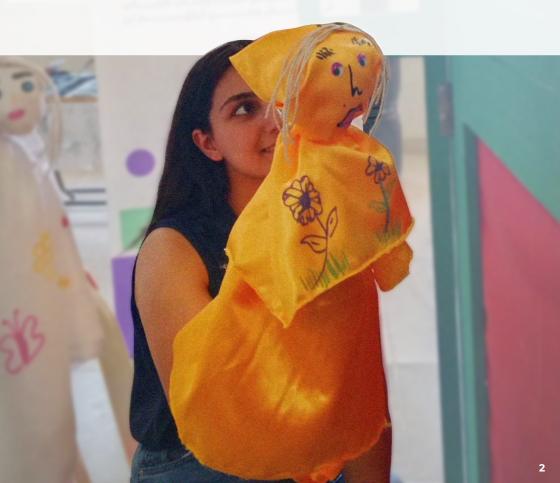


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# ABOUT ABAAD

Established in 2011, **ABAAD – Resource Center for Gender Equality** is a UN ECOSOC-accredited civil society organization that works to achieve gender equality as an essential condition for sustainable social and economic development in the MENA region. ABAAD advocates for policies and laws that enhance women's effective participation through a rights-based approach that brings tangible progress toward gender justice. ABAAD adopts a holistic, multidimensional approach to eradicating gender-based violence in all its forms and to creating equal, equitable societies where women and girls are protected and can thrive.



# VISION

ABAAD envisions a world in which men and women live as equitable partners and work together to secure better lives for their future and the future of the societies they live in.



TRANSPARENCY



#### A WORD FROM OUR

#### **FOUNDER & DIRECTOR**

This year, we accomplished a lot despite the challenging context we work in. It was an important year as we phased out of providing gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response through the Social Development Centers of the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs—a partnership that ran from 2015 to 2022—and established ABAAD's seven standalone Model Centers for Multi-Disciplinary Holistic Care to End Gender-Based Violence. These Centers serve as safe spaces where women, girls, men, and boys can access information about their rights, build social solidarity networks, gain new skills, and receive specialized GBV response services. In 2023, over 28,500 individuals were supported through this effort.

We continued working with government institutions, contributing to the National Strategy for Lebanese Women (2022–2030) and launching Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) with the Ministry of Social Affairs to strengthen Lebanon's GBV response. During the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV, we partnered with the Internal Security Forces to host the Second National Dialogue Conference on Sectoral Partnership to Respond to Domestic Violence and Sexual Crimes. This highlighted the need for ongoing training for security forces, the judiciary, and civil society to address GBV effectively.

In commitment to our role as a resource center, we launched the study, 'Active Citizenship as a Promoter of Gender Equality in Lebanon,' exploring how active citizenship can reduce GBV and promote gender equality. In collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, we also introduced the updated Program ABB (meaning 'father' in Arabic), a first-of-its-kind initiative encouraging fathers to play active roles in childcare.

On the global stage, we ensured active participation in international discussions, bringing voices from the region to key platforms like the Commission on the Status of Women, the Women Deliver Conference in Kigali, Rwanda, and the launch ceremony of the ICPD+30 Shadow Report. We were also proud to be recognized as a Shorty Awards Winner and Honoree for our #NoShameNoBlame campaign.

None of this would have been possible without the collective support and dedication that drives ABAAD's mission. The trust of those we serve, the commitment of our team, and the backing of our partners and donors. There is still a long way to go, and the job is hard, but we will move into the coming year with the same dedication to push for change, address the root causes of violence, advocate for law reform, and work on all levels to create a safer and more equitable future.

Founder & Director, ABAAD MENA



# GBV PREVENTION & RESPONSE

REACH

28,656
BENEFICIARIES

ABAAD's services reached 28,656 beneficiaries in 2023 through its model centers, men's center, safe shelters, and the mobile bus, Jina Al Dar. Most beneficiaries were women aged 18 to 59, with equal representation from Lebanese and Syrian nationalities.



Beneficiaries accessed a range of services, including prevention programs like awareness sessions and psychosocial support, as well as response services such as case management, psychotherapy for men, and safe shelter for GBV survivors and their dependents. ABAAD's Al Dar safe shelters in Bekaa, Mount Lebanon, and the North provided life-saving protection and essential support services to those in need.

