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**THE ROLE OF WOMEN NGOS IN EMPOWERING WOMEN IN
LEBANON:
A LIFE-LONG PARTNER TO GENDER JUSTICE?**

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Abstract: Despite impressive strides in women's education and economic participation, Lebanese women continue to be relegated to the secondary role and undergo domestic violence, social injustices and discriminatory actions at the family, community, and national levels. Amidst great structural barriers and discriminatory laws, Women Non-Governmental Organizations (WNGOs) have burgeoned in the past decade and their presence has been more pronounced at the socio-economic and political levels. However, despite their exponential growth, there is no concrete evidence of their programs' effect on women's empowerment in Lebanon. In this backdrop, the present study investigates the impact of WNGOs from women beneficiaries' perspectives, after controlling for the effects of socio-economic and demographic influential factors. Empirical data were collected from 330 women in 6 different governorates in Lebanon. Results revealed that a positive change in women's lives and an increased level in their overall empowerment due to WNGOs' interventions have been perceived by women, yet at a low effect size. Other socio-economic factors, such as education, access to household income, family upbringing and ICTs usage, turned out to be more important predictors of women's empowerment in Lebanon. Using specific experiences and quotations shared by participants, the paper then explores the different socio-economic, political and interpersonal barriers hampering women's advancement and achievement of gender justice, including WNGOs' backdrop in sustaining their effect and capitalizing on their gains. Implications of the present research findings have been discussed and future recommendations for further research have been also suggested.

KEYWORDS: women empowerment, gender justice, women NGOs, participation, measurement, Lebanon.

1. INTRODUCTION

Situated in the heart of the Middle East, Lebanon is an upper middle-income country of 4.510 million people belonging to 18 different sectarian religious groups, of whom 49.2% are women (World Bank 2014). Despite the historical social and political roles that Lebanese women have been playing since the 19th century (Khalaf 2010:1), they still suffer from gender-based injustices, such as domestic violence, honour crimes, rape, and legal discrimination (UNICEF 2011:2-3).

Although they can establish their own businesses, obtain bank loans, and own property, discriminatory provisions are still prevalent in the penal code, the nationality law and some of the personal status laws¹, a clear reflection of gender injustice. Great strides in women's education have been attained, however only 23% of Lebanese women participate in economic life (World Bank 2013) where most occupy jobs in the informal sector or in feminized positions, and earn less than men in work of equal value. This is mainly due to "gender-blind" economic policies, alongside "structural barriers" that include outdated traditions, stereotyping and deep-rooted patriarchal mindsets (ESCWA 2012:1), that constitute the main barriers to the achievement of gender justice.

Politically, Lebanese women remain underrepresented in the political sphere and continue to face obstacles to realize their full rights. Worldwide, Lebanon ranks 135 out of the 188 surveyed countries on women's participation in national parliaments, with only 4 out of the 128

¹ For instance, Lebanese Nationality Law no. 15 forbids Lebanese women from passing on their nationality to their foreign husbands and children. Articles 487, 488, 504 and 562 of the Penal Code sentence women for adulterous acts, justify honour killings perpetrated against women for alleged "illegal sexual intercourse", and leave husbands unpunished for marital rape (Khalaf 2010:3-6).

parliamentarian seats (3.1%) allocated for women (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2015). This under-representation is mainly due to Lebanon's political landscape that is based on sectarianism, hereditary political arrangements, and "flouted constitutional provisions for the protection of women's rights" that are often unenforced due to male-dominated politics and discriminatory laws (EIU 2012:12).

Despite ratifying and committing to the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Lebanon still witnesses outrageous cases of domestic violence, on occasion leading to homicide (Khalaf 2010:2-9). With a culture of "taboo" surrounding speaking out about domestic violence and laws that implicitly condone such acts, efforts to end these injustices recently materialized in a law condemning domestic violence. This law was however described as "incomplete" and "distorted" because it does not guarantee women's full protection (Human Rights Watch 2014) since amendments related to marital rape and the rape of unmarried virgin girls were not approved.

In view of the prevailing discriminatory policy environment and the persisting gender-based injustices at the socio-economic and political levels, Women Non-Governmental Organization (WNGOs) have burgeoned in the past few years and gained greater visibility. However, despite their proliferation, there is no concrete evidence on their programs' impact on women's empowerment and their subsequent achievement of gender justice in Lebanon.

This study extends previous research undertaken across the world by examining the relationship between WNGOs and the different facets of women's individual empowerment in the context of Lebanon. It hypothesises that WNGOs would be associated with greater level of women's empowerment, taking into account other contextual factors that may have initially contributed to their empowerment. These include, but are not limited to, women's age, level of education, family upbringing, household wealth, and access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

By adopting a participatory approach, the study engages women beneficiaries (i.e. participants) in assessing the change that WNGOs have made in their lives, capturing local specificities and other influential factors. The objectives of the study are to investigate perceived impact of WNGOs on women's multi-dimensional empowerment, study the extent to which socio-economic and demographic factors influence their empowerment, and explore their perceptions of the inherent barriers to their empowerment and to the achievement of gender justice in Lebanon.

Using empirical data from 330 Lebanese women in 6 Lebanese governorates, the present study aims to respond to the following specific **research questions**:

1. From participants' perspectives, do WNGOs contribute to their socio-economic, familial, political, legal, and psychological empowerment?
2. Do other socio-economic and demographic factors influence participants' reported levels of empowerment?
3. When controlling for the effects of the contextual factors, do WNGOs still significantly influence participants' empowerment?
4. What are the perceived challenges facing women's empowerment and undermining the achievement of gender justice despite benefiting from WNGOs' initiatives?

These aims pertain to the scientific aspects of the present study and what it contributes to the literature on women's empowerment and WNGOs' role in achieving this goal and enhancing gender justice in the context of Lebanon. Another important objective involves the practical implications of the findings of the present study. The inspection of WNGOs' effect on women's empowerment in Lebanon will pave the way for improved NGOs' interventions, by pinpointing the ways in which these organizations contribute to women's advancement and what participatory actions should be taken to maximize their impact and optimize their efforts to achieving gender justice.

2. BACKGROUND

A. Women Empowerment

Women empowerment has become a feel-good word and an overall goal that steers many government and organizations' priorities. Similarly to the notion of em'powerment, women empowerment is viewed as a process, where the focus is directed towards both the means and the ends to increase people's range of free choices and solidify outcomes of such choices (Parpart et al. 2002:4; Alsop and Heinsohn 2005:5). Women empowerment is enshrined in the Beijing Platform for Action (UN 1996), and is defined as an *"expansion of the range of potential choices available to women so that actual outcomes reflect particular set of choices which the women in question value"* (Kabeer 2001:81). These choices are shaped by the concept of "agency" that constitutes the ability to set own goals freely and to act upon them to achieve basic capabilities, legal rights and broad-based participation (Kabeer 1999:435-438; Moghadam and Senftova 2005:390; Mahmud et al. 2011:611). Ibrahim and Alkire (2007:7-14) showed the prevalence of the concept of "agency" by labelling empowerment as "an expansion of agency" that should be exerted within an enabling institutional and political environment that gives women the power to influence decisions that affect their lives, and the right to access resources and opportunities in a fair and egalitarian way as a means to achieving gender justice. However, despite growing emphasis on (women) empowerment, this concept has been openly debated and viewed as rhetorical. Experiences showed how empowerment activities have fuelled wealth and power among local élites and strengthened state-based institutions without channelling benefits to the needy (James 1999), and how they were sometimes paired with reduction of freedoms and immense expansion of responsibilities (Mahmud et al. 2011:610).

While access to financial resources have been recognized to have a knock-on effect on women's intra-household bargaining power, education, and children's welfare, this was contested by many scholars showing that women's empowerment should not be solely viewed in economic terms, but rather framed within the inherent legal systems and cultural norms, socio-economic rights and societal attitudes (Swain and Wallentin 2008:2-11). This is substantiated by Boserup (1970) and by Morrison and Jutting (2005:1067-1068), who view patriarchal and social institutions as major obstacles in fully achieving economic growth and women's participation. Women empowerment consequently implies self-autonomy, self-esteem, self-determination, mobilization, negotiation, networking and active participation (Ibrahim and Alkire 2007:6) across different domains. These have been measured through a number of context-specific indicators that were created to measure empowerment in general and women's empowerment in particular. They include, among others: *increased knowledge of women's rights, increased political and legal awareness, involvement in protests/campaigns, access to financial resources,*

ownership rights, access to education and ICTs, access to household decision-making and income, freedom from violence and even couple negotiations regarding sex (Hashemi et al. 1996:638-639; Malhotra et al. 2002:13; Handy and Kassam 2006:73; Mahmud et al. 2011:611).

However, research has shown that there is no one-size-fits-all model for measuring empowerment and that it should not be solely seen as quantifiable (Partpart et al. 2002:18), but can be done in various ways, at different levels, and with respect to different domains of life. Naila Kabeer also argues against the simplistic measurement of empowerment in ‘narrow material terms’ and the use of indicators that fall short of capturing women’s ability to make choices and fail to reflect their ‘functioning achievements’ (Kabeer 1999:443-462). Some analytical and empirical studies looked thoroughly into women’s positive attitudinal and behavioural changes as an indicator of empowerment. Others argued that women’s response to physical, psychological, emotional and verbal abuse also serves as an indicator of women’s empowerment (Swain and Wallentin 2008:10). This brings up the notion of “self-efficacy” that is particularly relevant to this study. Self-efficacy which was first introduced by Bandura (1986) and linked to women’s empowerment, was viewed as an “acquired” trait and refers to the belief in one’s ability to undertake tasks effectively or achieve self-defined goals through personal accomplishments, vicarious learning, and supportive environment (Handy and Kassam 2006:71-72). This indicator is used in the present research as it can study woman’s individual behavior and its impact on intra-household relations and the outer environment in which she practices her choices, rights, and freedom, i.e. the main elements of gender justice.

