

**]Final report. Empower Gender Participation in the Political life  
(2004-2005).**

**Gender / Political Participation**

**I- Introduction:**

The National Committee for the Follow up of Women's Issues pursued its efforts aiming at supporting the participation of women in political domain, alone or in cooperation and coordination with other concerned NGOs. These efforts began during the municipality elections, and the parliamentary elections of 2000 and the municipality elections of 2004. The Embassy of the Kingdom of Holland supported implementation of this project.

**II- Objectives:**

The NCFUWI, through the well planned activities of this project aimed at:

- 1- Avail women to equally participate in decision making with men as voting members, and as candidates.
- 2- Educate and enlighten women on how the election process is conducted, how to vote, who to vote for, clarify the laws that govern the election process, and the meaning of parliamentary representation.
- 3- Coordinate between women associations and other associations of the civil society to synchronize their work, and enlarge the participation of women in the political domain.

**III- Implementation:**

The preparation of the educational material and conducting the training workshop were timely accomplished, however the implementation of the remaining activities was delayed due to the assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, and the political turmoil that followed.

**A- Preparation of the Cognitive Material:**

- a- The NCFUWI, with the help and participation of well experienced members and lawyers, prepared, and printed a booklet containing a summary of eight suggested electoral laws including the quota, from the 94 suggested laws.
- b- A Women artist prepared a poster aiming at encouraging women to participate in the change that will be carried out by the members of Parliament, through women's active participation in the parliamentary election.
- c- Colored paper clippings each carrying a clear message on women's participation were also printed and distributed. The messages are:
  - 1- A larger percentage of women in the parliament are a larger capacity for development.
  - 2- Your right is to participate in the administration of your country, elect your members and run for the elections.
  - 3- Women's participation in politics is a chance for change: participate in the elections.
  - 4- It is not enough to vote: make a good choice and choose the best.

- 5- A women voting; a women running for elections means better future for the country.
- 6- Election is a democratic procedure, choose your representatives and make your own list.
- d- Few cartoons were prepared by a women participant in the training workshop, and matching slogans were prepared by the working groups who participated in the training workshop.

The cartoons and their matching slogans and comments were printed in black and white and were used and distributed during the regional meetings.

**B- Training:**

A two day training workshop was conducted at the Commodore Hotel. Around 34 trainers from 15 various organizations and **NGO'S** were trained as scheduled. Training was conducted in six working sessions over two days under the following titles:

- 1- Importance of political participation in the parliament and its effect on the process of changes.
- 2- Role of the Parliament, the duties of the members and election criteria.
- 3- Laws that regulate women participation in the political life in Lebanon.
- 4- Samples from suggested electoral laws.
- 5- Communication skills.
- 6- Information campaign.

**C- Equipment:**

The NCFUWI purchased a 4300 W multimedia front USB Prescott ready computer, and Intel 3.2Ghz1MB cash 800Mh2 and HP DeskJet 3740 printer. Purchase was made by choosing the best offer from different quotations.

**D- Awareness meetings and information campaign:**

Implementation of this stage was delayed till May 2005 due to the political turmoil that followed the assassination of Prime Minister Harriri.

Eleven meetings were organized in the regions in co-operation between NCFUWI and other NGOs and civil society organizations in the respective areas.

The regions' coordinators organized these meetings, and the trained members introduced the main topics namely: the importance of women participation in political life; the electoral laws stressing the laws that encourage women participation; and the responsibilities of the members and criteria for selection. The topics generated discussion and interest among the audience of both sexes that ranged from 30 to 200 people and received wide media coverage (photocopies of some paper clippings and a detailed table showing the details of the regional awareness sessions are attached to this report).

The National Committee for Follow up of Women's Issues organized a press conference titled "Obstacles of running and reasons for withdrawal from elections" at the press syndicate on 30 June 2005 at 12:30 am. The president of the syndicate highlighted the efforts and activities of NCFUWI which deal with social problems in addition to women's issues

Dr. Fahima Chrafeddine highlighted the bad electoral law of 2000, which was formulated especially in favor of selected people and to serve certain political purpose. She questioned the possibility of independent single candidates to run for an election that was made especially to fit and serve artificially organized lists and questioned their capacities to finance their campaigns and compete with the money spent on those "artificial lists"

and to pay for, or penetrate the media in the absence of any rules that regulate propaganda and any ceiling for expenditure.

