered for projects that are less critical and less profitable, and less sustainable?

Do men or women's self-perceptions or levels of self-confidence function as either a facilitator or a barrier for any new promotion?

Do men and women have unequal chances for trainings or knowledge in areas that are important for success of the company? If yes, in what areas?

Do men and women have equal access to and knowledge about the markets that are available for the products/services the company produces?

Will gender awareness training be required to ensure that husbands, families, and communities support women in the workforce?

III- Practices and Participation – this refers to peoples' behaviors and actions in life – what they do – and how this varies by gender. It encompasses not only current patterns of action, but also the way that people engage in development activities. It includes attending meetings, training courses, accepting, or seeking out services, and other development activities. Participation can be both active and passive.

Are communication channels that will be used to spread awareness of any new project and to encourage participation equally available to be utilized by men and women?

Will the overall of any new project be designed in a way that facilitates active participation from both men and women?

Are men and women equally likely to have access to and to participate in any training sessions that are offered in conjunction with this new project?

IV- Time and Space - This domain includes recognizing gender differences in the availability and allocation of time as well as the space in which time is spent. It includes the division of both productive and reproductive labor, identifying how time is spent and committed during the day, week, month, or year, and in different seasons, and determining how people contribute to the maintenance of the family, community, and society. The objective here is to determine how people in different gender categories spend their time and what implications their time commitments have for their respective availability for program activities.

What are men and women's responsibilities in terms of childcare and housework? Are there any cultural norms such that women do the majority of this work and men do little or none?





If women have greater responsibilities in these areas, do they have enough time to also engage in the workplace? Will their participation increase women's workload to an unsustainable level?

Would it be possible for women to participate in any new project that is being designed or to open a new line of business if support services (e.g., childcare) are not made available to them?

Would women's home responsibilities preclude them from participating in any new project at certain times of day or on certain days of the week?

Do men or women typically work or spend the majority of their time in locations that would make it difficult for them to participate in new projects that are being designed?

V- Legal Rights and Status - Analysis of this domain involves assessing how people are regarded and treated by both the customary and formal legal codes and judicial systems. It encompasses access to legal documentation such as identification cards, voter registration, and property titles as well as rights to inheritance, employment, redress of wrongs, and representation.

Are there any special benefits or restrictions in the legal or regulatory framework that explicitly or indirectly target women or men?

Are men and women equally protected under laws related to intellectual property rights and by the patenting process?

VI- **Power and Decision-making** - This sphere of social life pertains to the ability of people to decide, to influence, to control, and to enforce. It refers to the capacity to make decisions freely and to exercise power over one's body and within an individual's household, community, municipality, and the state. This includes the capacity of adults to decide about the use of household and individual economic resources, income, and their choice of employment as well as to vote, run for office, enter legal contracts, etc.

Do women have the power to make decisions about their own economic activities? Will women have control over and benefit from the funds and assets they may accrue because of their participation?

Do women actively participate in formal decision-making structures or bodies that address businessrelated issues (e.g., local economic development committees, business associations, chambers of commerce, etc.)?

Do women and men hold an equal number of the decision-making positions in these entities?

Analysis:

"How will the different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace, and household (for example, roles in decision making and different access to and control over resources and services) affect the work to be undertaken?" The purpose of the first question is to ensure that:





1) the differences in the roles and status of women and men are examined, and

2) any inequalities or differences that will impede achieving project or activity goals are addressed in the project or activity design.

"How will the anticipated results of the work affect women and men differently?"

The second question calls for another level of analysis in which the anticipated project or activity results are:

1) fully examined regarding the possible different effects on women and men and

2) the design is adjusted as necessary to ensure equitable and sustainable project or activity impact.

This section also specifies that all projects and activities must address gender issues in a manner consistent with the findings of any analytical work performed during development of the Mission's long-term plan or for project or activity design, as described above. The conclusion of any gender analyses must be documented, unless it has been determined that gender is not a significant issue, in which case this must be stated. In addition, the findings of any analytical work performed during the development of a project or activity design must be integrated into the requirements definition for all human resources activities, including, not limited to, appraisals and performance reviews.

The performance management systems and evaluations must include gender sensitive indicators and sexdisaggregated data when the technical analyses supporting the project, or activity demonstrate that there are gender issues that must be considered. This also instructs to look for unintended consequences that may need to be addressed over the course of the project.

After the gender analysis has been conducted, we will use the findings to shape the recommendations, and during the normal business practices, the company should consider whether any rule or practice needs to be amended to consider gender issues that have been identified or to ensure equal outcomes for women and men.

As part of this process, the following will be considered:

Have any key gender issues been identified that will prevent women and men from benefitting equally opportunities to be board members?

