# NARRATIVE REPORT FORMAT

# Purpose

As part of the post war recovery initiatives, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) pursued the partnership with the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) to implement Project LBN2G102 (referred to as “*Women Empowerment: Peaceful Action for Security and Stability*” WE PASS) through Lebanon Recovery Fund (Project’s Phase III). The idea started initially as a pilot project that aims to promote the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 (Women, Peace, and Security) relative to its context in Lebanon targeting selected communities that suffered from the war of July 2006.  It was launched in cooperation with municipal councils and Social Development Service Centers (SDSC) in selected communities. One of its main result was the establishment of women committees who act as beneficiaries of capacity building programs and partners to conduct community activities. LBN2G102 works in accordance with LRF terms of reference by complementing United Nations programmes on women empowerment through transparent fund administration and project implementation in line with the Government reform agenda. The activities are executed by national partners with the aim of transferring ownership to beneficiaries to ensure sustainability. The project also abides by transparency and accountability principles and is implemented with efficient utilization of donor funds. Narrative and financial reports are conducted on regular basis, and the project has been audited by an external auditor for 2008 under the guidance of UNFPA and was found to be unqualified.

The focus of the project LBN2G102 is to accomplish the following objectives:

* Support institutional building of women machinery entities for advocacy and policy dialogue for mainstreaming gender in peace and security related programmes, initiatives, strategies, policies, etc
* Promote advancement of women and youth in citizenship, democracy, decision making, leadership, literacy programmes, reduced vulnerability to violence
* Promote and support protection of and respect of women and girls human rights
* Promote and support protection of women and girls from gender based violence as well as other forms of violence in various initiatives and interventions
* Promote and support the full participation of women and youth in the peace process and conflict prevention at community and national levels
* Promote and fully support the empowerment of women in economic development
* Promote and support creation and operationalization of solidarity and coalition networks within and between the targeted villages as well as with national entities Explain how the project relates to the LRF Terms of Reference, including issues being addressed through the project.

The following outputs have been identified to be implemented:

1. Technical and Institutional Capacities of Women Machineries, Municipal Councils, and Organizations for advocacy, policy development and networking towards women’s advancement strengthened
2. Outreach, Awareness Raising, community mobilization on UNSCR 1325 as well as Comprehensive service package (health, GBV, literacy, and life skills) provided in targeted areas
3. Capacities for Women Economic Empowerment promoted and strengthened
4. A youth networking mechanism and strategic approach for empowering young people in public participation, peace and conflict prevention, reduction in high risk behaviors including HIV/AIDS prevention for young people established and linked to women committees and Y-PEER network
5. National women strategic priorities and framework revised, elaborated, and concurred in a participatory approach to be mainstreamed in national sectoral strategies and action plans

Two main partners are joining effort to implement Project LBN2G102: UNFPA and NCLW. Both partners supervise the overall management of the project through participating in the project Steering Committee established under phase I (consisting of selected NCLW members, UNFPA and the project management). The Steering Committee continues its functions by guiding the project implementation and approving various matters i.e. recruitment of staff, revision and implementation of work plan, management of funds, and oversee of an optimal degree of coordination and collaboration between and with implementing partners. Through a dedicated national director, NCLW supervises all the day to day management and provides guidance to the project team for the implementation of the activities. NCLW has proven a strong capacity to implement the project in its different dimensions and despite the many challenges faced through the political and security situations in the country. In addition to technical assistance provided by UNFPA Country office, an internal audit of the project is regularly conducted.

# Resources

*Financial Resources:*

The project was funded by the Government of Lebanon through the Lebanon Recovery Fund established on the occasion of the Stockholm Conference. NCLW provided an-kind of contribution of office space, communication, and office supplies, in addition to technical assistance through its members in the project steering committee and the project National Director.

LRF-funding amounts to a total of $ 994,458 allocated to cover staff salaries, implementation of activities, procurement of equipment, fellowships and study tours, auditing, and administrative cost to UNFPA.

Funding has been committed to cover expenditures until 31 December 2009 for the total amount of **$** **396,010.67.**

These resources cover the staff salaries, building capacities of women committees established through the project, conducting training sessions, awareness raising on RH and gender discrimination issues, conduct forum theatre on GBV, complete a literacy program, and implementation of BDS and micro credit services in addition to study tours and marketing forum, updating the National Strategy for Lebanese women, and institutional capacity building of NCLW staff. The budget breakdown per LRF category is as such:

* Personnel: $127,473
* Training: $99,424.93
* Subcontract: $135,711
* Transport: $9,719.24
* Material Produced: $16,433.5
* Office equipment: $7,249
* **Provide information on good practices and constraints in the mechanics of the financial process, times to get transfers, identification of potential bottlenecks, need for better coordination, etc**.

UNFPA followed up closely on the financial mechanisms requesting funds and closing each advance. An external auditor was also assigned to audit 2009 (yearly auditing of the project has been conducted ever since it started in 2006).

Among the good practices is the mechanisms of financial processes, whereby all financial forms (advances, disbursement, certification of expenditures, etc) and supporting documents are in compliance with UNFPA’s rules and regulation, which facilitate the follow up and coordination of all financial transactions.