## BREAKDOWN OF **SERVICES PROVIDED**

- **12,415** individuals participated in awareness activities
- 9,048 received psychosocial support
- 4,360 benefited from the Jina Al Dar initiative
  - **2,321** received case management services
    - **449** were hosted in safe shelters
      - 63 men accessed psychotherapy support



ABAAD provided 12,415 individuals with awareness sessions on various topics, including anger and stress management, breast cancer, crisis management, early marriage, first aid, GBV core concepts, legal topics, menstrual hygiene, positive parenting, sexual harassment, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Through 19 Jina Al Dar rounds in marginalized villages across Lebanon, ABAAD reached 2,136 women and 2,224 children with activities aimed at spreading awareness on important issues.

Additionally, 9,048 women, girls, men, and boys participated in focused psychosocial support and gender transformative sessions. These included programs on basic life skills, masculinities, positive parenting (Program ABB, Program Rajol), anger and stress management, and emotional support groups.



#### **PREVENTION**

12,415

received awareness sessions

4,360

benefited from Jina Al Dar (2,136 women – 2,224 children)

9,048

participated in focused psychosocial support and gender transformative sessions (women, girls and men)

#### **A. GROUP SESSIONS**

confirmed that the sessions met their needs

98% found the information useful

99% reported better stress management and stronger social connections

A satisfaction survey showed high approval of ABAAD's psychosocial support sessions including Basic Life Skills and Gender Transformative Programs, with 93% of participants saying the sessions met their needs and 98% finding the information useful. 99% reported better stress management and stronger social connections, while facilitators received a satisfaction rate of over 98%. Participants suggested adding children's activities, intensifying courses, and focusing more on problem-solving and stress relief.

**B. AWARENESS SESSIONS** 

97%

found the content engaging

98%

considered the information valuable

**99%** praised the facilitators'

praised the facilitators' knowledge, clarity, and respect



#### C. EMOTIONAL SUPPORT GROUPS (ESG)

Satisfaction surveys from women attending **Emotional Support sessions** showed positive feedback.

96% found the sessions interesting, 95% found them useful, and 93% said they met their needs. Participants reported improved well-being, with 92% learning positive coping strategies and looking forward to future sessions.

90% said they were now aware of where to access services, and 93% noted stronger support networks.

Logistics also received high ratings, with 95% satisfied with the learning environment, 98% with the clarity of materials, and 88% with COVID-19 measures. Awareness of ABAAD's complaints mechanism was at 90%, and participants highlighted a need for longer sessions, more diverse topics, and increased frequency, including one-on-one sessions.

**92%** 

reported learning positive coping strategies and expressed interest in future sessions.

90%

said they were now aware of where to access services.

93%

noted stronger support networks.



#### **RESPONSE**

#### A. CASE MANAGEMENT

ABAAD provided individual case management services to **2,321 women and girls** at risk or survivors of GBV in 2023

Most survivors were Syrian (74%), followed by Lebanese (25%) and 1% from other nationalities. 71% of survivors were married, 20% divorced, 5% single, 3% widowed, and 1% engaged.

#### **RISK LEVELS OF CASES ASSESSED**

14.3%

Low risk

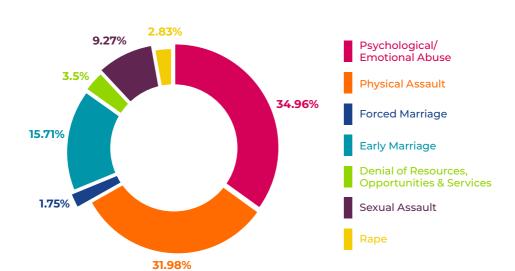
70.7%

Medium risk

15.0%

High risk

#### **TYPES OF GBV REPORTED**



#### **B. MEN CENTER**

#### 63 men and boys received

psychotherapy services at ABAAD's Men Center.

<b>Nationality</b>			
Radionality	<b>89%</b> Lebanese	<b>8%</b> Syrians	<b>3%</b> Palestinians

Manibal			
Marital	CEO( c: 1	2E0/ 14 1 1	00/ 5:
Marital Status	67% Single	<b>25%</b> Married	<b>8%</b> Divorced or separated

# Session-Type Common Issues Top concerns were communication difficulties and violent behavior, with other cases involving sexuality issues, anxiety, distress (including emotional distress), social isolation, and masculinity challenges.