In measuring empowerment, Alsop and Heinsohn (2005:6-10) place the use of choice, “agency”, and “opportunity structure” at the heart of the empowerment process. Different **degrees of empowerment** arise, and such agency-based nuances were considered in the present study. To illustrate, women who have benefited from WNGOs’ initiatives in Lebanon might have “chosen” to replicate these initiatives in their own environment or to use the acquired skills in different ways, but this choice might have been curtailed by the opportunity structure reflected in male opposition or other legal and patriarchal obstacles. Influenced by these determinants, Alsop and Heinsohn (2005:10) propose different degrees of empowerment that can be measured through **the existence, use and achievement of choice**. These were investigated in Ethiopia, Nepal, Honduras and Mexico (Alsop and Heinsohn 2005:17-26), which make these indicators applicable to different contexts and suitable for measurement in this study.

The present research thus measures women’s empowerment using a set of indicators that have been empirically tested and were found adequate to the socio-economic and political context of Lebanon. These include economic, socio-cultural, family/interpersonal, legal, political and psychological indicators at the household, community and national levels (Malhotra et al. 2002), which combined altogether constitute the diverse inherent aspects of gender justice.

B. Women Empowerment and Gender Justice through Non-Governmental Organizations

When assessing factors influencing women’s empowerment and contributing to gender justice, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) emerge as important contributors through awareness-raising and self-engaging activities, networking and activism. **Women NGOs** were specifically identified as a “cultural” indicator for measuring women’s empowerment, due to their instrumental role in influencing women’s knowledge and representation in different aspects of

life (Moghadam and Senftova 2005:399). Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are the “self-governing, private, not-for-profit organizations that are geared to improving the quality of life for disadvantaged people” (Vakil 1997:2060). **Women NGOs** can be hence defined as the organizations specifically mandated to empower, advance and improve women’s quality of life, and to campaign for gender equality, gender justice and women’s rights.

In fact, WNGOs across the world have played an important role in improving women’s socio-economic and political status by campaigning for their rights, fighting for the elimination of gender discrimination, and reducing women’s subordination in male-dominant societies. However, empirical evidence showed that they were faced with structural and institutional impediments that hampered their capacity to make long-lasting and tangible changes. Awan (2012) investigated the role of WNGOs in Pakistan as a causal predictor of women’s socio-economic and political empowerment, and showed that “no substantial change” has been recorded in women’s individual conditions or improved status as a result of WNGOs’ initiatives. Cultural values, including entrenched patriarchal norms, emerged as the most significant obstacle to women’s empowerment (Awan 2012:442).

In Cameroon, a study by Fonjong (2001) showed that while NGOs were able to increase women’s access to resources (i.e. credit, health services, employment opportunities), and improve their intra-household bargaining position, they had little impact in addressing women’s “structural” needs, reducing gender-based discrimination and increasing their participation in public life. Cultural and institutional changes were identified as main forces for satisfying women’s strategic needs and challenging gender subordination (Fonjong 2001:227-234). Changes in the cultural and conservative practices were also viewed by Dibbie and Dibbie as a major requirement to enable skilful and “talented” women in Africa to take leadership and senior managerial positions facilitated by concerned NGOs (Dibbie and Dibbie 2012:100-112).

Little work has been done to examine the role of WNGOs in empowering women and in achieving gender justice in the Arab region. A regional women’s empowerment program called “Arab Women Speak out” demonstrated that beneficiaries were more able -compared to non-beneficiaries- to have positive belief in their capability to contribute to social change, establish new income-generating activities, engage in decisions that affect their lives, and defy obstacles that impede their personal development (Jabre and Underwood 2003). However, no follow-up measures have been taken to ensure the sustainability of the programme’s impact.

In Lebanon, the last decade witnessed an unprecedented growth in WNGOs and women activism, yet very little evidence on WNGOs’ impact on women’s empowerment is available. Explicitly, Abdo and Kerbage (2012) examined the structural problems that prevented women beneficiaries from expanding their businesses, and NGOs from sustaining and coordinating their technical support to women entrepreneurship development initiatives in Lebanon. They pointed out the “gender occupational segregation” of NGOs’ supply-driven initiatives, which placed women beneficiaries as receivers rather than “rights-bearers”, and trapped them into traditional businesses of low added value (Abdo and Kerbage 2012:75-78). Accordingly, NGOs’ interventions that have improved women’s participation in different spheres have been poorly documented, and a thorough literature search has shown that no scientific and empirical studies have been done on this aspect in the context of Lebanon. **This justifies the need to empirically examine the impact of WNGOs on women’s empowerment in Lebanon.**

C. Contextual Factors

Based on literature, empowerment is shaped by several determinants and factors. In rural Bangladesh, these included formal education, family upbringing, household wealth, age and ICTs (Mahmud et al. 2012:612). In investigating the factors that significantly influence women's empowerment in India, Swain and Wallentin (2008) showed that while material resources constituted the most significant element for all respondents, other factors like education, networks, and traditional (family) upbringing also influenced their empowerment level. Age was also considered as a demographic factor influencing women's empowerment. This is supported by Mahmud et al. (2011) who consider that with age, women are more likely to have access to resources, to decision-making and to freedom of mobility (Mahmud et al. 2011:612). ICTs were also considered by many scholars as an important tool to increase information accessibility and networking among women and shape power relations (Suresh 2011:18-19).

As to family upbringing, the literature suggests three different styles, namely: (1) the **authoritative**, characterized by a certain degree of freedom and sensitivity to children's needs, but have firm standards of conducts; (2) the **authoritarian**, illustrated in very strict rules of behaviours with unquestioning obedience, lack of dialogue and respect for authority; and (3) the **permissive** that is distinguished by absence of restrictions and limits (Almajali 2012:128). While no particular study has been done to examine direct relationship between family upbringing and women's empowerment, permissive upbringing was viewed by the interviewed experts (at the pilot stage) as an important enabling factor to women's empowerment in Lebanon, and was thus incorporated as a covariate in the present study.

Accordingly, the effect of WNGOs' activities on women's individual empowerment in Lebanon is expected to vary with education, household income, age, access to ICTs and family upbringing, as those will be in a more advantageous position to benefit from WNGOs' interventions and to translate them into tangible outcomes. These constitute the main determinants/covariates in the present study.

Based on the above literature review, the following sets of hypotheses are proposed:

Controlling for age, education, household wealth, family upbringing, and ICTs usage:

Hypothesis 1a: The more effective women perceive the work of WNGOs to be, the more empowered they are.

Hypothesis 1b: The less effective women perceive the work of WNGOs to be, the less empowered they are.

In the literature, education was viewed as a non-economic factor that influences women's empowerment (Swain and Wallentin, 2008:3). As such:

Hypothesis 2: Participants' education level will positively influence their perceived empowerment.

Research showed that women's access to monetary income and household material resources is a way of inducing empowerment (Swain and Wallentin 2008:3-13), therefore:

Hypothesis 3: Participants' household economic situation will have a positive effect on their empowerment.

Recognizing the substantial role of ICTs in raising awareness on women's rights and in constituting a platform for expression and reflection (Awan 2012:441; Mahmud et al. 2011:612), the following hypothesis is suggested:

Hypothesis 4: Exposure to ICTs has a positive effect on participants' empowerment level.

Considering that with age, women are more likely to gain autonomy, household bargaining power, and access to resources (Mahmud et al. 2011:612), the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 5: Age will have a positive effect on participants' empowerment level.

Finally, despite the paucity of supporting literature examining the causal relationship between family upbringing and women's empowerment, interviews with gender experts have identified family upbringing as an influential factor to women's empowerment in Lebanon. Therefore:

Hypothesis 6: Family upbringing will have an effect on participants' empowerment level.

3. METHODOLOGY

The present study investigates perceived impact of WNGOs on women's empowerment in Lebanon, taking influential contextual factors into account. A mixed-methods research was adopted. The study is majorly **quantitative**, providing statistical evidence for the set research questions among a good-sized sample, while two **qualitative** questions were added to give depth to the analysis and capture nuances otherwise undetectable through closed-ended quantitative questions.

A. Main study procedures

(a) *Data Collection*

The data collection spanned the period of two and a half months, and comprised two phases: (1) securing WNGOs' collaboration, and (2) interviewing female Lebanese end-users. **Thirty-three WNGOs located in Beirut** were targeted. Phone calls and personal visits accompanied with formal letter to WNGOs were initially carried out, explaining the purpose and possible benefits of the study, and assuring the confidentiality of their beneficiaries' information. Out of the 33 contacted WNGOs, **17 collaborated**, while 5 refused to cooperate (for political and other undeclared reasons), and 11 were excluded for being inactive or for not meeting the requirements and purpose of the present research (Check the list of surveyed women NGOs in Appendix V).

(b) Sampling Method

Participants were all active beneficiaries of WNGOs' programs **over the past 4 years (i.e. from 2010 till 2013)**. This timeframe was chosen based on literature showing that project's impacts and behavioural changes require at least 1 year after completion of the project in order to be measured (Jupp et al. 2010). Random cluster sampling was selected to reduce WNGOs' interference in the selection process, thereby minimizing the risks of "human bias" and ensuring that "the process of selection is done without participants' knowledge" (Bryman 2012:191). Participants were randomly selected (with equal chance of selection) using Bryman's recommended **online random generator**² (Bryman 2012:192). A convenience sampling procedure was additionally used during the 29 March 2014 demonstration that pressured Lebanese parliamentarians to adopt the amended law on domestic violence (8 women interviewed). **In total, 330 female Lebanese participants were surveyed.**

(c) Analytical Method

The survey was administered through structured interviews, using **phone surveys** and **face-to-face interviews**. No email surveys were adopted to reduce bias against people who do not have access to internet.

B. Measures

Women's perceptions of WNGOs' impact were measured using five quantitative and qualitative items: **Two** were measured using a five-point rating scale ranging from 1(*to a great extent*) to 5(*not at all*) assessing perceived WNGOs' effect on women's lives and self-efficacy, and **one** using a scale from 1(*Has made a critical difference*) to 4(*Has made no difference*) assessing perceived WNGOs' contribution to participants' empowerment level³. **Two open-ended questions** were included to discern the **nature of impact** caused by WNGOs on participants, and detect the **obstacles** impeding their empowerment despite WNGOs' interventions. Answers were compiled and reduced through codification for ease of comparison and linkage (check *Appendix VII* for summary of data categories and codes of the two qualitative questions and their respective explanations).