- If yes, what process/law can be amended to ensure that men and women benefit equally?
- Do the gender issues that were revealed require that the most over- arching objectives and requirements of the board participation be re-phrased or re- conceptualized?

Does the gender analysis suggest that without any proactive intervention, board participation will be gender balanced? If not, how can the process be designed or amended to increase participation rates for the sex that is expected to be less well-represented?





Are the needs of men and women in relation to the board participation different enough that a separate prerequisites component focusing on women (or a sub-group of women) or men (or a subgroup of men) needs to be created?

Final note:

What types of data must be collected to track the impacts of the recommendations (once implemented) on men and women and to provide information about any gender issues that have been further identified?

Have any potential unintended consequences been identified? If yes, how should the project or activity account for these or be revised to counteract these?

Interviews:

Pulse checking interview on the implementation of policies related to gender equality

Colleagues,

Your company is participating in a participatory gender audit (PGA) that the facilitation team has presented to Management with its objectives, tools, and approach. This interview presents a number of questions about your impressions, knowledge and perceptions about procedures and practices related to gender equality in the workplace and the implementation mechanisms. The purpose of this interview is strictly for research purposes and its findings and results will be treated with anonymity. The interview will not in any way refer to your identities and this question will not even be asked. The responses will be made via an electronic link and the responses will directly be stored on a cloud server.

The interview comprises 30 multiple-choice questions. There are no correct or wrong answers. The interview will not require more than 8 minutes. We invite you to allocate the necessary time to share your responses.

1. Your gender?

- a) Male
- b) Female
- c) Prefer not to disclose

Your answer: ____

- 2. What is the extent of your knowledge in gender concepts and integration of gender equality the basic definitions of gender, women empowerment, principles of integration of gender equality at the workplace, taking the distinct needs of women and men?
- a) I have well rounded knowledge of all aspects of gender issues, women empowerment and integration of gender equality based on capacity development, exposure and follow up of changes in the domain.
- b) Good knowledge in the main concepts
- c) Superficial knowledge of the main concepts
- d) I am not knowledgeable nor exposed to the general concepts

Your answer: ____





- 3. Are you aware of the content of the company vision and objectives?
 - a) Fully
 - b) Sufficiently
 - c) Insufficiently
 - d) Not at all

4. Does the vision include aspects that support the inclusion of gender equality or just women empowerment?

- a) It includes aspects that are relevant to women empowerment
- b) It includes aspects that are relevant to inclusion of gender equality
- c) It includes aspects covering both
- d) Does not include any of the aspects
- e) I don't know

Your answer: ____

- 5. Are you aware of the National Strategy of Lebanese Women issued by the National Commission for Lebanese Women?
 - a) I have gone through it and I am aware of its content
 - b) I heard about it but did not go through it
 - c) I haven't heard about it
 - d) I don't know

Your answer: ____

- 6. IF your previous response was (a OR b), what is the source of your knowledge about the National Strategy?
 - a) Personal initiative
 - b) I participated in a course outside my role at the company
 - c) I participated in a course as part of my role at the company
 - d) An orientation session organized by company for the its staff
 - e) Information and knowledge sharing between colleagues in the company
 - f) I came across it from my previous work/area of study

Your answer: ____

7. How do you assess your knowledge in International Conventions that support the integration of gender equality in the workplace?

- a) Knowledge and understanding of ALL the conventions
- b) Knowledge and understanding of some of the conventions
- c) General superficial knowledge
- d) I don't have any knowledge

Your answer: _____

- 8. To what extent are you knowledgeable in Lebanese Laws in general and Lebanese Labor Laws related to integration of gender equality at the workplace?
 - a) Knowledge and understanding of ALL the laws
 - b) Knowledge and understanding of some of the laws
 - c) General superficial knowledge
 - d) I don't have any knowledge





- 9. To what extent does your company raise the awareness of its staff on the content of the National Strategy?
 - a) Fully
 - b) Sufficiently
 - c) Insufficiently
 - d) Not at all

Your answer: ____

10. To what extent does your company raise the awareness of its staff on the content of labor laws that impact women and men workers differently?

