

# Violence Against Women and Achieving SDG8: Innovation to Integrate VAW Prevention into Women's Economic Empowerment in Lebanon



# Intersection between WEE & VAW

VAW prevention is integrated within a broader Women's Economic Participation Project.

Builds on increased recognition of the connection between SDG 5.2 (EVAW) & SDG 8 (economic growth).

Adapted the Indashyikirwa model for Syrian refugee and Lebanese host communities – renamed Stronger Together.

Piloted and evaluated in the South Lebanon governorate.

- Understand, access, mitigate / reduce potential **VAW risks** within the scope of activities.
- Use an **economic entry point** for changing power relationships at household and markets level.
- Emphasize on **interdisciplinary programming** (go beyond providing economic opportunities)

# Stronger Together Overview

WEE activities are the entry point to engage participants.

Women participating in the livelihoods' activities invited husbands & male relatives to attend the 17 ST sessions aiming to enhance **healthy & non-violent relationships**.

Build the capacity and commitment of commitment leaders to **take actions promoting gender equality and environment free of VAW**.

**Structured activism opportunities** are provided through establishing 4 "Gender Equality Cafés", interactive safe spaces linking women with community leaders to engage in awareness-raising and community mobilization efforts to eliminate VAW.



Women and Men Workshops



Municipal and Community Leaders Workshops

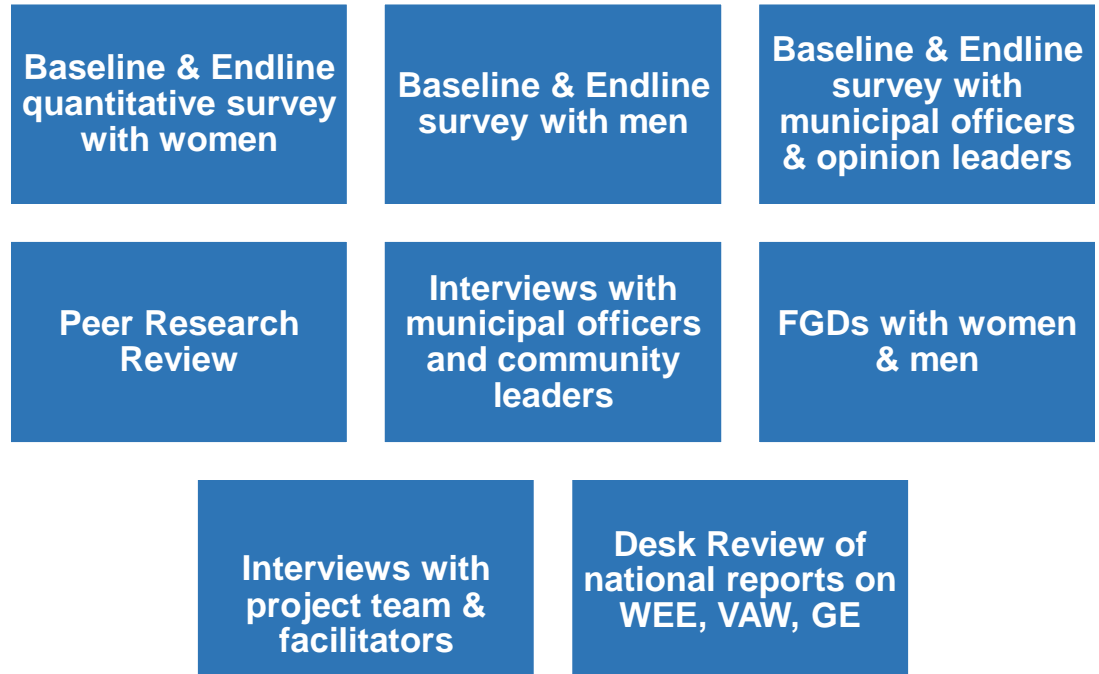


Gender Equality Cafés

# Mixed-Method Evaluation

- **Main Eval Questions:**

- To which extent did the integration of VAW prevention accelerated the achievement of WEE?
- To which extent did the project achieve positive changes in women and men's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors on gender equality & VAW?