Women empowerment was measured through scales created using Malhotra et al.'s (2002) proposed indicators of women's empowerment that were adapted to the present study. *Economic empowerment* was measured through 4 items (e.g. access to employment), the *socio-cultural dimension* through 6 items (e.g. autonomy/mobility), the *familial/interpersonal dimension* through 5 items (e.g. freedom of expression in household), the *legal dimension* through 2 items (e.g. awareness on women legal rights), the *political dimension* through 4 items (e.g. capacity to run for elections), and the *psychological dimension* using one item (self-esteem). **A five-point Likert-type scale** was used ranging from 1(*strongly disagree*) to 5(*strongly agree*) across the 6 empowerment dimensions. The developed scale displayed excellent internal consistency, with overall **Cronbach's $\alpha=.94$** .

² www.psychicscience.org/random.aspx

³ The 3 quantitative items were **recoded** into positively-worded scale items that match the Dependent Variable/DV scale items.

ICTs usage. Two items were created to measure the extent to which participants resort to ICTs to increase knowledge and express own views and apprehensions on gender-related issues. Answers ranged on a **five-point rating scale** from 1(*to a great extent*) to 5(*not at all*)⁴.

Family Upbringing. Three items from Almajali (2012) were used to assign a particular type of parenting to each participant, ranging from the “*permissive*” (most relaxed) to the “*authoritative*” (moderate) and “*authoritarian*” (most stringent) styles of upbringing.

Participants were finally asked to fill out **socio-economic and demographic questions** on age, marital status, education, monthly household income, women’s access to their household income, and living location (check Appendix VI- Questionnaire).

C. Data Analysis

Preliminary analyses of missing values, normality assumptions and univariate outliers were conducted prior to the main data analyses that involved scale descriptives, correlations, regression analysis and one-way ANOVA, using SPSS. To find relationship between the independent/IV and dependent variables/DV (i.e. WNGOs and women’s empowerment) and to check for individual correlation of each covariate with the DV, a Pearson’s correlation matrix was generated. To find the predictors of women’s empowerment, a two-step regression was conducted, where WNGOs-related variables were combined in first step, with other influential factors (covariates) in the second. In order to test for effects of family upbringing on women’s empowerment, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. A qualitative data analysis was finally undertaken to understand the nature of impact produced by WNGOs on participants’ lives and detect the contextual barriers impeding their **full** empowerment.

4. RESULTS

I- QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

A. Sample Characteristics

The sample comprised a total of 330 female Lebanese participants whose ages ranged between 18 and 66 years, with the highest age group being 36-45 years at 31.5% of total surveyed women (Minimum=18-25 years, and Maximum= >66, with age range of 46-55 years). A total of 95 participants were located in **Beirut**, 81 in **Mount Lebanon**, 53 in the **North**, 36 in **Bekaa**, 35 in the **South**, and only 1 in **Nabatiyeh** (29 did not specify their place of residency). The majority of participants (213) are “married” (64.5%), while 70 are “single”, 20 “divorced”, 13 “separated”, 12 “widowed”, and only 2 “live with a partner”.

Participants have, on average, reached high school studies (M=3.02, SD= 1.11), and had a monthly household income of \$1,000-\$1,500 (M=4.06, SD=1.81). However, participants’ socio-economic and demographic information varied with the geographical area. *Appendix I* shows the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of all participants per governorate.

⁴ The average *AVG_ICTs* variable (combining the two ICTs-related items) was **recoded** into positively-worded scale that matches the DV scale items.

B. Preliminary Analyses⁵

For variables assessing perceived WNGOs' impact on participants, all scores appeared to be above the midpoint, showing that WNGOs were seen to have induced significant changes in participants' lives, enhanced their self-efficacy, and improved their empowerment level. *Table 2* below captures the aggregate means and SDs of WNGOs-related variables and their respective explanation.

Table 1 - Scale Descriptives_WNGOs variables

Variables	Mean	SD	Indication
Changes in Women's Life due to WNGO	3.74	0.80	Participants thought, to a great extent, that WNGOs had significant impacts on their lives.
Impact of WNGO on Women's Self-Efficacy	3.80	0.79	Participants perceived, to almost a great extent, an increase of their self-efficacy due to WNGOs.
Extent of WNGO's impact on Women's Empowerment Level	3.03	0.69	Participants considered that WNGOs have made a "significant difference" to their empowerment level.

When participants assessed their own empowerment, on average, **total empowerment** (i.e. average of all 6 empowerment scales) was relatively high (positive) among participants, with a mean of $M=3.97(SD=0.72)$, i.e. above the midpoint (3). *Table 3* below presents aggregate means and SDs of all empowerment variables and covariates.

Table 2 - Scale Descriptives_Empowerment Variables & Covariates

Variables	Mean	SD	Indication
Empowerment variables			
Average Economic Empowerment	3.87	0.83	Participants have a certain level of access to employment opportunities, and control over financial resources.
Average Social Empowerment	4.05	0.79	High level of participation in public spaces, freedom of mobility, and capacity to confront patriarchal norms.
Average Family Empowerment	4.03	0.83	High level of freedom of expression in household, capacity to control marital sexual relations and to free oneself from domestic violence.

⁵ All items had missing values of less than 5%, which did not require further analysis and were all retained to preserve the integrity of participants' answers.

Average Legal Empowerment	3.73	0.98	Moderate-to-high level of awareness among participants on women's legal rights, and participation in collective actions.
Average Political Empowerment ⁶	3.72	0.91	Moderate-to-high level of capacity to vote without external influence, to run for elections, and to articulate women's interests in public.
Psychological Empowerment	4.32	0.80	Strong self-esteem among all participants.
<i>Covariates</i>			
Average ICTs usage	2.84	1.21	Participants, on average, do not resort to ICTs to increase knowledge and express views on women issues, but use it to a certain extent.
Monthly Household Income	4.06	1.81	Participants' monthly household income range, on average, between \$1000 and \$1500.
Direct Access to and Benefit from household income	3.34	1.16	Participants, on average, benefit to a certain extent from their household income.

C. Correlations

Perceived WNGOs' impact on participants' lives, self-efficacy, and empowerment level had a significantly positive and moderate correlation with one another at $p < .001$, with values ranging between $r = .37$ and $r = .58$. That is, the more participants viewed WNGOs as increasing their self-efficacy and improving their empowerment level for example, the more they perceived WNGOs as having contributed to significant changes in their lives. (Pearson's correlations between the different study variables are listed in *Appendix II*).

The average total empowerment scale (*TOTAL_AVG_EMP*) was significantly and highly correlated with its constituent segregated empowerment scales, with values of $r = .69$ (economic), $r = .77$ (social), $r = .77$ (familial), $r = .64$ (legal), $r = .77$ (political), $r = .72$ (psychological) respectively, all at $p < .001$. This means that the more the participants perceived themselves as being economically, socio-culturally, interpersonally, legally, politically or psychologically empowered, the more empowered they were in general. When correlating the segregated

⁶ Given the complex political landscape and lack of legislative support to women's participation in public life in Lebanon, variable *Capacity to run for elections* (EMP_Political3) was examined separately and was found to be right around the midpoint, $M = 3.04$ ($SD = 1.47$). This item along with variable *capacity to participate in political system and campaigns* (EMP_Political2) ($M = 3.4$, $SD = 1.23$), have influenced the total average political empowerment scale (AVG_EMP_Political) and have offset the high average scores of the 2 remaining items on *capacity to vote with no external influence* and *capacity to articulate own interests in lobbies* ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.98$; and $M = 4.14$, $SD = 0.96$). **This confirms the male-dominated politics ingrained in the Lebanese society.**

empowerment scales with each other, the r values showed a substantial to marked relationship with one another but none exceeded $r=.80$, which excludes problems of multicollinearity.

Perceived WNGOs' impact on participants in terms of inducing *life changes* and increasing their *self-efficacy*, had a significantly and positively low correlation with *total average empowerment* scale ($r=.14$, at $p<.05$, and $r=.18$, at $p<.001$), with a very small positive relationship between WNGOs' impact on participants' *empowerment level* and *total average empowerment* ($r=.06$). This indicates that the more WNGOs were perceived to have had an effect on participants' lives and self-efficacy, the more empowered they were from all aspects, yet at a low correlation level.

All covariates had a relatively substantial relationship with all empowerment scales: *Age* had a positive slight-to-low correlation with all empowerment scales, meaning that as their age increased, participants were more likely to be empowered across all domains. An interesting result was that the *monthly household income* showed a **low negative correlation** with *WNGOs' effect on participants' empowerment level*, with $r=-.12$ at $p<.05$; i.e. the less their monthly household income, the more participants viewed WNGOs as making a difference in their empowerment levels.

However, *education* and *monthly household income* had a substantial relationship with all empowerment scales, with values reaching a maximum of $r=.53$ at $p<.001$, which means that the more educated the participants were and the higher their household monthly income was, the more empowered they perceived themselves across all domains. A relatively substantial relationship was also found between *participants' direct access to household income* and all empowerment scales (reaching a max. of $r=.44$ (social) at $p<.001$), meaning that the more they benefited from their household income, the more empowered they perceived themselves to be.

ICTs usage had a significantly low-to-moderate positive correlation with all empowerment scales, with values ranging between $r=.30$ and $r=.44$ at $p<.001$, which means that the more the participants used ICTs, the more empowered they were across all domains. However, although some WNGOs' activities mainly focused on building participants' ICTs skills, the relationship between the latter and the 3 WNGOs' variables was negligible ($r=-.00$, $r=.12$ and $r=.02$).

D. Main Analysis: Hierarchical Multiple Regression

A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to test for the effect of perceived WNGO's impact (IV) on women's empowerment (DV), while controlling for the effects of influential variables (age, education, household income, access to household income, and ICTs usage). A two-step regression was run on SPSS, where the three (recoded) WNGOs-related variables (*WNGO_LifeChanges*, *WNGO_Self-Efficacy*, and *WNGO_Difference*) were combined in first step, while other influential predictors went into second step, both using a forward method.

