

# National Meeting on “Women Empowerment and Entrepreneurial Development in the Rural Context”

July 2019, Beirut

# Overview

- Akkar at a glance
- Perceptions and trends
- Akkar Network for Development interventions
- Challenges
- What role for women in Akkar?

# Akkar at a glance

- Located on the North of the country bordering Syria. Akkar is composed of 128 villages where an approximate number of 400,000 Lebanese and around 100,000 Syrian refugees reside.
- The Akkar governorate includes 15% of the cultivated land in Lebanon, while Akkar's area constitutes only 7.5% of Lebanon's total surface.
- Recent UN assessments have reported average monthly household income of \$641 in Akkar  
([http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resourcedocuments/reach\\_lbn\\_profile\\_hcv\\_akkar\\_jul2015.pdf](http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resourcedocuments/reach_lbn_profile_hcv_akkar_jul2015.pdf))
- Today, Akkar has one of the highest poverty rates in Lebanon, affecting 63% of its population. (*Aicha Moushref, January 2008, for Mada Association, UNDP, Handicap International and EU Humanitarian Aid, Forgotten Akkar, Socio-economic Reality of the Akkar region*)
- When considering the living conditions of Syrian refugees, and as per VASYR 2018, Akkar district is one of the poorest areas in Lebanon with 69% of the surveyed refugee population living below the SMEB level
- Moreover, 82% of the surveyed population in Akkar is living below the poverty line of US\$3.84 per day, compared to a national level of 68.5%.
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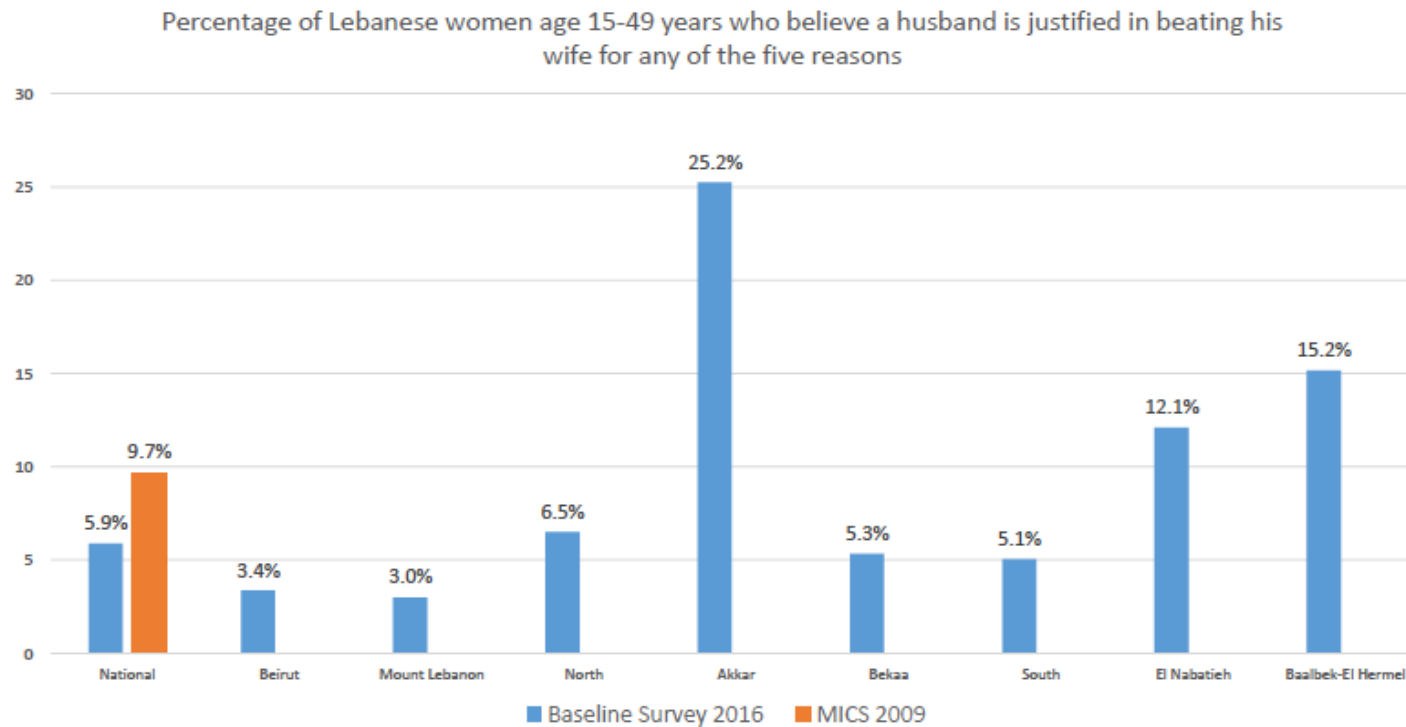
# Akkar at a glance