The main constrain is sometimes a delay in requesting funding and this is justified by the full participatory approach followed by the project where the beneficiaries play a major part in the planning and timing of activities, and that gets affected by many local modifications, which delays decision on funding requested.

*Human Resources:*

* National Staff:

Programme:

1. Zeina Mezher, Proejct Manager
2. Elissar Doueihy, Training & Community Mobilization Coordinator
3. Hicham Jadoun, Training & Community Mobilization Coordinator
4. Nizar Amine, Training & Community Mobilization Coordinator
5. Diana Nasrallah, Media and communication Coordinator

Operations and logistics:

1. Georges Aboud Haidar, Accountant (Part time )
2. Issam Hassrouti, Driver
3. Fadi Sayegh, Driver

* International Staff:

N/A

# Implementation and Monitoring Arrangements

* **Summarize the implementation mechanisms primarily utilized and how they are adapted to achieve maximum impact given the operating context.**

Since it was launched, Project LBN2G102 builds upon national strategies and successful initiatives relevant to its thematic areas. The project planning is linked to endorsed local, national and international priorities and frameworks on the advancement of women rights and gender equity. The main inspirations were the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD PoA), the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the National Reproductive Health Programme (NRHP), the National Population Policy, the Social Action Plan presented to the Paris conference, the draft National Youth Policy, the National Gender Based Violence Action Plan, and the CEDAW report and commission observations. In addition, the project was developed within the context of the National Woman Strategy, which is now revised and under further development as a major activity of the project.

Project LBN2G102 addresses Reproductive Health (RH) issues and areas that are aligned with the National Reproductive Health Programme (NRHP) that promote women’s ability to control their own fertility, choices, number of children, etc. RH awareness sessions have been considered a priority by the beneficiaries of the project, especially in rural areas where political parties and NGOs are not active in implementing any development issues. Invitations to RH awareness issues require the least mobilization for women to become interested in attending. The approach used by the consultants is focusing on empowerment, i.e. providing women with a choice based on the knowledge offered. In some areas RH service accompanied certain awareness campaigns, and it was a joint activity with nearby health care centers.

More so, the project continues to promote the objectives set in the national women strategy in Lebanon, and which discusses frames of actions in the following aspects: legal, political, economic, social, educational, health, environmental, media, and conflict areas. The previous phase of project LBN2G10 initiated the revision and updating the national women strategy to ensure the mainstreaming of emerging issues including participation of women in peace building and conflict prevention. The process follows a participatory approach that involves national NGOs, policy makers, and women at community level in selected WEPASS villages. This task continues under the current Phase III supported by LRF.

Project LBN2G102 also ensures that the various activities and interventions respond to and contribute to realizing the Millennium Development Goals namely goal 3 on promoting women empowerment. Specifically, the project will contribute towards supporting the development work of women's organizations, practice of democracy, and raising the level of coordination, including increasing political awareness in the regions outside Beirut. It will also support in the promotion and protection of women’s human rights and gender equality as a central goal of all aspects of the transition/recovery process and hence raising the legislature’s awareness of that important goal. The development of the National Woman Strategy will be used as a tool to advocate for relevant legislatives amendments.

A very essential dimension of the project is related to Gender Based Violence (GBV) prevention and protection and hence activities and interventions will be guided by the Gender Based Violence national action plan. The project is coordinating closely with intitives taken by partners on the theme, and focusing at this stage at working further with the communities were silence has been broken and a need for support group has been in demand. Community sensitization on GBV continues to be an ongoing effort, and it is often integrated in other themes like RH or gender discrimination and rights.

The methodologies used to implement the project activities are based initially on community mobilization, targeting community leaders, active local institutions, and women being the main direct beneficiaries. The women committees play the major role in deciding on the agenda and approach to be adopted in conducting activities, which the project team coordinates with consultants or NGOs. On the other hand the women committees play the role in organizing the activities at community level and are in charge of mobilization.

*Advocacy and Policy Dialogue* is also a main strategy adopted during the implementation process at all stages to meet the objective of strengthening the capacity of the WE PASS Women Committees (WCC) representing the women of local communities so that they can gain policy influence. This tool has proved efficient since many WWCs are now eager to enhance participation of women in the upcoming municipal elections in 2010.

The main challenges affecting the impact of the project activities is that gender discrimination is a complex matter that is embedded in religion and social culture, affected by poverty and conflicts, and requires time and continuous efforts in order for change to be manifested. By building local capacities, project LBN2G102 attempted to contain this challenge with the focus to sustain the initiative; it also encouraged networking with other stakeholders to address different needs and does so by engaging different NGOs in implementing the activities. Another challenge is to keep the WWC motivated and engaged despite the fact that the project will close while many topics have just started to be explored with more openness and in-depth.

* **Provide details on the procurement procedures utilized and explain variances in standard procedures.**

Procurement of commodities and services follow NCLW regulations which is in compliance with UNFPA’s standards. Any equipment amounting to more than 500 USD requires a minimum of 3 comparable offers and justification of selection, which takes the best price as a priority to favor the selection.