The **statistical assumptions** of non-zero variance of predictors, ratio of cases to the IVs, linearity, normality and independence of errors were all met (Durbin-Watson statistic=1.60, i.e. >1 and <3 , ~ 2). No cases of correlation between the set predictors and other external variables were found, and correlation values were all below 0.80 for all predictors. All VIF values were >1 and <2 while all Tolerance values were >0.1 , obviating any problem of multicollinearity or singularity between the IVs. However, a minor violation of the assumption of homoscedasticity was visually detected; but the distribution was neither funneling-out nor funneling-in, and did not show a curvilinear relationship, which may imply a partial fulfillment of the homoscedasticity

assumption (check figure 1 and 2 below. Also check *Appendix III* for more information on assumptions and figures).

Figure 1: P-P Plot (Total Average Empowerment)

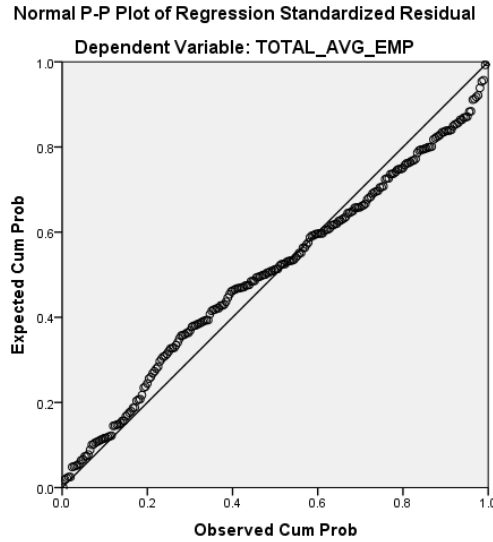
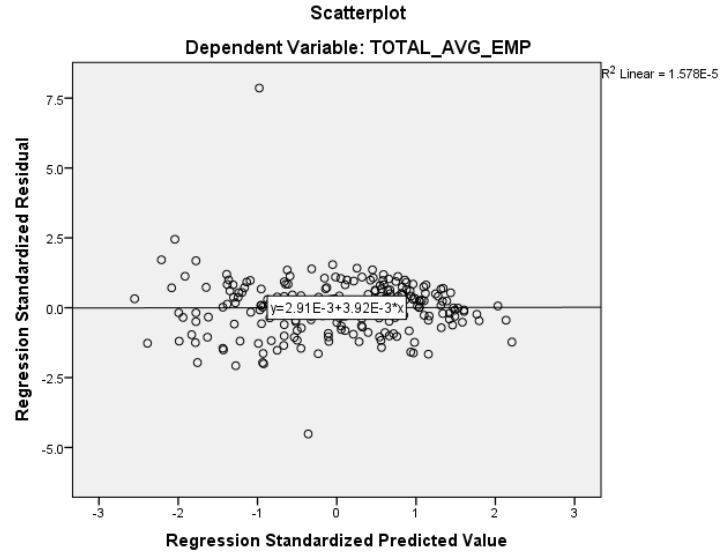


Figure 2: Scatterplot (Total Average Empowerment)



For the first-step model, out of the three main predictors (WNGOs variables), only *WNGO_Self-efficacy* variable (i.e. perceived WNGO's impact on women's self-efficacy) came out as significant predictor of the outcome and was thus retained, whereas the other two WNGOs-related variables (i.e. measuring perceived WNGO's impact on participants' life and empowerment level) were removed because the variance in the outcome (R^2) explained by this model was apparently negligible. However, the variance in the outcome explained by the *WNGO_Self-efficacy* variable was relatively small, at 4.1% ($R^2=.041$, $F(1, 235)=10.01$, $p<.01$).

When adding the influential predictors to the second model, *age* did not come out as a significant predictor ($p>.05$), whereas the remaining 4 covariates were retained. Adding these 4 predictors to the model resulted in $R^2=.360$, $F(1, 231)=26$, $p<.001$, hence explaining a good amount of variance of 36%. Education alone added 22.6% explanatory power to the model (R square change=0.226). For the final model, adjusted $R^2=.35$ (35%) showed a 1.4% less variance in the outcome when moving from the sample to the population. This small percentage of shrinkage indicates that the model used generalizes well from the sample to the population (Field 2009:221). *Table 5* below shows results of the two-step regression analysis.

Table 3 - R , R^2 , adjusted R^2 , and R^2 change of regression equation

Step	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	.20	.04	.04	.75	.04
2	.60	.36	.35	.62	.02

Table 6 below shows that out of the three WNGO-related variables, only *WNGO_Self-efficacy* variable came out as a significant medium-sized predictor of participants' overall empowerment at $\beta=.16$, $p<.01$. Hypothesis 1a was hence partially supported.

Table 4- Regression Parameters

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t-test</i>
	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	β	
(Constant)	1.92	.24		8.11***
Recoded WNGO effect on Women Self-efficacy	.16	.05	.16	2.96**
Education	.15	.05	.23	3.26***
Recoded Women Access to Household Income	.12	.04	.19	3.25***
Recoded Average ICTs usage	.10	.04	.16	2.48*
Monthly Household Income	.07	.03	.17	2.47*

*** $p<.001$, ** $p<.01$, * $p<.05$

After controlling for the major predictors, the influential variables/covariates were examined as possible predictors of women's empowerment. **Age** did not come out as part of the final model, and so was not a predictor of women's empowerment at $p>.05$, refuting by that Hypothesis 5. **Education** came out as the strongest predictor in the model, with a medium effect size $\beta=.23$, $p<.001$, indicating that as participants were more educated, they tended to be more empowered at all levels. Hypothesis 2 was then fully supported. **Women's access to household income** and their respective **monthly household income** were also significant predictors, small-to-medium in magnitude, with $\beta=.19$, $p<.001$ and $\beta=.17$, $p<.05$. The more participants benefited from their household income and the higher their monthly household income was, the more empowered they perceived themselves to be from all aspects. Hypothesis 3 was thus fully supported. Finally, **ICTs usage** resurged as a significant small-to-medium predictor of women's overall empowerment, with $\beta=.16$, $p<.05$, indicating that the more the participants resorted to ICTs to increase their knowledge and express their views on women's issues, the more empowered they were. Hypothesis 4 was supported.

E. ONE-WAY ANOVA

In order to test for the effects of **family upbringing** on women's empowerment, a **one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA)** was used, with the total average empowerment (*TOTAL_AVG_EMP*) as the DV and family upbringing as the IV at three levels (authoritarian, authoritative, permissive). A Games-Howell correction was used for post-hoc comparisons since the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met (Levene's test $F(2,327)=16.91$, $p<.001$). Results showed that family upbringing had a significant effect on average empowerment, $F(2,329)=14.88$, $p<.001$. Hypothesis 6 was then fully supported. Post-hoc comparisons showed that women whose upbringing was permissive had higher average empowerment levels ($M=4.28$, $SD=.50$) than those whose upbringing was authoritative ($M=3.96$, $SD=.59$) or authoritarian ($M=3.59$, $SD=1.13$). However, the difference in empowerment levels between women who grew up with authoritarian or authoritative rearing did not differ (check *Appendix IV*).

II- QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Two open-ended questions were included in the first section of the questionnaire measuring perceived WNGOs' impact on participants. These complement quantitative data by depicting details about the **nature** of impact caused by WNGOs on participants' lives, and the main **contextual factors** impeding their empowerment. **319 responses** were collected (11 missing), and answers were compiled per question and reduced through codification.

In response to the 1st open-ended question, **108** participants reported a significant increase in their self-esteem and capacity to challenge patriarchal norms, thanks to WNGOs' activities. NGOs' major impact also revolved around participants' increased knowledge on women rights, gender equality and citizenship values (59 cases), enhanced political choices and leadership skills to participate in public life (47 cases), improved financial situation and standard of living (36 cases), increased participation in women campaigns (36 cases), and freedom from domestic violence and household injustices (18 cases). Interestingly, the **multiplier effect of WNGOs'** work was highlighted by 48 participants acknowledging having retained ownership over WNGOs' activities, through replicating awareness sessions on women rights, mainstreaming gender equality in educational programmes and journalistic articles, and establishing low-scale NGOs in rural areas. Conversely, 10 participants reported having felt no difference in their lives due to WNGOs, and that their self-motivation and courage to defy social norms have been the main reason for their personal empowerment. Among these, some criticized WNGOs for not showing full commitment to their goals, and for falling short of achieving their broad missions and making tangible change in society. One participant even stated that "*most WNGOs' projects tend to be distorted and captured by local élites*". This shows meaningful differences in views and probably pinpoints lack of concrete WNGOs' impact.

As to barriers impeding women's empowerment (2nd open-ended question), 229 participants perceived patriarchal mindset, social norms and gender stereotypes as main obstacles to their empowerment, while 30 attributed the latter to male-dominant parenting style, 26 to husband's objection to women's participation in extra-household activities, 18 to domestic violence, and 4 to forced early marriage. Discriminatory laws and legislations and bad governance were viewed by 16 participants as key obstacle to their empowerment. Poverty and lack of financial resources have been also recognized as major impediments to 14 participants. Interestingly, war and conflicts emerged as a significant contextual factor hindering participants' full empowerment (5 cases). Surprisingly, 25 participants acknowledged having faced no obstacles whatsoever, either because of their marital status, the way they were raised, or their husbands' support (Check *Appendix VII* for a list of participants' categorized answers).

V. DISCUSSION

*Empowering or Not? WNGOs through women's lenses*⁷

Statistical results showed that the relationship between WNGOs and women empowerment in Lebanon is positive but other contextual and socio-economic factors turned out to be more influential. Correlation results showed that WNGOs in Lebanon were perceived to have contributed to participants' overall empowerment, but displayed a low effect size. One explanation for the low-sized relationship could be

⁷ This section responds to research questions 1 and 3 captured in the introduction section.

the complex political landscape, the inhibiting patriarchal system, and the lack of laws supporting women's participation in public life, all of which might have thwarted WNGOs' efforts.