- As many as 25% of families in Akkar rely on a military salary or pension as their primary source of income ( *FAO / REACH Food Security and Livelihoods Assessment of Lebanese Host Communities, June 2015*<sup>(1)</sup> ).
- As per the FAO, 64% of Lebanese surface is considered agricultural, and 14% of total land is considered arable.
- In the same time, and relying on Akkar's natural resources, around 28% of the local population is engaged in the agricultural sector, including full-time and part-time or seasonal labor. Up to 31% of the agricultural labor force rent the lands they cultivate
- Akkar's poverty problems, have been linked in several assessments with the lack of support for agriculture and agribusiness activities, *"Lebanon's rural people live in poverty as a result of the major problems facing agricultural production, which are mainly the small size of agricultural holdings, lack of agriculture policies, high production costs and lack of specialized agricultural credit. Women, who make up one third of the agricultural labour force, are particularly disadvantaged by the lack of programmes and interventions targeting women. This leads to their poor representation in all aspects of agricultural production, with negative repercussions on their own socio-economic status and that of their households"*.

<http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/rural-poverty-portal/country/home/tags/Lebanon>

# Perceptions and trends (*preliminary findings HH survey 2015+MICS 2009*)

## Key Indicator Results – Attitudes toward domestic violence (women)





# Safer Communities for Women & Adolescent girls III

- The **GBV intervention projects** started in 2015 with funding by UNICEF
- **Areas of Coverage in Akkar:**
  - a-Jurd Akkar
  - b- Sahel Akkar
  - c- Shafat area (Halba and surroundings)
- **Types of activities and services provided:**
  - a-Sensitization activities (Religious leader meetings, community groups, Information sessions and community events)
  - b- Prevention & Response services (Focused Psychosocial Support curricula, additional awareness sessions, Non focused Psychosocial Support skills sessions and Case management)
- **Number of Women and Adolescent Girls reached in the last two years:**
  - a- 2017-2018: 11060
  - b- 2018-2019:11702



Focused Psychosocial Support Curriculum – Life skills through drama (Photo above)

First aid training

Community Events

Non-Focused Psychosocial Support skills sessions –First aid (Photo to the left)



# Inclusion in the political process: Women in elections

- In preparation for the municipal elections 2016, AND organized several information sessions for women interested in running for municipal office.
- AND organized a social marketing campaign to sensitize the community about the role of women in the municipalities





# Socio-Economic Empowerment

- Trainings on:
- Accessories
- Candles Moulding
- Soap making
- Chocolate making
- Computer literacy
- Dolls confection
- Sewing
- Wool Knitting
- Food safety...



# Awareness on child rights, participation, promotion and demand creation in Akkar.

- The **Social Inclusion project** started in July 2017 with a first phase that ended in June 2018, and a second phase that started in October 2018 and ended in January 2019. A third phase is expected to start soon.

- **Areas of Coverage in Akkar:**

- a- Sahel Akkar

- b-Wadi Khaled

- **Types of activities and services provided:**

- a- Awareness raising sessions on child rights for caregivers and children.

- b- Capacity building to Steering committees and Children committees to act as agent of change and support in their respective communities.

- c-train a certain number of children to become child right advocates in their communities.

- d- Community based interventions (equipping playgrounds and public gardens with games for children)

- e- Encouraging discussions between adults and children; 2 discussions took place in the two areas of coverage, one was about child labor and the other about substance abuse.





Children participating in the community event



AND staff providing awareness sessions to caregivers



# GIL- Youth Innovation Labs

- The **GIL project** started in July 2017 and ongoing
- **Areas of Coverage in Akkar:**
  - a- Jurd
  - b-Wadi Khaled
- **Types of activities and services provided:**
  - a- Entrepreneurship skills track ( with INJAZ)
  - b- Digital skills track ( with DOT)
  - c- Possibility to compete for seed funding
  - d- Mentorship support



# GIL- Youth Innovation Labs





# Challenges

- Perception of women's role
- Limited socio-economic opportunities
- Mobility restrictions
- Peer Pressure
- Early marriage
- Limitations on choice of studies ( in university, when available)

# What role for the women in Akkar?

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- **What are we providing for the women in Akkar?**
- A - A community that is more aware of the issues that women and children can face. A community that embodies the needs of women, girls and children, a community that accepts to act when witnessing women and/or children rights abuse.
- B -Providing a holistic approach to the needs of a household as met on the field by coordinating between the different interventions in the community such as the GBV, CP, livelihoods...
- C- Providing attainable economic opportunities
- D- Encouraging a mixed, dual approach: top-down, and bottom-up.
- E- Encouraging the presence of empowered women and including them in the spotlight to create role models for adolescent girls.





شبكة عكار للتنمية

AKKAR NETWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT

— AND —