The following has been purchased in 2009:

* One Photocopy Machine Konica Minolta Bizhub 350
* Two Lap Top HPT64002.0GHZ/3GBRAM/ 250GBHDD/15.6" VISTA PREMIUM
* **Provide details on the monitoring system(s) that are being used and how you identify and incorporate lessons learned into the ongoing project.**

In order to support monitoring of project implementation, a number of initiatives have been undertaken to identify gaps and guidelines in implementing activities, and to monitor progress towards the goals. These include: a) the Steering Committee to assess results and challenges and provide guidance and oversight, b) the staff meetings/minutes to assess results, challenges, opportunities, best practices and lessons learned, and suggest alternatives approaches to problematic issues c) the WWC in the targeted villages, d) the ongoing meetings with community leaders for purposes of advocacy and sensitization, e) the progress and activity reports, and f) the field visits conducted on a regular basis by the project team, g) the evaluation meetings with partners (consultants and NGOs) to measure achievements relative to indicators and objectives and assess challenges and opportunities; and h) the pre and post evaluations during training and awareness raising sessions to assess change in knowledge.

Based on lessons learned and best practices, the project staff amends the approach followed in implementing activities, and if decisions are of strategic nature, they are brought to the attention of the steering committees. For instance, due to increased stressful economic burdens in the communities, women were hesitant to engage in micro credit and incur the interest rate; in order to support women with viable business ideas, the steering committee agreed to give an incentive relative to the value of the interest paid for women upon closing their credit. This created a good impact and encouraged more women to apply for micro credit, and eventually start a profitable small business.

* **Report on any assessments, evaluations or studies undertaken.**

A documentation of good practices at the level of strategies and implementation of the project activities started and to be completed by the end of the project.

# Results

* **Provide a summary of Programme progress in relation to planned outcomes and outputs; explain any variance in achieved versus planned outputs during the reporting period.**

**Create and build capacities of women committees in new villages**. In order for a group of people to work together, a shared vision and common identity are important to define their esteemed role. Thus “*Role and Identity*” were workshops organized in the new villages with the aim of establishing a common identity for the committee based on their identified needs and priorities. The trainers use tools and exercises to sensitize the participants on women’s condition in the general context as well as their local one.

The workshops were also a mean to assess further training needs, at the level of new women committees; for instance Seb’eel and Kantara reflected more readiness to go further in institutionalizing themselves, as it was clear that they had a shared objective to change the situation of women in their communities, and seem to have the proper setting to go further into doing it.

Other training workshops were on communication skills based on needs assessed at an earlier stage. The training tools were tailored specifically for each committee due to the difference of their requirements and ability to interact. In Beyt Lahiya cluster, this is a serious issue where women lack all the basic listening and dialogue skills which impede their participation in other activities. And due to the large number of participants in this cluster, the groups were divided and separate training has been organized. In Sebe’el, Ardeh, and Kantara, the training was also aiming at building self esteem of women participating. It was a very successful initiative to enhance solidarity among these different committees who attended the workshop together.

More training were conducted on differences and plurality so women become more sensitized on the concept of accepting others differences, and empowered to conflict resolution approaches when facing conflicts due to diversity.

**Train WE PASS Women Committees (WCC) towards sustainable entities**. Evaluation meetings with consultants working on the training of WWC have been organized. The meetings helped to assess the status of WWC and their future training needs.

The result of the evaluation indicates three categories of committees:

1- Sustainable ones: Two WWC are at the last step of getting their official documentation as NGOs and therefore have become sustainable entities: Kfeir (named “Support Women Empowerment” NGO, and Sebe’el (named Hayya). Ras Baalback had already started acting as an official NGO (named Women of Rasbaalback in Solidarity)

2-Require further intense training. Ongoing

3-Can only implement activities planned in cooperation with project staff. The reasons are mainly local challenges and nature of social work in respective villages.

**Launching the Woman NGO in Ras Baalback through live play-Inti..Hiyi:** The Woman NGO of Ras Baalback presented the journey that lead to them becoming a sustainable group through the various activities of the project. The launching was organized during a festival that takes place each year in Ras Baalback and the play on gender issues was based on material produced by the project (Inti… Hiyi stories) concluded the day.

**Conduct literacy program:** TheLiteracy program was conducted in Yarine and two neighboring villages, opening a learning opportunity for illiterate women and a job opportunity for educated ones trained in previous phase of the project to supervise and coordinate the lessons. Three groups completed the first phase of their learning cycle and are preparing for their graduation day which will be a community event that enhances the visibility of their achievement and highlight the importance of women’s education, especially in underprivileged areas.