More particularly, perceived WNGOs' impact on participants in terms of **inducing significant life changes** and **increasing their self-efficacy**, were significantly and positively correlated with the total average empowerment scale of participants, but at a low effect size. This correlation was slightly stronger when examined separately with each of the six empowerment scales, which could represent the effect of WNGOs' scattered and isolated activities across the socio-economic, legal, political and psychological spheres. Further research is possible to understand in which particular sphere WNGOs generate better outcomes, and to explore variations in WNGOs' efficiency by assessing their impact, quality of services, and sustainability. It was surprising to find that the variable measuring perceived WNGOs' effect on participants' empowerment level had a negligible relationship with all six empowerment scales. This result seems counterintuitive at first, considering that the majority of participants attributed their increased empowerment, in at least one aspect, to WNGOs' initiatives. This could be possibly due to the fact that the scale used for measuring this particular variable did not capture the idea of WNGOs' effectiveness on participants the way intended.

Regression analysis was conducted to determine predictors of women's empowerment in a heterogeneous sample of Lebanese women from different geographical areas across Lebanon. The main hypothesis for this segment was that WNGOs will predict women's empowerment after controlling for influential factors. However, results showed that the only major variable that predicted empowerment was WNGOs' effect on participants' *self-efficacy*, which by itself only explained a small amount of the variance in women's empowerment. Interestingly, perceived WNGOs' impact on *participants' lives* and *empowerment level* had no predictive power over the *total average empowerment*. This could be an indicator that WNGOs' activities did not achieve the impact expected from their resonant empowerment goals, and did not generate tangible effects in women's lives. These results support Awan's finding in Pakistan (2012) that WNGOs' effect is of low impact compared to their overarching goals. Hypothetically speaking, even if participants viewed WNGOs as having contributed to significant changes in their lives, this effect cannot be accurately measured given the subjectivity of participants and the complexity of the empowerment process.

A possible explanation for the low magnitude relationship between WNGOs and women's empowerment is that WNGOs' activities are scattered, sometimes duplicated and not properly channeled towards effective empowerment of women. According to the interviewed experts at the pilot phase of this study, "*WNGOs failed to live up to their rhetorical goals of women empowerment*", and focused more on short-lived projects that increased women's financial independence through feminized income-generating activities (embroidery, beauty-making, food-making and handicrafts), while missing out on the main requirements for long-term and sustained cross-disciplinary empowerment. This substantiates Abdo and Kerbage's finding (2012) that NGOs' initiatives trapped women into traditional "feminine" businesses of low value. Also, power dynamics in communities and households appear to be disregarded in WNGOs' programmatic mandates and interventions, gearing efforts towards more "*measurable interventions that meet donors' satisfaction and secure short-term funding*", as stated by one participant. According to the interviewed experts, these are accentuated by lack of coordination between WNGOs, their competitiveness, and shortage of technical material facilitating the replication of their programs. Furthermore, where micro-credits are granted, links to the market were often absent leaving participants struggling to find a sustained resource for their long-awaited acquired skills.

While quantitative analysis does not give a firm support to the relationship "hypothetically" existing between women's empowerment and WNGOs, participants acknowledged having been influenced by

WNGOs' activities in at least one dimension: Beyond achieving economic empowerment through income-generating activities, WNGOs constituted a platform where participants gained voice, confidence, and knowledge on women rights and gender equality practices that play an important part in achieving gender justice. They also succeeded in increasing participants' awareness on reproductive health and sexual transmitted diseases, and created a space for activism, networking and experience-sharing. One of the WNGOs, supported with a pool of resources and efforts, was even able to increase participants' political and leadership skills, and accompanied them through the election process. The centrality of WNGOs' initiatives was also found in the multiplier effect created, whereby participants replicated WNGOs' activities and expanded the number of beneficiaries in their own communities. However, it was not clear from responses whether participants' initiatives were sustained and supported by WNGOs. Further research is needed to assess the long-term effect of WNGOs' interventions, and to reflect on means to sustain and expand their impact. Also, where economic empowerment is achieved through WNGOs, further investigation is required to examine whether follow-up actions were taken to support participants in expanding their businesses beyond minimal and low-income activities.

Context matters: Factors affecting women's empowerment in Lebanon⁸

The following section explores contextual socio-economic and demographic factors (age, education, monthly household income and access it, family upbringing and ICTs usage) and their influence on perceived women's empowerment in Lebanon.

Firstly, *age* had a significant positive correlation with all empowerment scales, indicating that with age participants are more likely to be empowered. This result may seem to support Mahmud et al.'s (2011) belief that older women are more likely to have access to resources, decision-making and freedom of mobility. However, when undertaking the regression analysis, *age* did not come out as a significant predictor of women's empowerment, probably because education, ICTs, household income and access to it were much important in predicting women's empowerment in the context of Lebanon. However, this does not mean that Mahmud et al.'s finding can be fully refuted, but rather shows how the magnitude of demographic factors may differ in context.

Education was found to have a substantial relationship with all empowerment scales, which means that the more educated the participants were, the more empowered they perceived themselves across all spheres. In the regression analysis, *education* explained the highest amount of variance in the *total average empowerment* among the identified influential factors, and had the strongest predictive power over perceived women's empowerment. This supports the widespread academic and UN literature underscoring the pivotal role that education for women can play in achieving empowerment, and the effect this can have in shaping the quality of human capital. However, while the impact of education on women's empowerment is unquestionable, in Lebanon this depends substantially on the quality of education, particularly in rural areas, and on other factors affecting education outcomes, such as poor linkage between education supply and labor market needs, conflicts and political instability. Concurrently, gender-sensitive programmes and gender equality values should be integrated in public and private education in Lebanon if a new generation of gender and social justice is to be shaped.

Alongside education, participants' *household income* and their *access to it* came out as significant predictors of women's overall *empowerment*, i.e. the higher their household monthly income was and the more they benefited from it, the more empowered they perceived themselves at all levels. These results

⁸ This section responds to research question 2 of the present study.

support the literature showing the importance of women's accessibility to financial resources to secure their economic empowerment, and how this creates a knock-on effect on their personal choices and agency. Interestingly, when examining correlations between *monthly household income* and WNGOs-related variables, poorer women tended to benefit more from WNGOs' programs and be more empowered by them than wealthier women. This explains where the effect of WNGOs is mostly perceived, as it seems to be more pronounced among poor women who gained access to income-generating opportunities and technical-employability skills through WNGOs, than middle-income and high-income women.

Concurrently, results showed a significantly positive correlation between participants' use of *ICTs* and the empowerment scales, meaning that the more the participants used ICTs, the more empowered they were across all spheres. Also, this variable came out as a significant predictor of women's overall empowerment within the regression analysis. This supports Suresh's argument (2011:17) that ICTs constitute a "potent force" in increasing information accessibility of women, enhancing networking, and shaping power relations. Further investigations are necessary to examine in which domain ICTs mostly affect women's empowerment, and how WNGOs could further use ICTs as a tool to empower women. Noteworthy is that correlation results showed a significantly negative but low relationship between ICTs and participants' age group, meaning that older women are less likely to use ICTs. Such result highlights the need to expand the acquisition of ICT skills and connectivity to Internet across different age groups, and urges stakeholders to adopt structural plans to ensure effective use of and "equal" access to ICTs by all population groups, as well as to address the digital divide in Lebanon.

Finally, the present analysis revealed that family upbringing considerably influence women's empowerment in Lebanon. Statistical results have further shown that participants with "permissive" upbringing had the highest levels of empowerment compared to their peers who underwent an "authoritarian" or "authoritative" style of rearing. This was further ascertained by participants who denied the existence of any challenge impeding their empowerment, thanks to their open-minded childhood upbringing style.

Challenges to safeguarding WNGOs' impact⁹

Despite the relatively positive impact of WNGOs on participants as evidenced in the analyses, the latter reported being faced with a myriad of barriers that may have offset WNGOs' cumulated effects. These obstacles pinpoint the complexities of the Lebanese society and the political landscape in which women strive to survive. Patriarchal mindset, religious beliefs, discriminatory laws, and early gender segregation were identified as major stumbling blocks to participants' full empowerment and to the achievement of gender justice in Lebanon. These were similarly identified as structural barriers to achieving women's empowerment and gender equity in Pakistan (Awan 2012), and were further substantiated by Fonjong (2001) when studying the main forces affecting women's participation in Cameroon.

Ingrained patriarchal norms and women's subordination were attributed by some participants to religious values. Further research on how religion and women's empowerment and gender justice interact is worth being examined in the context of Lebanon. Traditional norms were also considered as "*having prevented them from taking part in political, social and economic life*", and even "*delayed their empowerment*". Participants' advancement and freedom was even manipulated by their male counterparts, which sabotaged WNGOs' efforts to achieve gender justice through empowering activities. These were proven in statements like "*I'm obliged to take my husband's permission to attend extra-household activities,*

⁹ This section responds to research question 4 of the present study.

which sometimes depended on his mood". Interestingly, while some acknowledged having challenged gender subordination, others refrained from confronting patriarchal norms to preserve their freedom of mobility and participation in WNGOs' activities. This is a manifestation of how women maneuver patriarchal barriers and men's oppression, and achieve participation in public life through, what Kandiyoti identified as "**patriarchal bargains**"¹⁰ (Kandiyoti 1988).

However, gaining empowerment through WNGOs' activities came at a hefty price for participants, as they reported being victim of sexual harassment, verbal and psychological abuse, and hurtful criticism at both household and community levels. "*The Lebanese society is not loyal to women*" one participant said, "*it does not accept that women gain power over men*". Some participants were even unjustifiably accused of being "*careless mothers*" and of "*demoralizing their wives and sisters*", moving by that from questions of empowerment and justice to those of obligations and morality. This can be viewed as a way to subvert women's participation in public life, and a manifestation of men's feeling of threat from women's advancement. This was proven in statements like "*men in my community were accusing me of working against men's rights rather than for women's rights*".

Authoritarian family upbringing and early gender segregation have been also identified by participants as a structural challenge to attaining early advancement and sustaining empowerment. On the economic front, the deteriorating economic situation and poverty have aggravated participants' situation and shifted their priorities to merely ensuring their survival. "*The difficulty to juggle work, women activism and household chores, including childcare*" has also placed a great burden on participants and slowed down their advancement. The discriminatory laws, bad governance, and current political impasse, also meant to some participants a dramatically reduced access to political opportunities and social services, which stymied their hope for increased empowerment and fostered gender justice. More alarmingly, war and armed conflicts have surfaced as an important barrier to women's sustainable empowerment. Therefore, agendas aimed at reducing the effects of war and integrating women in the public sphere, should ensure that the facilitating conditions are available.