Men and boys who reach out to schedule a session at the men center face significant struggles with emotional regulation, aggression, and interpersonal challenges. 50.7% of referrals are related to violent behaviors, mood disorders, and difficulties in emotional expression and communication. The remainder of referrals are spread across a range of issues, highlighting the variety of psychological and social difficulties men encounter when seeking help, such as substance abuse, childhood disorders, sexuality-related issues, sleep disorders, interpersonal deficits, and other personal struggles.

All the men and boys who seek psychotherapy sessions at ABAAD's men center are self-referred and initially most callers express that they don't exhibit aggressive behavior and that they are seeking assistance for other issues. However, assessments by the social worker, along with follow-up sessions with the psychotherapist, revealed deeper issues such as challenges with masculinities, difficulties in emotional regulation, and interpersonal conflicts.

# ABAAD'S APPROACH ENSURES THAT EVERYONE RECEIVES TAILORED SUPPORT IN UNDERSTANDING THEIR OWN BEHAVIORS AND CREATING MORE CONSTRUCTIVE COPING STRATEGIES

Men often seek therapy for anxiety, depression, or interpersonal conflicts. Through therapy, many disclose deeper trauma, such as childhood abuse or intimate partner violence, which they initially fail to recognize. For example, a man presenting with social isolation or emotional difficulties may reveal past verbal or emotional abuse, marking a turning point in his healing process. Therapy fosters accountability and personal growth while addressing root causes.



## THERAPY TYPE BY MARITAL STATUS

#### MARRIED OR COHABITING INDIVIDUALS

received either couple therapy (37.5%) or individual therapy (62.5%).

DIVORCED, SEPARATED, AND SINGLE INDIVIDUALS

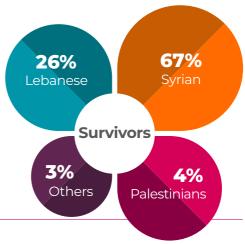
received individual therapy in most cases.

#### C. SAFE SHELTERS

ABAAD's shelters in Bekaa, Mount Lebanon, and the North hosted **449 residents**, including **190 women** survivors and **259 dependents** (118 boys and 141 girls).

Women stayed an average of two months, with 54 beneficiaries staying less than 10 days and 14 staying over 200 days.

Exit surveys showed high satisfaction with the services provided, including medical care, follow-ups, cleanliness, and shelter policies.



#### **TYPES OF GBV**

**60.9%** — Physical Assault

**9.5%** — Rape

7.4% — Sexual Harassment

21.1% — Psychological / Emotional Abuse

1.1% — Denial of Resources / Opportunities and Services



#### **SUCCESS STORIES**

In the second half of 2023, a participant in Program ABB, shared that he had begun helping with domestic tasks and caring for his children. By applying new parenting techniques and communication skills, he challenged traditional gender roles he had previously adhered to. His transformation reflects the program's success in promoting gender equality within a conservative patriarchal community.

#### **Empowering Maria**

#### A SURVIVOR'S JOURNEY TO SAFETY & RESOLUTION

Maria (name changed for confidentiality), a 24-year-old Syrian mother of two, fled to Lebanon seeking safety after enduring three years of severe physical and emotional abuse by her husband. In 2023, she sought help at ABAAD's model center in Zahle, supported by her father, who remained by her side throughout the process.

Maria's goal was to secure a divorce and custody of her children. With ABAAD's guidance and legal support from the Danish Council, she pursued her case while attending psychological and social support sessions for four months. These sessions helped her build emotional resilience.

Maria and her husband eventually agreed on a living arrangement that prioritized her safety. However, this decision caused conflict in her family, with her brother threatening her life. Her father again intervened, seeking ABAAD's support to address the threat.

As Maria's case was resolved, her father began referring other survivors to ABAAD, trusting the organization for its compassionate care and professional support. His belief in ABAAD grew as he saw it help his daughter and others break free from violence.



#### **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

ABAAD organizes community events as part of its prevention efforts to raise awareness about GBV and promote positive behavioral change. These events foster education, advocacy, and a sense of collective responsibility. Each year, ABAAD celebrates key international humanitarian days, such as International Women's Day, Girls' Day, and World Refugee Day, providing opportunities to honor community resilience and reaffirm its commitment to a safer, more equitable society.