**Awareness sessions on Reproductive Health (RH) services:** RH awareness is one of the activities that attract a large audience and gain interest among women who always seek to know more about ways to prevent and deal with health issues. The resource people are either suggested by UNFPA and with whom a previous collaboration has been established, or new ones recommended by the local communities, or identified by the project. The following activities had been organized in 2009:

\*Breast Cancer Awareness in Beit Lahya Cluster, and Bourjein,

\*Menopause in in Beit Lahya Cluster,

\*Prevention of Back pain in Kantara, and Ardeh, and Bourjein

\* Puberty and Adolescents’ health in Kantara, and Ardeh

\*First Aid during Emergency situations in Yarine, and this takes the form of training. In this community where the major activity performed by the project is a literacy program, the need to respond to emergency in conflicts situations was addressed through training on *Basics**in Emergency Relief in Conflicts Situations*. Women participating in the literacy program were from two neighboring villages to Yarine, (all of them frontline villages) i.e. Dhayra and Marwahin. The impact was significant as the activity provided the women with more self confidence and security.

A group of key influential women in Ardeh (highly educated, wives of local decision makers and businessmen) participated in an RH awareness session focusing on the importance of RH and the key role of women in maintaining it. The session was approached in an informal brunch style where interactive discussion with a specialist took place. The importance of awareness and prevention was stressed upon and women were empowered to play a greater role regarding the promotion of a healthier lifestyle, and passing information gained to their peers.

Also women ofBint Jbeil and Aytaroun communities participated to a breast cancer campaign. Each woman attending a lecture on the subject has the right to a free medical service (mammography) offered by the project.

Awareness session on back pain was conducted where women from the local communities of Aytaroun and Beyt Lahiya cluster participated to training on preventive measures for back and neck pain. Given the importance of the topic for women, they requested to provide more training to multiply the effect reaching for a wider audience.

**Organize Focus Group on Healthier relation between mothers and teenagers:** A main need for women, specifically mothers, is on how to deal with their children during the teenage period. The problems are affecting women's well being and their ability to participate in public life, and self development. Thus a focus group training was organized in Kfeir, Ras Baalback, Kantara, and Beyt Lahiya cluster. The training targets mothers of children under 12 years old. The targeted youth also take part in future activities of the project by linking to the Y-PEER network supported by UNFPA.

**Organize Focus Group on Women roles and relations with violent adolescent kids:** A specialist led a focus group aiming at supporting women to deal with violent and aggressive children, a problem of great significance in Ras Baalback. The Focus Group was designed to be an interactive learning tool where the women build the trust to share in a confidential climate their families relations and experiences. By the end of this activity, the women learn to assess their own behavior and communications skills, then define personal work plans to make necessary changes.

**Organizing Solidarity activity among youth promoting gender equity through Photo voice:** Adolescents from all the communities participated to the activity. Photo voice aims at the sensitization of teenagers on gender equity and discrimination through photos. The participants learn basics of photo shooting and expression through photography, and basic notions on gender equity. Then they take time to express their own understanding of gender equity through taking photos in their own community. They also get exposed to the ethics of photography. It was a very interactive activity that resulted into a major photo exhibition during the celebration of international women day and mother's day. This activity was also a chance to bring youth from different communities together.

**Organizing local meetings for promoting CEDAW:** One local meeting to promote CEDAW was organized in Sebe’el. A movie tackling the experience of three southern women was used as an introduction to the topic. Participants stressed on the importance of the convention and the amount of rights it granted them which they weren’t aware about. Yet the evaluation of the meeting indicated that the women at local level need to be approached differently on such matters that seem too dry.

**Organize national event celebrating International Women Day and Mother's day:** The event was an opportunity for 500 women and youth from the project's communities to meet among themselves contributing to the solidarity network established by the project, and with national stakeholders working on women issues, as well as officials representing embassies and UN agencies and government. The event used tools produced in previous phases of the project, like a documentary where two beneficiaries talk in their own language the benefit of the project and its impact on them, as well as a play based on Inti...Hiyi stories on women empowerment. The event was also an opportunity to exhibit the photos taken by the youth, and a committee selected the top photos to be put in next year's calendar. The participation of the first lady in the event gave further credibility to the women committee who are looking into establishing a more solid network with NCLW.

**Honoring elderly women:** The WWC of Sebe’el implemented a huge event in the village center honoring its elderly women. This event aimed at addressing the growing need for care and attention for the elderly women in the village. It was also a chance for the committee to implement a successful public activity that increased its visibility and boosted their morale. The activity was a huge success gathering the majority of the village with its entire influential people and was attended by religious men, spouses of women, and the Y-PEER network of Sebe’el.

C**ommunity mobilization Iftars:** Iftars were organized in the village of Kantara gathering all the WWC along with their husbands and families with the participation of key leaders in the community. This event intended to mobilize the community around the committee and gather the support of men for its future efforts and activities**,** especially that the Kantara WWC is heading towards sustainability.

Also the coordinators, the trainers and the learners from the literacy program of Yarine gathered over an Iftar. The event had a very positive impact on women because it strengthened their ties and it was an opportunity to women tobacco growers to rest and feel the solidarity among themselves.

**Forum theatre on Gender Based Violence(GBV):** A forum theatre on GBV was implemented in the village of Kantara sensitizing and mobilizing men, women, and youth to publicly discuss that issue. The attendance of key leaders in the community, such as the head of the municipal council and the mayor, and their active participation in the discussions was very noticeable and influential. This activity was the first in the village to address men and women jointly. It presented an important visibility for the committee and boosted their credibility in the community.