Conversely, some participants acknowledged having faced no obstacles whatsoever, which shows two different sides of the same coin. Self-determination and motivation, permissive family upbringing, and changing marital status (divorced/widowed) have been identified as core reasons for their freedom and empowerment. In some other cases, husband's support and encouragement constituted an important incentive for participants' empowerment and happiness in life. Therefore, development initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and women empowerment in Lebanon should ensure that both men and women are engaged in gender-related activities and informational campaigns. Such initiatives may help sustain WNGOs' effects and bring about more powerful changes to women's misfortunes.

VI. CONCLUSION

WNGOs in Lebanon have succeeded to induce positive changes in women's lives and to contribute to some elements of gender justice, yet at a low effect size. Results revealed that WNGOs constitute an important contributor to women's self-efficacy in Lebanon, but not a major influential player in realizing their "full" empowerment and in achieving gender justice since other socio-economic factors come into play (namely, education, family upbringing, access to household income, and ICTs usage).

¹⁰ Patriarchal bargains refer to women's capacity to strategize within a set of concrete constraints to maximize her security and optimize life options by resorting to coping mechanisms and strategies (Kandiyoti 1988:274-275).

Beyond achieving women's economic empowerment through micro-credits and vocational trainings, WNGOs in Lebanon have undeniably influenced women's choices and enhanced their self-efficacy in different ways. However, this success heavily depends on WNGOs' capability to capitalize on their gains, and to maximize collective action for the achievement of women's comprehensive rights and the attainment of gender justice. This will also depend on securing a strong political will that stands up for women's rights and enacts gender-sensitive laws that underpins gender justice.

Findings support the notion that women's empowerment is indeed complex and should not be considered in isolation, but rather framed in the broad socio-economic, political and cultural forces at play, and built within a "stable" environment conducive for women's wide-ranging participation and favorable to the principles of gender justice. Improvements to women's situation in Lebanon will not be possible without fundamental institutional and cultural reforms that challenge the deep-seated patriarchal mindset and reverse discriminatory actions against women that undermine gender justice. WNGOs' active partnerships with the State and other stakeholders are thus crucial to effect long-standing changes in this realm. This is to be compounded by reforms to the educational system in order to counter perceptions of traditional gender roles, and build a new generation of young girls and boys that aspires for an equitable democratic society. This will also require the application of gender-sensitive programs that challenge cultural stereotypes, and promote instead a culture of equality and gender justice where men and women act as equal partners. So, if well-established partnerships between government and civil society organizations are not built, and if radical changes to patriarchal norms and discriminatory laws are not introduced, the goals of WNGOs will remain elusive. A summarizing point in the words of one of the interviewee is: *"Irrespective of any empowerment that takes place, if women in Lebanon are not empowered legally and the patriarchal mindset is not changed, any empowerment is irrelevant"*.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I- Socio-Economic Demographic Information of Participants per Governorate

Demo-graphic	Categories	GOVERNORATES											
		Beirut		Mount Leb.		North		Bekaa		South		Nabatiyeh	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Educational Level	Elementary & below	9	9.5	6	7.4	15	28.3	2	5.6	2	5.7	1	100
	Intermediate	30	31.6	8	9.9	10	18.9	9	25.0	6	17.1		
	High School	17	17.9	22	27.2	16	30.2	12	33.3	10	28.6		
	University	35	36.8	36	44.4	11	20.8	11	30.6	15	42.9		
	Graduate studies	4	4.2	9	11.1	1	1.9	2	5.6	2	5.7		
	Total	95	100	81	100	53	100	36	100	35	100		
Household Monthly Income	<\$200	2	2.1	1	1.2	6	11.3	1	2.8	0	0.0	1	100
	\$201-\$500	12	12.6	11	13.6	10	18.9	5	13.9	7	20.0		
	\$501-\$1000	23	24.2	13	16.0	19	35.8	12	33.3	13	37.1		
	\$1001-\$1500	13	13.7	21	25.9	8	15.1	7	19.4	4	11.4		
	\$1501-\$2000	18	18.9	10	12.3	5	9.4	4	11.1	4	11.4		
	\$2001-\$3000	10	10.5	11	13.6	2	3.8	3	8.3	3	8.6		
	\$3001-\$5000	6	6.3	10	12.3	0	0.0	1	2.8	1	2.9		
	>\$5000	9	9.5	3	3.7	2	3.8	3	8.3	3	8.6		
	Missing	2	2.1	1	1.2	1	1.9	0	0	0	0		
	Total	95	100	81	100.0	53	100	36	100	35	100		
Family Upbringing	Permissive	19	20.0	14	17.3	13	24.5	5	13.9	13	37.1	1	100
	Authoritative	58	61.1	51	63.0	34	64.2	27	75.0	19	54.3		
	Authoritarian	18	18.9	16	19.8	6	11.3	4	11.1	3	8.6		
	Total	95	100	81	100.0	53	100	36	100	35	100		

APPENDIX II -Pearson's Correlations between Variables

	WNGO_LifeChanges	WNGO_Self-Efficacy	WNGO_Difference	AVG_EMP_Econom.	AVG_EMP_Socio-cultural	AVG_EMP_Family	AVG_EMP_Legal	AVG_EMP_Political	EMP_Psychological	TOTAL_AVG_EMP	Age group	Education	Monthly Household Income	Direct access to household income
WNGO_Self-Efficacy	.585**													
WNGO_Difference	.481**	.372**												
AVG_EMP_Econ	.120*	.131*	.031											
AVG_EMP_Social	.157**	.195**	.034	.637**										
AVG_EMP_Family	.137*	.132*	.047	.617**	.684**									
AVG_EMP_Legal	.105	.119*	.081	.369**	.466**	.395**								
AVG_EMP_Political	.174**	.209**	.091	.503**	.695**	.590**	.553**							
EMP_Psychological (Self-Esteem)	.101	.086	-.018	.545**	.603**	.631**	.475**	.631**						
TOTAL_AVG_EMP	.139*	.183**	.059	.688**	.774**	.767**	.637**	.772**	.725**					
Age group	-.002	-.075	-.087	.199**	.214**	.152**	.115*	.178**	.144**	.177**				
Education	-.072	.008	-.092	.329**	.526**	.363**	.286**	.481**	.389**	.446**	.025			
Monthly Household Income	-.051	.003	-.123*	.382**	.472**	.408**	.355**	.458**	.405**	.475**	.244**	.590**		
Direct access to household income	.067	.109*	-.007	.378**	.441**	.367**	.206**	.317**	.347**	.357**	.200**	.269**	.399**	
AVG_ICTs Usage	-.009	.122	.016	.297**	.381**	.331**	.323**	.442**	.314**	.415**	-.200**	.514**	.412**	.243**

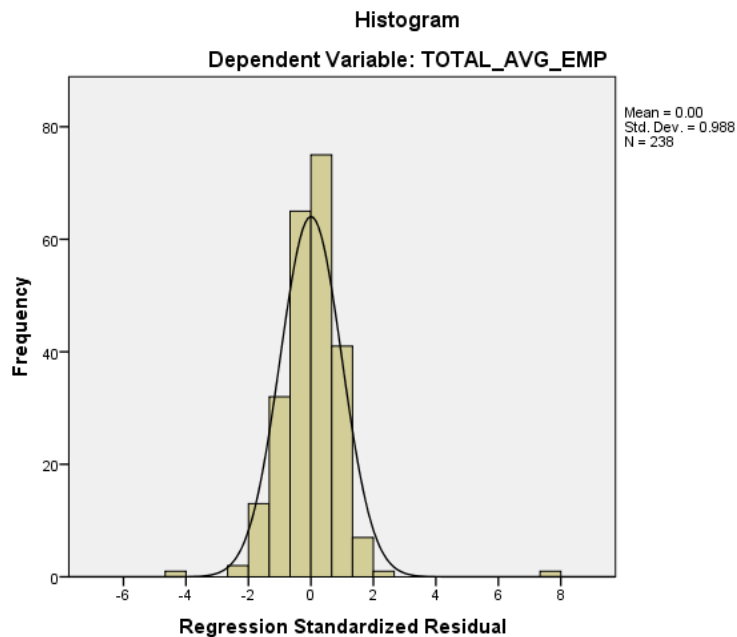
** Correlation is significant at $p < .001$ / * Correlation is significant at $p < .05$

APPENDIX III- Regression Assumptions & Figures

With a total sample size of 330 participants, the assumption of the ratio of cases to IVs was met since the minimum sample size required for testing individual predictors is 112 (i.e. $104 + 8$ predictors), and for testing the overall model is 114 (i.e. $50 + 8*8$) (Green, 1991; cited in Field, 2009: 222)¹¹. The assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity were examined through the histograms with normal curve, p-p plots and scatterplots for the total average empowerment (DV). The histogram showed a leptokurtic distribution where most scores were scattered in between 2 standard deviations and clustered around the mean of 0. While the P-P Plot did not show a perfectly normally distributed data set, the violations are minor since the residuals appeared to be symmetrical along the line and are not very distant from the regression line. In the scatterplot, the data seem to be scattered around but is neither funneling-out nor funneling-in and don't even show a curvy linear relationship. However, the scores were not perfectly scattered around the plot and show a linear horizontal relationship with only two obvious outliers on the two extreme sides of the plot. This implies a minor violation of the assumption of homoscedasticity.

The correlation matrix of all predictors showed no high correlations ($r > .80$) between any two variables, thus excluding problems of multicollinearity. Moreover, all VIF values were above 1 and below 2 (way below 10 as a cut-off point), while all of the Tolerance values were greater than 0.1, which obviates any problem of multicollinearity or singularity between the IVs (Field, 2009:224). This proves that the assumption of “no perfect multicollinearity” was met (Field, 2009:220). The assumption of uncorrelated adjacent residuals (independent errors) was also met, since the Durbin-Watson statistic showed a value of **1.6** that ranges between 0 and 4 and which is relatively close to 2 (Field, 2009: 220-221).