Event topics are tailored to the needs of local communities, addressing issues like sexual harassment, digital security, and child marriage. Additionally, they focus on promoting gender equality through themes like positive parenting, the role of fathers, and rethinking social roles. These events play a crucial role in driving lasting change in attitudes and behaviors toward GBV.





#### **EQUIPPING THE TEAM**

ABAAD prioritizes the **professional development** of its staff to enhance service quality

In 2023, refresher and new trainings were provided on topics such as time management, facilitation skills, communication, conflict resolution, GBV case management, and gender core concepts.



#### **EQUIPPING THE GRASSROOTS**

The Generation Gender program, a five-year initiative aimed at fostering grassroots allyship for just and violence-free societies, focused on building youth and civil society capacity in 2023. Key components included:

Gender core concepts and masculinities trainings, exploring socio-cultural norms and their impacts.

Policy bootcamps, emphasizing youth-inclusive, gender transformative policymaking

Gender integration trainings, teaching participants to apply a gender lens and understand intersectionality.

Civic engagement trainings, promoting active citizenship and accountability.

Advocacy trainings, enabling participants to influence decision-making and public opinion on gender equality.

Coaching and mentorship, providing ongoing technical support.

#### Why we do it?

Capacity building fosters self-reflection, encouraging participants to critically assess socio-political systems and their internalization of harmful gender norms. It helps them challenge the status quo, ask difficult questions, and pave the way for sustainable reform. Participants gain the skills needed to mobilize and transform into activists while reducing blind spots and developing more responsive, community-focused interventions. Through these efforts, ABAAD engaged over 100 youths across Lebanon and partnered with 15 civil society organizations working in sectors like education and livelihoods.

#### **EQUIPPING CIVIL SOCIETY**

In 2023, ABAAD conducted extensive capacity-building trainings for CSOs in Lebanon, the MENA region, Ethiopia, and Sahel countries. Key topics included:

#### GENDER CORE CONCEPTS

Introduced socio-cultural norms and their social, political, and institutional impacts.

#### GENDER INTEGRATION TRAINING \_\_\_\_\_

Built skills to understand and address gender norms, analyze their impact on programs, and integrate a gender perspective across the program cycle.

#### MASCULINITIES TRAINING \_\_

Explored gender through a masculinities perspective, addressing power dynamics and GBV, promoting equality, and supporting women's empowerment.

#### AAP AND PSEA \_

Focused on protection against sexual exploitation and abuse, accountability to affected populations, and anti-corruption. Participants developed action plans to strengthen organizational efforts.

#### GENDER-SENSITIVE MHPSS TRAINING \_\_

Linked gender sensitivity with mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), focusing on GBV forms, gender roles, and skills for psychosocial support and psychological first aid for GBV survivors.

THESE TRAININGS
ENHANCED THE CAPACITY
OF CSOs TO ADDRESS
GENDER-RELATED ISSUES
EFFECTIVELY AND
RESPONSIBLY.



# ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNS

#### WOMEN'S STRATEGY

In 2022, the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) held cross-sectoral consultations with stakeholders to gather feedback on the first draft of the National Strategy for Lebanese Women (2022-2030).

Based on these inputs, the NCLW finalized the document and, in November 2023, launched the strategy in partnership with ABAAD.

The event, held under the patronage of Prime Minister Najib Mikati, was attended by government representatives and foreign dignitaries, including Dutch Ambassador Hans Peter van der Woude.

While the ongoing presidential void prevents formal endorsement by the caretaker government, the strategy's creation remains a key step toward safeguarding the rights of women and girls and keeping them high on the national agenda.





#### SHIFT CONFERENCE

The first Arab Feminist Forum for Digital Content **(SHIFT)** was hosted by **No2ta feminist lab** with ABAAD's support in September 2023

This three-day conference brought together digital feminist content creators from across the MENA region, including Bissan Owda, Salam Katanani, and Maya Al Ammar, to explore advancing Arab feminism through digital media.

The first two days, open to the public, featured panel discussions and workshops on crosscutting themes, while the third day was a closed session for content creators to brainstorm and strategize. The event engaged approximately 600 participants, both in-person and via Zoom, providing a platform for dialogue and collaboration.



#### **ICPD+30 SHADOW REPORT**

In 2023, **ABAAD** contributed alongside other international partners to the development of the **ICPD+30** shadow report produced by Rutgers.