This was also organized in two villages of the Beyt Lahiya cluster. It was a very good opportunity to break the silence on GBV and engage men in the discussion. It also had a positive impact on the visibility of the project in these communities.

**Support groups for women** were organized in Yarine contributing to: a) Reducing the stress and anxiety resulting from a high-stress environment through creating a safe adequate environment suitable for women and adolescents to express freely and openly; b) Assisting group members to continue to adapt with the changes resulting from the post-July 2006 war environment which had various and long lasting negative effects on their personal and professional lives; c) Allowing participants to meet others who share a common experience and exchange mutual emotional support; d) Facilitating the exchange of practical experience and information on how to deal with children within current situation of high stress; and e) Increasing knowledge about GBV, early marriage, etc…

**WE PASS Day:** This event was organized to celebrate women empowerment as a theme. The focus was on women’s participation in local decision making. WWC hosted the event in their village inviting other women committees and young participants. The specific objectives of this activity are the following:

* To actively engage WWC in social activism;
* To give WWC and youth the basic know-how on designing and implementing an electoral campaign;
* To raise local public awareness and to engage in a participatory discussion on women’s rights;
* To introduce the concept of local governance and the active role of women in the local development process to the youth;
* To enhance solidarity among Lebanese women and youth from various backgrounds.

**Train and build capacities of women on family and personal budget:** Women in the village of Ardeh met on 2 occasions to be trained on concepts and new methods for family budgeting. Participants were provided with innovative techniques and approaches that they could incorporate in their daily household budgeting.

**Focus group discussion on economic empowerment:** women from Aytaroun, Bint Jbeil, and Yarine participated to a focus group discussion on the economic empowerment component. The participants are women who already have a business of their own or who are willing to start their own businesses. The group of Yarine will require special approach due to the illiteracy of the group. Women from Beyt Lahiya cluster participated to a focus group discussion on the economic empowerment component. The participants are women who already have a business of their own or who are willing to start their own businesses.

**Market Studies:** Market studies were carried out in selected villages in the south and the north (Nabatieh, Aytaroun, Sebe’el and Kantara) in order to help finding out the occupation and marketable products that match the need in those areas. Specific objectives of the studies are the following:

* Identifying channels for local promotion of the products produced by the women;
* Finding out a mature product ready to be widespread in the market;
* Analyzing a market plan by the marketer containing all the details, the information needed and the recommendations for each area;
* Assisting women with networking and creating deals;
* Training on products displaying and pricing.

**Train women on economic components:**

* **Business management** **training:** women from Yarine participated to training on business management tailored according to their needs (the participants’ ability to read and write is very limited). The businesses they want to start are; green house, grocery shop, Brazilian jewellery, bakery, hair dresser, cloth shop. A major breakthrough is that these women are asking for alternative to tobacco cultivation. The result of this initiative will be further elaborated during the next reporting period. Also the basic management training was provided to the women of Kantara participating in the vocational training. Taking into consideration the characteristics of the participating women and their enthusiasm to start practical work, a training program was developed in a way alternating between theoretical and hands-on sessions. That way ensured the participation of women in all sessions and equipped them with the essential knowledge and skills. Also women from Aytaroun participated to training on business management. Most of the women are part of a local cooperative whereas the others want to start their own business.In Bint Jbeil the participants to the business management training are women who already have their own businesses (shoe business, household store, hair dressers…) and women who want to start their own businesses but lack of innovative and lucrative ideas.
* **Vocational training:** Different types of vocational training were organized based on women's interest and market needs in the areas, these are as such:
  + Clothe design (haute couture) in Bint Jbeil; women participated to a training on dress making so they would improve the quality of their work (new designs and fabrics, color harmonization…).
  + Chocolate design and manufacturing in Ras Baalback and Kfeir.
  + Jewelry accessories in Nabatiey. Interested women in the village of Kantara met with a marketing specialist and identified a vocational training that would benefit them all. The selection criteria took into consideration the potential market for this new skill and business in the area and the women readiness to undertake such training. During a period of one month women were trained on designing and arranging candles, chocolate, and glass.
  + InAytaroun women participated to a training on chocolate, soap, and candle design.
  + Women of Deir Mimas community participated to a training on quality control and food safety in addition to learning new recipes.
* **Study Tours:** After the training on chocolate design, souvenir design and clothing design, field trips were organized to Syria having a main supplier chain for different products and row material needed. Women from Kfeir and Bint Jbeil, Ghaziyeh, Nabatieyh, and Ras Baalback were exposed to new merchants and practiced what they have learnt during the business management training (negotiation skills, pricing…)
* **Entrepreneurial Trip to Amman.** A Forum was held in Jordan in coordination with a leading Jordanian microfinance institution “Tamweelcom”. The women exchanged experience with Jordanian women who are also micro-entrepreneurs and have different occupations. The Jordan trip included 2 days of advanced training session on marketing, debt management and awareness as well as the participants joined the exhibition in “Souk Al Ayadi” and benefited of introducing their products and selling some of them in the Jordanian market.
* **Access to Market-Marketing Forum at Souk el Tayeb**. A fair took place in Beirut – Saifi where women had the opportunity to share this day with the regular suppliers of Souk Al Tayeb market place (organic market) and to introduce their products and their business to the usual clients who visit the Souk every Saturday of the year. This was an opportunity for the WE PASS women to experience networking, and marketing outside their limited geographic borders.