Figure 1: Histogram with Normal Curve (Total Average Empowerment)



¹¹ Field, Andy. 2009[2000]. *Discovering Statistics using SPSS*. London and California: SAGE.

APPENDIX IV– One-Way ANOVA Results

Testing the Effects of Family Upbringing on Women's Empowerment

Table 9- ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	14.42	2	7.21	14.88	.000
Within Groups	158.41	327	.48		
Total	172.83	329			

Table 10 - Multiple Comparisons _Post-Hoc Comparison_Games-Howell correction

(I) Family Upbringing	(J) Family Upbringing	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Permissive	Authoritative	.31*	.07	.000
	Authoritarian	.69*	.16	.000
Authoritative	Permissive	-.31*	.07	.000
	Authoritarian	.38	.16	.054
Authoritarian	Permissive	-.69*	.16	.000
	Authoritative	-.38	.16	.054

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

APPENDIX V- List of Surveyed Women NGOs

Data Sources: Official WNGOs list of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) in Lebanon and the UNDP list of NGOs in Lebanon

No.	Name of WNGO	Mission & Aim
1	<u>ABAAD – Resource Center for Gender Equality</u> Website: www.abaadmena.org	Promote sustainable social and economic development in the MENA region through equality, protection and empowerment of marginalized groups, especially women.
2	<u>Association of Justice Without Frontiers</u> Website: www.jwf.org.lb	Fight violence against women and provide legal assistance to victims of domestic violence, lobby for democratic reform, and support human and women rights.
3	<u>KAFA (Enough) Violence & Exploitation</u> Website: www.kafa.org.lb	Eradicate all forms of gender-based violence and exploitation of women through advocating for legal reform and change of policies and practices, influencing public opinion, and empowering women and children.
4	<u>RDFL - The Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering</u> Website: www.rdfwomen.org	Enhance gender equality, raise awareness on women's rights, end violence against women, and promote networking among women and women NGOs to achieve democracy and justice.
5	<u>WRG - Women's Renaissance Gathering</u> Website: www.womensrenaissancelb.com	Support women in becoming industrious and productive members of the society.
6	<u>LNGC - Lebanese National Committee for the Follow-up on Women's Issue</u> Website: www.cfuwi.org	Enhance women participation in the social, economic and political life, and contribute to the elimination of all types of discrimination against women, raise awareness on women rights, and encourage women networking.
7	<u>LCW - Lebanese Council of Women</u> Website: www.lcw-cfl.org	Establish a Lebanese society where women and men are equal in rights, obligations, and opportunities.
8	<u>LECORVAW - Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women</u> Website: www.lebanesewomen.org	Respond directly to cases of violence against women (VAW); and reduce/eliminate future cases of VAW by raising awareness and lobbying for legal reform.
9	<u>The Institute of Progressive Women Union</u> Website: Under construction	Advocate for community-based development and human rights through grants, capacity-building activities and educational and legal assistance.
10	<u>WIF – Women In Front</u> Website: www.womeninfront.org	Promote expert and specialized women, highlight their expertise, and push them to the front line by encouraging them to play leading role and to contribute to the creation of a new modern and reformed Lebanese society.
11	<u>The Made at Home Network</u> Website: www.made-at-home.org	Increase women economic empowerment in Lebanese underserved communities, through income-generating activities and community-based development.

No.	Name of WNGO	Mission & Aim
12	<u>JAWA - Jabal Amel Women's Association</u> Website: www.jabalamelwomenassociation.org	Improve health and social conditions in Southern Lebanese villages. Prepare the youth, especially women, to face livelihood challenges by increasing their productivity and improving their social and economic skills.
13	<u>Rural Women in Development</u> Website: No website available	Raise awareness on women rights, and improve women's economic situation through income-generating activities and vocational trainings.
14	<u>Lebanon Family Planning Association – “WOMEN PROGRAMME”</u> Website: www.lfpa.org.lb	Improve women's reproductive health in rural and remote areas, raise awareness on women rights and empower women economically and socially.
15	<u>MF – MAKHZOUMI Foundation - Women Programme</u> Website: www.makhzoumi-foundation.org	Increase women's participation in the market and enhance her capacity to contribute to the economical growth of Lebanon.
16	<u>HF - Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development - The Women Empowerment Program</u> Website: www.hariri-foundation.org	Empower women socially, legally and economically and create gender-sensitive institutions and public opinion; and contribute to changes in the existing concepts, policies and approaches that address women needs.
17	<u>RMF – RENE MOAWAD Foundation</u> Website: www.rmfm.org.lb	Enhance women's political and economic participation, so as to build a responsible civil society that strengthens national unity and promotes democratic values and social justice.
THE 29 MARCH 2014 DEMONSTRATION¹² (supporting Lebanese domestic violence law)		8 women interviewed. This non-probability sampling method has been used for convenience reasons, and to gain trust of WNGOs that were initially contacted.
TOTAL WNGOs INCLUDED IN SURVEY = 17		TOTAL WOMEN SURVEYED = 330
18	YWCA - The Lebanon Young Women's Christian Association Website: http://www.lebanonywca.org/beirut/about-us.php	11 WNGOs excluded from the present research because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WNGO is no longer active or existent (e.g. LLWB, WRSRC, Women in IT, the Working Women League in Lebanon) The scope of work of the WNGO is limited to intermittent research work undertaken by few scholars, or to
19	CRTD.A - Collective for Research & Training on Development - Action Website: www.crtda.org.lb	

¹² The demonstration was held to pressure MPs to adopt the amended law on domestic violence. The draft-law was approved by the parliament on the same day but did not meet the expectations of activists supporting the cause, as it failed to approve the requested amendments priority resisted by Muslim religious authorities (ex. marital rape, and the rape of unmarried virgin girls whereby the rapist is exempted of any charges if he marries his victim).

No.	Name of WNGO	Mission & Aim
20	LNWU - Lebanese National Women's Union Website: N/A	<p>few entertaining gatherings and brainstorming sessions that are of benefit to board members only (e.g. Lebanese Association of Women Researchers, the Lebanese Association of University Women).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NGO is mainly committed to lobbying and campaigning for women rights in Lebanon and so cannot be measured and investigated within the present research (e.g. MARCH Organization, NASAWIYYAH organization, YWCA, WWLL). The WNGO does not meet the requirements and purpose of the research (e.g. Le Mouvement Social Libanais that exclusively focus on women prisoners). The WNGO is only concerned with Palestinian and Syrian women refugees, which goes beyond the scope of the present research (e.g. the Women's Humanitarian Organization). The researcher did not receive any response from the WNGO despite numerous visits, reminders and calls (e.g. YWCA). The WNGO refused to collaborate (e.g. CRTD.A, LLWR, WOSS, LNWU). <p>N.B: The IPWU is a network that comprises the majority of the WNGOs that were included in my survey.</p>
21	<u>WOSS - Women Organization for Social Solidarity</u> Website: N/A	
22	<u>LLWB- The Lebanese League for Women in Business</u> Website: www.llwb.org	
23	<u>LLWR - League of Lebanese Woman's Rights</u> Website: www.llwr.org	
24	<u>WRSRC - Women's Rights Study and Research Center</u> Website: www.wrsrc.org (NOT WORKING)	
25	<u>WWLL - Working Women League in Lebanon</u> Website: N/A	
26	<u>Bahithat - Lebanese Association of Women Researchers</u> Website: www.bahithat.org	
27	<u>WHO - Women's Humanitarian Organization</u> Website: http://www.palwho93.org/	
28	<u>WIT - Women in IT</u> Website: www.wit.org.lb (NOT WORKING)	
29	<u>LAUW - Lebanese Association of University Women</u> Website: www.ifwu.org (NOT WORKING)	
30	<u>MARCH Organization</u> Website: www.marchlebanon.org	
31	<u>MSL - Mouvement Social Libanais</u> Website: www.mouvementsocial.org	
32	<u>NASAWIYYAH</u> Website: http://www.nasawiya.org	
33	<u>IPWU - Institute of Progressive Women Union</u> (comprised of 20 NGOs) Website: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Institute-of-Progressive-Women/129684697107141?sk=info	

APPENDIX VI –Questionnaire

Name of Investigator: Nadine Abi Zeid Daou

Respondent Code #

Date: _____

Location: _____

Purpose of the survey:

To investigate perceived impact of women Non-Governmental Organizations (WNGOs) on women's empowerment in Lebanon.

SECTION I: ASSESSING PERCEIVED IMPACT OF WOMEN NGOS' ON WOMEN BENEFICIARIES

I- In general, do you think that the Women NGO's (WNGOs) activities in which you took part have contributed to significant changes in your life?

1. To the greatest extent
2. To a great extent
3. To a certain extent
4. Not a lot
5. Not at all

II- In your opinion, do you think that the WNGO increased your self-efficacy?

(N.B: Self-Efficacy is viewed as an acquired trait and refers to the belief in one's ability to undertake tasks efficiently or to achieve self-defined goals. It is attained through (1) personal performance accomplishments, (2) role modeling and vicarious learning, (3) verbal persuasion and (4) a supportive environment.)

1. To the greatest extent
2. To a great extent.
3. To a certain extent
4. Not a lot
5. Not at all

III- How has your engagement and participation in WNGOs initiatives contributed to your improved empowerment level?

- 1) Has made a critical difference
- 2) Has made a significant difference
- 3) Has made some difference
- 4) Has made no difference

IV- In your opinion, what was the main benefit and impact of the WNGOs' activities on your life as a woman?