The report titled "The Heart of the Matter: Embrace the Reality of Young People's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Today" was launched in July in Kigali, Rwanda, at the residence of H.E. Matthijs Wolters, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Rwanda, in the presence of Dr. Natalia Kanem, UNFPA's Executive Director. ABAAD delivered the keynote opening speech, placing youth at the forefront of global discussions and advocacy efforts.

#### **LEBANON MENENGAGE NETWORK**

**ABAAD** resumed efforts to reactivate the **MenEngage Network** in Lebanon, the national branch of the Global
MenEngage Alliance dedicated to advancing gender
justice, human rights, and social equality.



The network raises awareness about the importance of involving men and boys in the pursuit of gender equality and urges policymakers to adopt inclusive policies that support their active role in achieving this goal.

It also facilitates the exchange of knowledge and best practices to empower men as agents of peace, equality, and social change within Lebanon's context. At its core, the network underscores the need for men and boys to stand as allies in the advancement of women's rights and broader social justice movements.

This year, ABAAD launched a call for new members, organized Steering Committee elections, and updated the network's governing documents and strategy for 2024–2027 to reinforce its impact.



ABAAD, along with PAX, WILPF, SIHA, and UPP, co-organized a hybrid event on "Gendered Dynamics of Digital Peace Activism: Challenges and Opportunities Experienced by Feminist Peace Activists and Human Rights Defenders" during the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York.

The event brought together feminist peace activists from Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, and Sudan to share their views and experiences. They talked about how new technologies helped women's peace movements campaign and organize online, but also highlighted barriers caused by the digital gender gap. The panel also discussed how women peace activists are targeted online and explored ways to counter digital and technology-based gender-based violence.



#### **ANNUAL PARTNERS MEETING**

OF THE CALL TO ACTION ON PROTECTION FROM GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

ABAAD participated in the 2023 Annual Partners Meeting of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, held at the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin. The meeting offered members an opportunity to exchange ideas, develop key recommendations, and outline actions to strengthen GBV protection in emergency settings. ABAAD contributed actively to the discussions and remains committed to supporting the implementation of the identified priorities under Germany's leadership of the initiative.



# COOPERATION WITH PUBLIC SECTOR

## PROGRAM P-ECD (ABB) LAUNCHED (AT, THE NATIONAL LEVEL)

### ABAAD and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) launched Program P-ECD (ABB) on November 16, 2023.

Developed in collaboration with Equimundo and MoSA's Consultative Team, the program promotes positive parenting and strengthens fathers' involvement in early childhood development (up to age 8). It consists of 13 group sessions, along with additional guidance for caregivers and facilitators, addressing intellectual, emotional, physical, and psychological needs while enhancing family relationships.

Program ABB targets social workers and service providers, aiming to empower communities through parenting education, promote gender equality, and support sustainable care for children in early childhood. It emphasizes safe, nurturing parenting practices to build healthy, rights-respecting societies.



#### **GBV CASE MANAGEMENT SOPS**

ABAAD and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) officially launched the updated Gender-Based Violence Standard Operating Procedures (GBV SOPs) on November 23, 2023.

Initially developed in 2018 with support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the SOPs were revised in 2023 to address Lebanon's evolving GBV challenges and incorporate recent advancements in the legal framework. This update was informed by consultations with MoSA, IRC, the World Bank, and GBV experts to ensure the SOPs adhered to international standards while addressing Lebanon's specific context.



#### ISF DIALOGUE SESSION



ABAAD collaborated with the Internal Security Forces (ISF) on the Community Policing (CP) project to strengthen communication between security agencies and civil society and promote a rights-based approach to policing.

On November 28, 2023, the second dialogue session on sectoral partnership for responding to sexual and domestic crimes was held at the ISF headquarters.



The session brought together CSOs, international organizations, media, academics, and ISF representatives to address challenges in tackling sexual and domestic violence. Discussions focused on existing structures, services, and recommendations for improving ISF responses. Participants included organizations like Himaya, Concern Worldwide, Terre Liban, ALEF, Caritas, and representatives from universities and embassies.



ABAAD was honored as a winner of the 15<sup>th</sup> **Annual Shorty Awards** in the Nonprofit category for the **#NoShameNoBlame** campaign. This recognition highlights our team's dedication to creating a safer and more just environment for women and girls in Lebanon, even during challenging times. The campaign continues to advocate for increased sentencing for GBV perpetrators as a step toward ending the cycle of violence. The awards ceremony, held on May 24<sup>th</sup> at Tribeca 360° in New York City, brought together global leaders, with winners selected by the Real Time Academy, a panel of industry experts in digital and social media.