# Impact on Economic Empowerment



- **28.7%** of targeted women reported increased access to economic resources, assets & benefits, compared to 20.5% at baseline.
- **17%** of targeted women reported a positive change in control (ownership & decision-making) over economic resources.
- **21.7%** of targeted women reported improvement in economic conditions.

Findings should be understood by factoring in the rapidly changing context and on-going multiple economic & political crisis in Lebanon.

# Women's Beliefs & Attitudes on Gender Equality

- **16%** increase in the % of women reporting improved beliefs, attitudes, & behaviors towards gender equality.
- Increased women's **understanding of gender roles** as being learnt through socialization rather than being innate/natural.
- Encouraged women to **adopt more flexible understanding of gender roles.**



# Women's Beliefs & Attitudes on Care Work

- Positive changes in women's perceptions of **shared care work with men.**
- Encouraged some women (*younger, newly married, or parents of new-born children*) **to ask for their husband's co-sharing care work.**
- Women were not encouraged to ask their husband to do so, as they believed that it remains very difficult to change how men think and behave, and did not want to ask for their husband's help as they anticipated that their request will be disapproved

*“During the sessions, I started to reflect on the past; I realized that my husband could have contributed to care work and that there was nothing wrong about asking him to do so. I was working inside and outside the house, while he was only working outside the house.. We would have raised our children better if we share care work.” Syrian Participant.*

# Women's Beliefs & Attitudes on Women's Economic Roles

*“Nowadays, even when women & men are both working, they will not be able to cover their living expenses. I support women working and having their own personal income. Unfortunately, we live in a patriarchal society where a man is more capable to oppress his wife if she is economically dependent on him. Women should work and have their own income to avoid experiencing economic violence”*

Lebanese Woman Participant.

- Increase in women's recognition of the benefits of their economic participation in terms of allowing them to develop more equal and violence free relationships with their husband.
- Women's economic participation is seen as an ever-increasing need in the current context of economic collapse.



# Women's Beliefs & Attitudes on Women's Economic Roles – ctd.



- Syrian women didn't elaborate on the empowering effects of their economic participation.
- This relates to **structural barriers** that often limit their access as **women refugees** to economic opportunities that tend to **increase their vulnerabilities** rather than empower them.
- ST workshops encouraged some Syrian women to join the labor market, while it seemed to **reinforce other Syrian women's unwillingness to do so under the current conditions (workplace exploitation)**.

# Healthy Communication

- **85.4%** of targeted women reported speaking with husbands more frequently about topics that can make their relationship healthier including theirs as well as their husbands worries or feelings, and sexual relationship, compared to 70% at baseline.
- Introduced women to healthy communication skills that they did use to healthily manage disagreement with their husbands and avoid its escalation into conflict.

*“ I learnt many new skills that I was able to use with my husband. I now make sure to dedicate time for us to sit and discuss our problems to find solutions together. This solved many problems between us, and I am very happy about that.”*

*Syrian woman participant.*

# Men's Beliefs & Attitudes

- **85% & 47%** of targeted Lebanese & Syrian men reported improved beliefs & attitudes towards women's economic roles; compared to 29 and 28% at baseline.
- Decrease in the % of men agreeing that their wife/ female household members equally participate in decision making.
- Findings might indicate that men are more of gender inequalities in terms of issues related to decision-making on investments, expenditures, place of residency, etc..
- High increase in men's reporting of equally participating in care work.



# Lessons Learnt

- Supporting WEE enables women to increase their decision-making and assume new roles at the household, markets and society while challenging existing power relations and gender norms.
- Failure to integrate VAW prevention into economic empowerment interventions would increase the social & economic challenges; & jeopardize any intended benefits of WEE.
- Understand the links between VAW and WEE in their local contexts and be responsive to women's needs and realities. → no “one-size-fits all” approach.
- The integration of power framework help women and men to identify multiple forms of violence.
- **Power-within** concept supports the improvement of women's self-confidence; **power with & power to** support women and men to work together to eliminate VAW.