- a) Fully
- b) Sufficiently
- c) Insufficiently
- d) Not at all

Your answer: ____

- **11.** To what extent does your company raise the awareness of its staff about the content of International Conventions and International Labor Law Standards?
 - a) Fully
 - b) Sufficiently
 - c) Insufficiently
 - d) Not at all

Your answer: ____

- 12. Does your company have sufficient knowledge and practices (based on approaches and methodologies) to use tools to conduct gender needs assessment and incorporate the results of such an assessment in the various design stages of program/project lifecycle?
 - a) Fully
 - b) Sufficiently
 - c) Insufficiently
 - d) Not at all
 - e) I cannot decide

Your answer: ____

- 13. Is gender equality explicitly mentioned in specific sections within the company reports, any special reports on technical cooperation or/and any publication issued by the company?
 - a) Yes, all the time
 - b) Yes, sufficiently
 - c) Yes, but only occasionally
 - d) No
 - e) I cannot decide

Your answer: ____





- 14. Does your company provide opportunities of (capacity building, trainings, direct support, mentoring, literature review on gender equality) on gender equality topics and concepts to reinforce your knowledge and skills related to gender equality in your area of work?
 - a) Yes, more than enough
 - b) Yes, sufficiently
 - c) Yes, but insufficiently
 - d) Not at all
 - e) I cannot decide

- 15. In your capacities as a person responsible in your company, to what extent do you integrate gender equality in the various stages of design of programs/projects based on the gender mainstreaming in program lifecycle in your area of work?
 - a) My responsibilities do not involve gender mainstreaming in my work output
 - b) Fully
 - c) Sufficiently
 - d) Insufficiently
 - e) Not at all
 - f) I cannot decide

Your answer: _____

- 16. Do you have sufficient knowledge in gender mainstreaming so that you could provide pieces of advice to others?
 - a) Yes, more than sufficiently
 - b) Yes, sufficiently
 - c) No, not sufficiently
 - d) Not at all
 - Your answer: ____
- 17. What is the extent of your knowledge in tools and methodologies available to gender mainstreaming in your work such as for example (gender mainstreaming in planning, gender mainstreaming in budgeting, gender mainstreaming in communication, in training, in mobilization etc.)?
 - a) Very knowledgeable
 - b) Sufficiently knowledgeable
 - c) Insufficiently knowledgeable
 - d) Not knowledgeable at all

Your answer: ____

- 18. To what extent do you use tools and methodologies based on approaches for gender mainstreaming in your work?
 - a) Fully
 - b) Sufficiently
 - c) From time to time
 - d) Not at all

Your answer: ____





- 19. How recurrent is gender mainstreaming explicitly made in your work (when selecting activities, approaches and systems followed)?
 - a) Always
 - b) Usually
 - c) Rarely
 - d) Never

20. Personally, what importance do you carry to ensure respectful working relationships between men and women in your department/unit or when working with partners (suppliers, customers,

...)?

- a) A lot of importance
- b) Some importance
- c) Not sufficient importance
- d) I don't show any importance

Your answer: ____

- 21. When you come to know of challenges that one of your colleagues (men or women) face at work because of their gender, do you take any action in that regard?
 - a) Always
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Rarely
 - d) Never

Your answer: ____

- 22. Does your company exercise sufficient efforts to limit any expressions of gender inequality (screensavers that are not gender sensitive, inappropriate comments and jokes)?
 - a) Yes, more than sufficiently
 - b) Yes, sufficiently
 - c) No, insufficiently
 - d) Not at all

Your answer: ____

- 23. Does your company promote practices and procedures that prevent harassment at the workplace and during program interventions and handles it if it were to happen?
 - a) Perfectly
 - b) Sufficiently
 - c) Insufficiently
 - d) There is no anti-harassment policy
 - e) I cannot decide

Your answer: ____

24. How do you judge the representation of women in the leadership positions in your company?

- a) Balanced representation equal number of men and women
- b) Imbalanced representation in favor of men
- c) Imbalanced representation in favor of women





25. How do you judge the representation of women in the board of directors?

- a) Balanced representation equal number of men and women
- b) Imbalanced representation in favor of men
- c) Imbalanced representation in favor of women

Your answer: ____

26. How do you judge the mechanisms that your company follows on integrating gender equality in decision making?

- a) Fair and suitable for both genders
- b) Biased towards women
- c) Biased towards men
- d) I don't know

Your answer: ____

27. Does your company have an anti-harassment policy and a mechanism to handle reported cases (as proof of its activation)?

- a) It has a dedicated policy and its activated
- b) It has a dedicated policy but it is not activated
- c) The anti-harassment policy falls under the code of conduct and it is activated
- d) The anti-harassment policy falls under the code of conduct and but it is not activated
- e) I don't know

Your answer: ____

28. In your opinion, are women able to lead employers' organizations in Lebanon?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I cannot decide

Your answer: ____

29. Kindly explain your former response?

Thank you for the time you have allocated to share your impressions and perceptions. If you wish to get in touch with the facilitation team to share additional views and impressions, kindly do not hesitate to contact us over email on: program.manager@llwb.org

All emails will be dealt with anonymity and will not be disclosed.