Dr. Aman Chaarani who ran for the elections in Tripoli as a representative for the women organizations, unions and syndicates and the civil society at large presented her experience, she explained that the national atmosphere of March 14, 2005 that called for equal opportunities and the freedom of the state and its institutions, and the support of supported by the Lebanese council of women, the United Women Associations of the North and the National Committee for Follow up of Women's Issues encouraged her to run for the elections. She realized that slogans are different from reality. She was nominated by, and running in the name of civil society (the 3<sup>rd</sup> group) that does not exist to the main and major players. She attributed that to the following:

- 1) The very bad electoral law that results in the success of a group of people who were not selected by the majority of the voters, but by the heads of the lists who control the parliament
- 2) The corruption of the system that will not allow change and reform which can possibly take place if the new parliament change the existing electoral law?
- 3) Going back to sectarianism and religious affiliations where by all politicians ask for their shares, but not for the development of the regions and the people whom they are supposed to represent.
- 4) The political / electoral money and very high budgets, where those who do not have or possess big money are excluded from political activities, this could be also related existing electoral law.

She added that the people, especially women reacted positively with her and expressed their needs for development at all levels.

For all those reasons, and to avoid negative effect of the results of this election on the future plans of women organizations she decided to withdraw

She concluded that we have, to work from now, to create young qualified leaders and support them and encourage them to participate in the political activities of the country. It is important to lobby for a new electoral law, to control legally and administratively political money and regulate expenditure for political activities and to create pressure to include the youth who have completed 18 years of age as well as people living abroad or away from their place of birth to participate in the next election. Furthermore, we have to lobby against sectarianism and religious divisions and to build bridges and ties between the civil society and the state.

Mr. John Jabbour, explained that his withdrawal from the election was due to the (1) bad electoral law, and to the (2) unseen powers that still direct the heads and leaders of the electoral lists and (3) to the chaotic expenditure and media coverage of the election campaigns that could only be provided by the wealthy ruling group.

Mrs. Linda Matar spoke about her previous experience and summarized the reasons for not running by (1) the bad electoral law (2) the bad political system which must change (3) the religious and sectarian system. (4) And the absence of any laws that regulate media coverage and expenditure.

The conference received wide media coverage in the daily papers of July 1, 2005.

### **Evaluation Workshop**

**Table 1-The topics, places and dates and audiences of the regional meetings:**

<b>Region&amp; place</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Date</b>
A- Mount Lebanon				May
1) Salima/Metn	- Responsibilities of the members of parliament. -Criteria for selection	Hind Masri	150 men and women of different age groups.	May13,2005
2) Abey/chouff	/electoral laws. - Obstacles and Importance of women participation - Responsibilities of members of parliament. - Electoral laws. -Importance of women's participation	Hind Masri  Nazik Abul Hosn  Nazik Abul Hosn  Nada Talhouk. Hind Masri	107 men & women.	May31,2005
B- North Lebanon				
1) Al Qalamoun	- Importance of and obstacles for women participation - Electoral laws. - Responsibilities of members and criteria for reelection.	Dr. Fatima Badawi.  Dr. Hind Soufi.	A group of men and women.	May13,2005
2) Khraybet el-gindi/Akkar	- Importance of political participation of women. - Responsibilities of member /criteria for election/ electoral laws.	Dr. Fatima Badawi.  Dr. Hind Soufi.	A group of men & women	June10,2005
C- Beirut				
1) Lebanese University.	- Importance and criteria for election /right of women participation. - Importance of election.	Dr. Ghada Yafi		May5,2005
2) Ghbaireh		Dr. Fatima	A group of men	May27,2005