#### REFORM: TOWARDS A STRENGTHENED QUALITY RESPONSE AND INCLUSIVE AND DIGNIFIED DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR GBV SURVIVORS IN LEBANON

The REFORM project, funded by RDPP and implemented by ABAAD, worked to advance gender equality and reduce GBV among host and refugee communities in Lebanon. It ran from 2019 to 2022 for three years and eight months.

## SUPPORTING AND RAISING AWARENESS AMONG MEDIA ACTORS ON **LAW 205/2020**

This report summarizes two key phases of specialized trainings on Law 205, issued in Lebanon in 2020, which criminalizes sexual harassment and provides rehabilitation for survivors. It also addresses strategies for promoting gender-sensitive media content and coverage. The report outlines the preparatory phase before the training, including insights from a discussion session with journalists to identify their needs. It then details the specialized training itself and presents key observations, outcomes, and recommendations.





#### GENDER INTEGRATION TOOLKIT

The Gender Integration Toolkit is a comprehensive training guide aimed at enhancing the capacity of partner organizations in integrating gender perspectives into their work.



## NATIONAL STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)**

ABAAD updated the Gender-Based Violence Standard Operating Procedures (GBV SOPs) to address Lebanon's evolving GBV challenges. Initially developed in 2018 with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the SOPs have been revised in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs to reflect current realities and strengthen institutional responses. The next steps include operationalizing the updated SOPs through a roadmap integrating them into the work of all relevant ministries, ensuring effective, survivor-centered support.



## ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AS A PROMOTER OF **GENDER EQUALITY IN LEBANON**: A RESEARCH STUDY

This study coordinated by ABAAD and funded by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), under the project "Engaging civil society and youth in gender inclusive citizenship and leadership in Lebanon" explores how active citizenship can promote gender equality in Lebanon. The research surveyed 1,214 Lebanese youth aged 15-35 from all governorates to measure active citizenship levels. Additionally, 22 focus group discussions with the general public and stateless communities examined perceptions of active citizenship and its relationship to gender equality.



To explore these resources and more, visit: abaadmena.org/resources

## SAFEGUARDING

#### **PSEA NETWORK**

ABAAD has co-chaired the PSEA Network for nearly three years. In 2023, ABAAD continued its co-chairing role and took the lead in supporting the ad interim PSEA Network coordinator. From October 2023 onwards, ABAAD has been leading the network in the absence of a full-time coordinator, ensuring its continued functionality. ABAAD also contributed to emergency preparedness efforts and coordinated the drafting of the 2024 PSEA Network Action Plan.

## PSEA/AAP TRAININGS AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The Accountability and PSEA Department conducted 34 training sessions on PSEA, AAP, and related topics, engaging 395 participants from ABAAD and external organizations across Lebanon, Iraq, and the Netherlands. Additionally, ABAAD provides ongoing technical support to 14 Lebanese CSOs and 2 Iraqi organizations through its PSEA Coaching and Mentoring initiative, aiming for completion by Q1 2024.

#### **CHS ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP**

ABAAD became a full member of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance, gaining access to resources, collaboration opportunities, and best practices. This membership enhances ABAAD's ability to contribute to global efforts to improve humanitarian aid effectiveness and accountability, reinforcing its commitment to upholding the highest standards in the field.

# DONORS & PARTNERS





































































## **FINANCES**

#### **ABAAD FINANCIAL STATUS**

**\$5,700,489.00** EXPENDITURE

**\$5,700,489.00** INCOME

#### ABAAD EXPENDITURE

**78%** PROGRAM COSTS

22% ADMIN COSTS



THERE IS STILL A LONG WAY TO GO AND THE JOB IS HARD, BUT WE WILL **MOVE INTO THE COMING** YEAR WITH THE SAME **DEDICATION TO PUSH FOR CHANGE AND WORK AT ALL LEVELS TO CREATE A** SAFER AND MORE **EOUITABLE FUTURE.** 

#### **GHIDA ANANI**

**FOUNDER & DIRECTOR** ABAAD MENA

Thank you for making this journey towards change possible!



# ap<u>ش</u>q إنهاد



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