**Provide Micro Credit for women who have the capacity to sustain an income generating project**:

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| The micro-credit is a financial innovation, a program for those who are granted small funds to start up business or develop their own one. Since the beginning of the project and until to date, the total number of beneficiaries that took a loan is 94, the total number of loans taken is 113 (includes renewal), the total amount disbursed is US$ 80,900.  Loans are two types, individual and group loan. In the **individual loan**, collateral requirements play a part in achieving the high repayment rates especially in form-D (home and work assets as collateral) but it makes a good option for clients and that is not provided in bank services. Twenty women received individual loans in this phase from different regions (Ghazieh, Kfeir, Doueir, Bint Jbeil, Sibeel and Aytaroun) with a total amount of US$ 29,800 and two women (Ras Baalbak and Doueir) renewed their loans with a total amount of US$ 2,300.  To get a **group loan**, woman should join the financial group and the group guarantees the loan. Group lending refers to the practice of working with clients in small groups; it has the potential to provide affordable credits, reduce transaction costs and lower the risk of default. Six group loans have been approved in this phase from different regions (Kfeir, Bint Jbeil and Doueir) with a total amount of US$ 12,300 and five groups (Bint Jbeil, Nabatieh and Aytaroun) renewed their loans with a total amount of US$ 8,500.  Micro credits were approved on, shoe shop, dress making business, and a hairdresser business, agricultural business, curtains shop, hairdresser, grocery store, accessories & toys, jewelry accessories , beauty saloon, handy craft business, dress making business, cloth shop, a driving lessons business, chocolate design business, lingerie shop.  **Group loan were approved as follows:**   * In Bint Jbeil: one group composed of women owning a grocery shop, a cloth shop and a small food processing business. * In Nabatieyh: One group composed of women who participated in the Jewelry Accessories design. * In Aytaroun: six groups obtained micro credits: The group loan is not necessarily for women having common objectives, but rather for them to support one another as debtors. These were for agricultural businesses, one hair dresser and a computer shop, handy craft businesses, and food process businesses * In Bint jbeil: group one composed of women owning a cloth shop, shoes shop and make up business, food process business, dressmaking business * In Doueir: one group composed of 3 women; two of them own food process businesses and the third one is a tailor. Another group is composed of 3 women who have agricultural businesses, one hairdresser and a woman who has a small food processing business. A group three consists of 3 members of the handicraft cooperative. And a forth Group consisting of 3 women who have agricultural businesses. |

**Distribution of equipment and tools as grant** to women entrepreneurs of different categories:

1. Beneficiaries who undertook the vocational trainings and willing to start their own enterprise. This is a way to encourage them expanding their business at a lower initial cost.
2. Women micro-credit beneficiaries, who need a small grant to boost their economic activity, increase their income generation and therefore improve the livelihoods condition of their family. Four additional women were granted with the chocolate tools in the last phase in Kfeir.

A "needs assessment" questionnaire was used to assess each micro-credit entrepreneur’s situation and identify the needs in terms of tools and equipment to expand the business, increase the monthlyincome and compensate the losses generated by the war. The distribution activity was completed by the end of March 2009.

**Individual Consultation and group IC:** Two individual consultations were organized in Ras Baalback, 1 in Doueir, and 1 in Ghaziyeh to advise women on their feasibility study prepared and further requirements and potential to venture into micro credit. A group consultation also supported the women of Nabatiye and Bint jbeil regarding the production process.

**Coaching beneficiaries of economic empowerment to participate in a national marketing:** A national event/forum was organized last December to promote the products produced by women beneficiaries of micro credit and training. The women are being coached by experts to enhance quality and display of goods. Meetings were held in each village to give details of the upcoming forum and to assess local women’s products.

**Establishment of women cooperatives:** A group of women in Nabatiey started a cooperative (the ones who got a group loan). In Kfeir they have started the process of establishing a cooperative, yet there are many incidents that suggest future problems, hence the project will give special attention to Kfeir to secure sustainability.

**Identify areas of intersection and proper mechanism of action between the project and the youth peer to peer (Y-PEER) project**: Upon Assessing the tools used by Y-PEER network, a need for a cultural and social sensitive approach for addressing high risk behaviors among young people seemed necessary to be adopted at this stage. Thus this activity was initiated in 2009 though sensitization meetings and visits and will be further implemented in 2010 with the Y-PEER project.

**Revise and update the 1997 “Woman National Strategy” through consultive and participatory approach:** This activity is in Process. The first stage of organizing focus group meetings with grassroots has been concluded. This allowed for assessing women's needs before targeting NGOs and governmental bodies and UN agencies working on women issues. Data has been collected and NCLW is at the final stage of formulating the Woman National Strategy before presenting it to stakeholders for validation and finalization. This is an ongoing process that will be completed by the end of the project.