	- Obstacles of women participation /electoral laws.	Kadora. Hind Masri.	& women (30).	
D- Beqaa 1) Riyaq	- Electoral laws & how they effect women participation.	Rima Saghir.	50 women	May14,y2005
2) Al Ayn	- Women's participation. - Criteria for election. - Women's Participation. - Importance of women participation.	Laila Mroueh. Kholoud Zaiter. Dr. Fatima Dabbouss. Laila Mroueh.	A group of men & women.	May21,2005
3) Baalbek	- Difficulties of women participation /electoral laws. - Criteria of reelection.	Laila Mroueh. Marian Karakalla.	A group of people.	May27,2005
3) Baalbek				
E- South Lebanon 1) Saida	- Importance of women participation in politics. - Electoral laws and Quota.	Dunia Mukalled. Hala Wehbe.	85 women	May12,2005
2) Tyre/(Sour)	- Importance of women participation /electoral laws/ criteria for election and responsibilities of members.	Souraya Hachem. Rajaa Hshem.		May20,2005

**Matweyah 2005**

**The National Committee for the Follow up of Women's' Issues**

**LEBANON**

### **Historical Background**

- The committee was formed on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1993, for the preparation of the Beijing convention in order to stage an effective participation on behalf of the Lebanese women.
- Half of the members of the National Commission for the Lebanese Woman Affairs were selected from among members of the National Committee for the Follow up of Women's Issues.
- The National Committee includes men and women experts, vocational trade unions, women associations, individuals and civil society institutions.
- The National Committee was established according to decree number 71/AD issued on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1996.
- The National Committee uses networking as a means to establish units in all Lebanese regions: Beirut – Mount Lebanon – North Lebanon – South Lebanon and the Bekaa Area.
- The National Committee accomplished its organizational and administrative structure in the year 2000.

### **Objectives**

- To develop the participation of women on all levels of social, economic and political aspects of life, also to revise the role of women and to eliminate all types of discriminations against women.
- To upgrade awareness concerning the concept of GENDER and to work towards its integration within the national policies.
- To enable women to participate in the decision- making process and also to exercise their rights and to take up their responsibilities in the planning and designing of the national life policies.
- To consolidate the norms and values that respect, human rights including the genuine rights of women.
- To encourage intercommunications among women on the local, regional and international levels.

### **The National Committee Accomplishments**

#### **1994 – 1995**

- Announcement of the establishment of the National Committee for the follow up of women's Issues by initiative from the Lebanese Council of Women.
- Participation in the preparation of the National report for the Beijing convention, in cooperation with the National Commission for the Lebanese Woman Affairs.
- Preparation for the fourth convention for women in Beijing.
- Participation in all the National and Arab preparatory activities for the Beijing convention.
- Representing Lebanon in the convention and the forums.

#### **1996 – 1997**

- Preparation of a National strategy for the Lebanese women in collaboration with the National Commission for the Lebanese Woman Affairs.

- Publishing the Lebanese working paper, that includes five study projects for the coming five years- in association with the National Commission for the Lebanese Woman Affairs, and submitting the projects to the donor countries.
- Participation in the Arab Forum for Non Government Organizations (NGOs) in Amman.
- Participation in the National Campaign for the support of the participation of women in the political life.
- Educating, enlightening and training women for leadership in order to activate women participation in the local authorities.
- Organizing meetings and workshops (144 meetings) in Beirut and the Lebanese governorates and regions to encourage women's participation in local authorities.
- Formation of regional units and launching communication networks in all Lebanese governorates.
- Preparation of the National Committee institutional structure with UNIFEM, and a working plan for the support of the National Women Board.
- Preparation and implementation of five training sessions in the empowerment of women for leadership roles in collaboration with the National Committee of UNESCO.
- Preparation of a curriculum to upgrade the awareness of semi-illiterate women on how to provide educational opportunities for girls, and holding practical training session within this context in collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Office

#### **1998 - 1999**

- Organizing a press conference for the support of women candidates running for the local authorities elections, and for announcing their programs at the press syndicate headquarters.
- Organizing an evaluation conference for the national campaign for the promotion of women participation in the local authorities that was carried out by the National Committee.
- Participation in the debate and discussion of the law that was proposed by the parliamentary Justice and Administrative Committee.
- Participation in the debate and discussion of the prepared law for the National Committee, within the Justice and Administrative Committee of the Lebanese parliament.
- Implementation of the project for the support of the women national apparatus in establishing the (G.F.P) organizational units within the
- Launching the National campaign for the elimination of all types of legal discrimination against women, in collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), OXFAM, and the Lebanese Bar Association.
- Preparation of the Lebanese Document for the "Elimination of all types of Discrimination Against Women" in collaboration with the Lebanese Bar Association and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES).
- Capacity building of the regional units regarding the Lebanese document for the "Elimination of all types of Discrimination Against Women".