V- What factors in your life or environment have impeded your empowerment despite your participation and benefit from WNGO programs? Please specify. (These may include patriarchal mindset and social norms, laws, regulatory frameworks, intra-household discrimination, violence against women, others)

SECTION II: MEASURING WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The following statements are about a variety of indicators that measure women's empowerment from different dimensions. You will probably find that you agree with some of the statements, and disagree with others, to a varying extent. Please indicate your personal assessment to each statement based on your personal experience by circling (or placing X if filled electronically) under the acronym that best reflects your perception. Use the keys provided:

Strongly Disagree = SD	Disagree = D	Neutral = N	Agree = A	Strongly Agree = SA
1	2	3	4	5

	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. ECONOMIC					
I have access to employment opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
I have access to credit and other assets	1	2	3	4	5
I am involved in the decision-making on buying and selling of property	1	2	3	4	5
I have control over household income, family resources or other independent savings	1	2	3	4	5
2. SOCIO-CULTURAL					
I have access to (and visibility in) social spaces	1	2	3	4	5
I am informed and educated on issues of public interest, and on issues of particular interest to women	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy autonomy and freedom of mobility	1	2	3	4	5
I participate in extra-household groups and social networks	1	2	3	4	5
I confront patriarchal norms and challenge gender subordination	1	2	3	4	5
I have access to a broad range of educational options	1	2	3	4	5
3. FAMILIAL / INTERPERSONAL					
I participate in domestic decision-making (freedom of expression)	1	2	3	4	5
I have awareness and capacity to control sexual relations	1	2	3	4	5
I take other personal and familial decisions (such as childbearing, number and spacing of children, contraception, abortion, spouse selection, marriage timing, divorce, care for children when granted legal custody, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
I do not face intra-household discrimination	1	2	3	4	5
I am able to free myself from domestic violence (be it physical violence, or verbal, emotional or psychological abuse)	1	2	3	4	5
4. LEGAL					
I am aware of women's legal rights	1	2	3	4	5
I take part in campaigns for the enforcement of women's legal rights (eg. Citizenship, child care and other children issues, relationship breakdown, sexual violence, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
5. POLITICAL					
I exercise my right to vote without others' influence	1	2	3	4	5

I am involved in the local political system and campaigns	1	2	3	4	5
I have the capacity to run for elections and to hold high decision-making positions	1	2	3	4	5
I am capable to represent and articulate my own interests and other women's interests in effective lobbies and interest groups.	1	2	3	4	5
6. PSYCHOLOGICAL					
I have self-esteem (confidence and happiness, desire to take decisions on my own about myself and others, etc...)	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION III – DEMOGRAPHICS & CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

- AGE:**
- ☐ Under 18
 - ☐ 18 – 20
 - ☐ 21 – 25
 - ☐ 26 – 35
 - ☐ 36 – 45
 - ☐ 46 – 55
 - ☐ 56 – 65
 - ☐ 66 or above

- Marital Status:**
- ☐ Married
 - ☐ Living with Partner
 - ☐ Single
 - ☐ Separated
 - ☐ Widowed
 - ☐ Divorced

Place of residency: _____

- EDUCATION LEVEL:**
- ☐ Elementary and below
 - ☐ Intermediate
 - ☐ High School
 - ☐ University
 - ☐ Graduate studies

HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIC SITUATION

- Monthly Income:**
- ☐ Less than \$200
 - ☐ \$201-\$500
 - ☐ \$501-\$1000
 - ☐ \$1001-\$1500
 - ☐ \$1501-\$2000
 - ☐ \$2001-\$3000
 - ☐ \$3001-\$5000
 - ☐ More than \$5000

Do you have access to household income or do you benefit from household financial resources?

1. To the greatest extent
2. To a great extent.
3. To a certain extent
4. Not a lot
5. Not at all

FAMILY UPBRINGING

How do you consider your personal Family Upbringing?

- ☐ **Permissive** (i.e. distinguished by the absence of restrictions and limits)
- ☐ **Authoritative** (i.e. characterized by a certain degree of freedom and sensitivity to children's needs but have firm standards of conducts and behaviors)
- ☐ **Authoritarian** (i.e. characterized by very strict rules of behaviors with unquestioning obedience, lack of dialogue and respect for authority)

ACCESS TO SOCIAL MEDIA & ICTs:

Do you resort to the internet and social media like twitter, facebook, YouTube, Blogs, etc... to get information and increase knowledge on women rights and other gender-related issues?

1. To the greatest extent
2. To a great extent.
3. To a certain extent
4. Not a lot
5. Not at all

Do you use blogs, facebook, twitter and other e-platforms to express your views, apprehensions, protest, perceptions and views on women-related decisions and issues?

1. To the greatest extent
2. To a great extent.
3. To a certain extent
4. Not a lot
5. Not at all

APPENDIX VII– Qualitative Data

Table 1-J_Participants’ responses to Questions 4 and 5 of the questionnaire¹³.

Q4- What was the main benefit and impact of the WNGOs’ activities on your life as a woman?				
Category	Code	Description	Compiled answers	Frequency
KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS RAISING	WR	Women Rights	Increased knowledge on human and women rights, including gender equality actions and practices.	33
	WS	Women Situation in Lebanon	Increased knowledge on the critical situation of women in Lebanon.	10
	WP	Women in Politics	Increased awareness on the important national role that women can play in the political life and the significant change she can produce.	9
	NWT	New way of Thinking	Enlightened me with new ideas and way of thinking.	3
	ICTs	Information & Communication Technologies	Increased my knowledge and skills on ICTs, which enabled me to find a job.	5
	CITZ	Citizenship	Enhanced my respect for diversity and citizenship values and participation.	4
MULTIPLIER EFFECTS	REPL	Replication of NGO activities	Increased capacity to instigate development projects in own community and to retain ownership over the executed projects/activities.	6
			Empowered me to provide technical assistance and awareness sessions on women rights and gender equality in own community and workplace.	13
	EST	Establishing NGO	Empowered and supported me to establish a woman NGO in my own (rural) community.	1
	MAINS	Gender Mainstreaming	Enabled me to mainstream gender issues in my press releases/interviews/reports and school curriculum.	5
			Empowered me to promote a culture of gender equality and gender justice to a myriad of readers and audience.	7
			Spurred me to advocate women leaders and highlight the vital role of women in public and political life in journalistic articles and programs.	16
COLLECTIVE ACTION AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY	COLACT	Collective Action	Sensitized my engagement in campaigns calling for the attainment of women full rights in Lebanon. (namely, right to nationality and full citizenship, right to open bank account for own children, criminalize violence against women/girls, reform the electoral law and adopt 30% quota for women’s decision-making positions, etc.)	20

¹³ Note that participants’ responses overlap across different categories and dimensions.

Turned me into a women activist and gender advocate. **16**

POLITICAL Empowerment	POL	Political	Improved my political choices.	9
			Honed my political and leadership skills and encouraged me to participate in public life, to run for elections, and to vote for women candidates in municipality and parliamentary elections.	34
			Enhanced my capacity to develop an efficient electoral development project.	4
ECONOMIC Empowerment	ECON	Economic	Provided me with project management skills, including strategic planning and financial management, which enabled me to execute women-oriented projects in own community.	10
			Provided me with microloans that enabled me initiate income-generating activities, which improved my (family) financial situation and standard of living.	11
			Gave me financial independence, which owed the respect and support of my husband.	5
			Opened up for me new horizons and opportunities to prove myself and be productive.	3
			Provided an electronic portal that helped me post my handmade home-manufactured products, and transfer the acquired food-making knowledge to other women.	7
SOCIAL empowerment	PAT	Patriarchy	Boosted my courage to revolt against the ingrained traditional norms and patriarchal mindset the household and community.	32
			Gave me freedom of mobility, autonomy and independence.	5
	HEA	Health	Increased awareness on reproductive health and sexual transmitted diseases.	6
	EDU	Education	Provided free education opportunity and enabled the acquisition of specialized degrees (yet failed to link me to the labor market).	11
			Spurred me to raise my children differently, one that is based on gender equality and respect for women.	9
	NETW	Social Networking	Increased my participation in social events and expanded my personal networks/connections.	11
			Provided a platform for social networking and dialogue (freedom of expression), as well as experience and knowledge sharing.	11
PSYCHOLOGICAL Empowerment	PSY	Psychological	Increased my self-esteem, confidence and happiness in life, and enabled me to take better decisions that concern me the most.	52

Provided me with psychological support and enhanced my emotional well-being **24**

INTERPERSONAL Empowerment	FAM	Familial	Empowered me to defend and demand my rights, and take own decisions.	7
			Enabled me to challenge injustice and violence, and discriminatory practices.	23
			Gave me a new meaning of life, and helped me break out of the vicious cycle of household chores and responsibilities	47
LEGAL Empowerment	LEG	Legal	The WNGO defied discriminatory legal laws and provided me with legal support and freed me from domestic violence and household injustices, and helped me regain the custody of my children.	18
NON-EXISTENT	NI	No Impact		10

Q5- What factors in your life or environment have impeded your empowerment despite your participation and benefit from WNGO programs? Please specify.

Category	Code	Description	Compiled answers	Frequency
SOCIAL NORMS	PAT	Patriarchal mindset	Patriarchal mindset, social norms and gender discrimination.	196
	GS	Gender Stereotypes	Gender stereotypes that are ingrained in society and that consider women vulnerable and biologically incapable to be active in the political field or to make a change	33
	REL	Religion	Religious beliefs and Islamic values.	2
LAWS & LEGISLATIONS	LAW	Law	Discriminatory laws and legislations	13
	GOV	Bad Governance	Bad governance and mismanagement in public institutions. Also, the entrenched corruption in society and politics that stymies hope for women's advancement (eg. the renewal of the Parliament mandate has impeded my chance to run for elections).	3
FAMILY UBRINGING	UPB	Family upbringing/Gender Segregation	Childhood education and parenting style (that is strongly influenced by social norms and the patriarchal society).	30
INTRA-HOUSEHOLD DISCRIMINATION	HUS	Husband objection	Husband's refusal of women's participation in extra-household activities.	26
	DV	Domestic violence	Intra-household discrimination and domestic violence	18
	EM	Early marriage	Forced early marriage.	4

WAR	WAR	War Conflict	and	War and conflicts, and the precarious political situation.	5
ECONOMIC CHALLENGES	ECON	Economic		Poverty and lack of financial resources and assets.	14
NON-EXISTENT	NONE	Absence of factors inhibiting women emp.	of	Do not exist at all because: (a) I am divorced, widowed or single (freed from male dominated practices and gender subordination); (b) I am self-empowered through personal efforts and resistance to the status quo / personal ability to defy the patriarchal mindset with diplomacy/or by force; (c) because of the way I was raised (permissive style of upbringing); (d) Partners/husband's support.	25