**Documentation of Best Practices of the WE PASS project:** The consultant subcontracted to

document the project’s Best Practices conducted field trips to the project villages and met with the WWC , key community actors, project partners, and others to document process and capture good practices. The work in progress.

* **Report on the key outputs achieved in the reporting period including # and nature of the activities (inputs), % of completion and beneficiaries.** 
  + 51 stakeholders (UN agencies, Ministries, Research Centers, NGOs, Women Committees) were consulted to map services and collect data relevant to the National Woman Strategy.
  + 5 new women committees established and participating in training (Kantara, Sebel, Ardeh, Beit Lahya, Bakifa, Tannoura, Akabi, Ain Hersha)
  + 15 % of municipal councils and community leaders understanding 1325 with a focus on GBV
  + 40% of centers in 10 villages trained on comprehensive gender service package
  + 64 women acquired skills and knowledge on listening and dialogue skills; enhancing self esteem;
  + 17 mothers acquired knowledge and skills for a healthier relationship with their teenage children;
  + 470 women acquired knowledge on reproductive health topics;
  + 42 women gained knowledge and skills on Basics in emergency relief in conflicts situations;
  + 85 women attended awareness sessions on preventive measures for back and neck pain in addition to practical physical exercises
  + 100 women were sensitized and gained knowledge on breast cancer and had access to a free medical service (mammography)
  + 45 illiterate women are learning to read and write;
  + 15 women acquired skills on relations with violent adolescents kids;
  + 270 young men and women were sensitized on issues of gender equity and discrimination;
  + 12 women participated to a support group on GBV in Yarine
  + 180 men, women and youth participated in public discussions and sensitized on GBV though participatory theatre
  + 135 women contributed to the revision of the National Woman Strategy.
  + 70 men and women with increased knowledge about CEDAW
  + 500 women and youth from all the villages participated in the solidarity celebration held on the occasion of international women day and mother's day;
  + 18 women completed a computer course;
  + 300 men, women, and youth participated in honoring elderly women
  + 3 women committee acquired skills and knowledge about strategic planning and developed its own plan
  + 45 mothers are gaining knowledge on parenting skills
  + 134 men and woman enhanced their solidarity relations through community mobilization iftars
  + 210 young girls and boys participated in community advocacy to elect women in municipal councils
  + Business Development Service package delivered in all villages with
  + 55 women participated to a trip to Syria to study market and suppliers; 38 women participated to Beirut fair; 24 women participated to Amman entrepreneurial trip
  + 236 direct and indirect 944 beneficiaries of non financial services within the economic empowerment component in all villages until 31 Dec 2009 distributed as such:
  + 36 participated in the Fair trip
  + 24 represented the villages to sell their products in Souk el Tayeb
  + 81 participated to supplier trips
  + 39 participated in the market study
  + 37 attended training on finishing and packaging
  + 13 participated in individual consultation 6 participated in group consultation93 women gained knowledge and skills on business management training136 women attending vocational training.
  + 82 women benefited from grants in form of equipment or tools for their business
  + 113 loans were disbursed to 94 women micro- entrepreneur (includes renewal), until 31 December 2009
  + 21 women started-up a new business to create an income generation activity
  + 79 women improved their business performance and therefore increased their family revenue
  + 11 women acquired knowledge on quality control and food safety in addition to learning new recipes
* **Explain, if relevant, delays in programme implementation, the nature of the constraints, actions taken to mitigate future delays and lessons learned in the process.**

There was no implementation constrains on the national level at this stage. On the local level of implementation, there are few constrains summarized as follows:

* The project has been cautious in prioritizing the training needs, to support women committees towards sustainability especailly given the lack of experience of the women committees in social and development work;
* In communities where there is a high need for similar initiatives, it has been difficult to limit the number of participants to most activities, which affect the effectiveness of such activities especially training. This is the specific case of the cluster of Beit Lahyia which lead to dividing the work per village to increase chances for participation and outreach.
* The high interest rate of micro credit, and expectations of most community that credits are in form of grants affected the enthusiasm of women to engage in loans; this is decreasing as a challenge with the increased self trust gained by the women and the exposure to marketing opportunities and other women entrepreneurs;
* Tobacco growing season and olive cultivations delay certain activities and slow the process;
* The limited ability to write and read of most of the members of the women committee in Beit Lahiya cluster is imposing an additional challenge during the activities, especially that this was not a declared issue from the beginning.
* Women are beginning to talk openly about their fears. Indeed, during the conflict resolution training in Kfei,r a group of the WWC expressed in a sensitive way their fear that the political group of the rest of the committee would interfere in the decision making of the women cooperative. It was the first time that women would discuss such sensitive topic when usually they would elude it because it might generate a conflict between the two communities of Kfeir village.