#### **2000 - 2001**



- Holding central and regional meetings (50) in all governorates to create legal awareness in connection with the Lebanese legal document.
- Preparation of the shadow report on the accomplished progress in the implementation of the accord signed for the elimination of all types of discrimination against women (CEDAW) in association with the UNIFEM & UNICEF.
- Preparation of national report of the NGOs' (Beijing + 5) that was adopted by the National Commission for the Lebanese Woman, in association with the Lebanese Women Council.
- Organizing a convention for the evaluation of the first stage of the national campaign for the Elimination of all Types of Discrimination Against Women within the legal aspects- an evaluation and future prospects.
- Organizing a seminar over political participation, democracy and peace with the German Minister of Justice, in collaboration with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES).
- Training of Trainers (TOT) on gender, in collaboration with UNIFEM.
- Holding central and regional meetings in the different Lebanese regions and in Beirut for the spread of legal awareness in connection with the Lebanese legal document which mounted to 36 meetings and training of 37 participants from various NGOs.
- Establishing a website, home page: <http://www.cfuw.com>
- Supporting women participation in political life.
- Preparation of the cognitive material: (deputies' duties and tasks, summary of electoral laws).
- Training and capacity building of women in the regions.
- Organizing a press conference to pave the way for women candidates to introduce themselves and their programs.
- Participation in the Arab Nations convention for coordination and planning post the Beijing, and Cairo conventions.
- A convention for the evaluation of the National Committee accomplishments of five years (its networks and supporting associations).
- **2002 – 2003**
- A workshop on institutionalization and Future plans.
- The National Committee, within its position as a primary partner with UNIFEM implemented the following activities:
  - Participation in a regional training session on gender strategy planning in Amman.
  - Three training sessions on the concept of gender, its roles, needs and its relation with the development process in South Lebanon, North Lebanon and the Beqa'a region.
  - A workshop for integrating gender within the primary axis of the National strategies.
  - A training session on the use of the inter net, information technology, and communication, at ESCWA.

-Educational seminars on citizenship and public affairs in Beirut, South Lebanon, the Beqa'a valley, North Lebanon and Mount Lebanon.

- Publishing a book entitled “supporting political participation of women- the National Committee experience 1998 – 2001”.
- Establishment of a gender center for training, creating awareness and studies.
- Presenting a list of demands to the three presidents in cooperation with the National Council of women including:
  - Demanding the strengthening of women participation in decision-making.
  - Equal opportunities in the election process.
  - Equality between both sexes in the citizenship law.
- Follow up of the awareness campaign on abolishing all forms of discrimination against women.
- Follow up the educational and awareness meetings on gender with high school and university students (10 meetings).
- Follow up the project of women participation in political life.
- Establishment of the cultural forum: meetings and witnesses aiming at improving general knowledge and culture of women, and encouraging women to participate in systematic discussions and debate, and to adopt the concepts of human rights that are based on equality and social justice among sexes.

## **2004**

- Implementation of the campaign for activation of women’s participation in local authorities in alliance with the Lebanese Women Democratic Forum and the Lebanese Association for the Democracy of Elections:
  - Holding 25 meetings in all the Lebanese governorates to promote women participation in election as a voter and as a nominee.
  - Organizing four training workshops for the observation of the election process from a gender perspective.
  - Organizing an evaluation conference in Beirut for the above- mentioned campaign.
- Continue the implementation of the project of raising awareness on gender concept in universities and high schools.
- Continue the implementation of the cultural forum: seminars and meetings in Beirut & the regions:
  - Witnesses on pioneer women; women movement, pros and cons -North Lebanon.
  - Democracy & its effect on changing positions and status of women -Beirut.
  - Witnesses on pioneer women-Mount Lebanon.
  - Reproductive health of women- Beqa'a Valley.
  - Women & politics- South Lebanon.
- Preparation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> shadow report on the achieved progress in the implementation of the accord signed for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women CEDAW, supported by UNIFEM and UNFPA.
- Publishing issue #7 of the newsletter "QADAYA".
- Participation in various regional and international forums.
- The initiative of the committee to call institutes and organizations of the civil society for the establishment of a network, that was called” The Lebanese Network of Women” and preparation of its establishing document.

- Renewal of the website in collaboration with the embassy of the kingdom of Holland.

### **Major Publications**

- The National Committee for preparation and participation in the fourth International conference of women in Beijing 1995 – a summary of objectives – activities and plans.
- Proceedings of the seminars and working sessions that were held in connection with the preparations for the Beijing conference (1994 – 1995).
- The National Report of NGOs working in Lebanon on the accomplishments of implementation of the Beijing plan of Action 1995, in collaboration with the Lebanese council of women, UNIFEM, OXFAM and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES).
- Shadow report (CEDAW) on achieved implementation of the signed accord on eliminating all forms of discrimination against women – part I & part II in 2004.
- A summary of the electoral laws in collaboration with the Lebanese Council of Women and Friedrich Ebert.
- The Lebanese document for eliminating all forms of discrimination in collaboration with the Bar Association, Frederick Ebert and OXFAM.
- Supporting women participation in political life in Lebanon. The parliamentary and local elections 1995 in collaboration with Frederick Ebert.
- Newsletter "QUDAYA" which is a specialized quarterly publication by The National Committee. Seven issues have been published the first of which as published in May 2002.

### **Projects of 2005**

- A project for the preparation of the second document on eliminating all forms of discrimination against women in the Lebanese laws including:
  - Revision current Lebanese laws and assess their compliance with eliminating of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW), funded by AMIDEAST.
  - Prepare amendments to existing laws or new laws.
  - Formulate pressure groups to affect legislative authorities to discuss and act on the set of prepared, amended or new laws.
  - Selected, qualified and experienced lawyers in the legislative field researched and studied current laws.
  - Organization of round tables with judges and lawyers of both sexes.
  - Organization of round table for Women Associations and civil society organizations.
  - Organization of a National conference to declare the second final legal document.
  - Organization of 12 awareness meetings in all the Lebanese regions.
- A project to "empower gender participation in political life". Supported by the Embassy of the kingdom of Holland.
  - Prepare summary for samples of suggested electoral laws.
  - Training of trainers (TOT) on skills related to activation of women participation in political life from a gender perspective.
  - Organizing twelve (12) meetings in Beirut and the Lebanese regions.

- Organization of an evaluating workshop.
- The cultural forum that includes meetings and lectures highlighting Lebanese women pioneers, in Beirut and the regions.
- AFKAR, a project for gender reading and analysis of text- books of the elementary stage supported by OMSAR.
- Follow up the work in the Lebanese Women Network, to carry out and implement campaigns aiming towards amendments of existing laws or preparing new laws that guarantee true equality between sexes.

## **STRUCTURE**

### **The constituent body**

Dr. Aman Chaarani, DR. Fadia Kiwan, Dr. Lamia Rostum, Ms. Nelly El Helou; Dr. Nour Salman, Dr. Fahmiya Sharafeddine, Ms. Majida Al-Khatib.

### **The Administrative Body 2004 – 2006**

Dr. Aman Kabbarah Chaarani	President	Ms. Huda Adra
Dr. Fahmiya Charafeddine	Vice President	Ms. Thoraya Hashem
Ms. Hind Masri	Executive Secretary	Dr. Carmen Boustani
Ms. Mona Ibrahim	Treasurer	Ms. Haifa Malak
Ms. Widad Chakhtoura		Ms. Nayla Masri
Ms. Afifa El Sayyed		Ms. Natallie Za'arour

### **Names of Organizations and Institution Members In the National Committee**

The Cultural Council for South Lebanon.  
The Women Democratic Forum.  
The Lebanese Association for Human Rights.  
The Association for Educational Development.  
Beirut Association for Social Development.

### **Names of Supporting Organization and Institutions**

The Press Syndicate  
The Bankers' Association  
The Lawyers' Syndicate  
The Teachers' Syndicate  
The Editors' Syndicate  
The General Labor & Trade Confederation  
The Lebanese Industrialists Association  
The Hariri Foundation  
The Teachers' Bureau  
The University Teachers league

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**Gender/النوع الاجتماعي**  
**ملخص تنفيذي حول انجازات اللجنة الأهلية في حقل النوع الاجتماعي**

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