There were many lessons learned along the process summarized as follow:

* The economic empowerment is a challenge to the building of the committee as a group especially the establishment of cooperatives because they require skills that the members of the group do not sufficiently have.
* The resistance and hesitancy of women to take loans due to high interest rate suggests finding support mechanisms to encourage women to engage more in micro credit.
* The importance of targeting youth and involving them in the project is an essential aspect for women empowerment. By involving this generation the issue of gender equity would gain more allies and potential for sustainable interest;
* WWC in new villages have a need for organizing big and successful events in their communities to increase their credibility and show a concrete aspect of the kind work they are doing. It is very essential to keep on using interactive and participatory methods in sensitizing the community and transmitting the messages;
* Changes in workplan proposed by the WWC should reach a stage where it is implemented without lots of changes because it affects their self confidence and ownership. Yet this require a consolidated effort from project staff as well as the committees;
* Regular field visits during courses (like computer, vocational training, business development services, literacy…) are essential for monitoring purposes and visibility of project;
* Approaching local municipal elections is starting to create or emphasize tensions among groups, which sometimes affect the success of the committees in carrying on its work, or sustaining its effort beyond the scope of the project. This is clearly the case in the villages where the women committees did not gain enough skills and reached ownership of the project.
* The economic empowerment component is implemented by training sessions that improve the leadership perspective of business management.

During this period of the project, some difficulties were faced and this is related to several yet different kinds of challenges as such:

* Challenges related to Business Management Training (BMT) such as in Kantara; women were overloaded with theoretic topics and they wanted to have more practical work so the number of beneficiaries was low at the beginning but within the vocational training, women found the BMT interesting especially the session of accounting and bookkeeping. Challenges related to the micro-credit component that needed more elaborate and repetitive clarification and encouragement (grants, interest rate fear of taking out a loan and failing in managing it…).
* Challenges related to the level of education and perception like in Yarin where women work with tobacco and agriculture while the others are housewives. During the focus group we faced a big challenge of illiteracy; therefore mainly those who benefited from the literacy classes were oriented on economic empowerment. Concrete steps such as building an NGO increases women commitment and involvement to activities. They feel that they will be able to really practice what they have learned and they are enthusiastic because they are building their own sustainable entity.
* Increasing activities that address and target youth can be a factor that helps us to reach young people successfully because they are eager to participate to any kind of interactive activity. They also have a direct influence on their parents, at least in bringing them to activities. The small, collective, and rural environments in which these beneficiaries live give way to much paranoia, real and perceived, about the anonymity and confidentiality of the issues discussed within the support group sessions (i.e. Gender Based Violence). Although it is unrealistic to eliminate such an obstacle completely, these issues require more attention and continual revisiting then they would in other populations. Thus, as demonstrated in the current support group sessions, a certain amount of fluidity is needed in the overall therapeutic plan for the group sessions available in order to deal with such threats efficiently. In the current project, this was dealt with through the 6 in depth group dynamic reports, written by the social worker on the project. This allowed for revision of the administered support group sessions, as well as the strategic and proper reformulation of goals, techniques, and expectations for the upcoming support groups.
* **List the key partnerships and collaborations, and explain how such relationships impact on the achievement of results.**

This project is nationally implemented by the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) in coordination with women NGOs, especially umbrella organizations, and with technical support from UNPFA country office. As for the partnership with NGOs, the project under this Phase III continues to coordinate with specialized NGOs, such as **KAFA** “**Enough Violence and Exploitation**” and **Lebanese Council to Resist Violence** (LECORVAW) in reference to GBV related initiatives; **EPEP** in reference to literacy; and **Al Majmoua** in reference to economic empowerment; **SDC** in reference to participation and gender discrimination.More NGOs are continuously engaged on areas related to youth, reproductive health, and human rights. In addition to local NGOs with a defined and relevant role, the project will strive to liaise with international NGOs, on the economic development component in particular, and with ones that have a previous and current involvement in income generating projects. Promoting coordinated efforts with various entities including NGOs, municipalities, community committees, schools, health care centers, social development centers, and other UNFPA supported projects etc… is one major objective of the project.

On the other hand the project cooperates with various national experts and research/academic institutes for specific tasks such as conducting research and studies, contributing to capacity development to name but a few. Finally the support of the various municipalities of the old and new villages is a challenge and an opportunity that the project takes into account while designing the activities as well as conducting any mobilization plan. This kind of support and partnership was – and still is - very handful and necessary during Phase III, and it became more vital as the women committees developed. Efforts will be made to sustain this partnership.

# Future Work Plan (if applicable)

Work plan Attached (Annex 1)

# Performance Indicators (optional)

# Abbreviations and Acronyms

CEDAW Convention for the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women

EPEP Ecumenical Popular Education Program

GBV Gender Based Violence

ICPD PoA International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action

LECORVAW Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women

LRF The Lebanon Recovery Fund

MDG Millennium Development Goals

NCLW National Commission for Lebanese Women

NGO Non Governmental Organization

NRHP National Reproductive Health Programme

RH Reproductive Health

SDC Sustainable Democracy Center

SDSC Social Development Service Centers

UNFPA United Nations Population Fund

UNSCR United Nations Security Council Resolution

WEPASS Women Empowerment: Peaceful Action for Security & Stability

WWC WE PASS Women Committees

Y-PEER Youth to youth peer network