

Gender Audit of Collective Displacement Shelters in Lebanon

Gender Audit of Collective Displacement Shelters
Lebanon | July 2026
Prepared by ABAAD | Resource Center for Gender Equality
Shelter Sector | Protection Cluster | Lebanon Response

67 SITES AUDITED	8 GOVERNORATES COVERED	9,752 DISPLACED PERSONS HOSTED
---------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------------



Protection analysis for safer, more dignified collective displacement shelters

Acknowledgements

ABAAD gratefully acknowledges the support of its partners whose contributions under their respective projects made this Gender Audit exercise and report possible. This collective support reflects a shared commitment to strengthening evidence-based protection analysis and advancing safer, more dignified conditions for women and girls in Lebanon, as well as their families and communities.



Contents

Clickable navigation. Select any section title to jump to the corresponding part of the report.

Acknowledgements	2	3.3 Access for Vulnerable Groups	8
Executive Summary	4	3.4 Protection Information	8
Summary of Findings by Sector	4	4. WASH Sector Findings	8
1. Introduction	4	4.1 Proximity and Accessibility	8
1.1 About ABAAD	5	4.2 Sex Segregation and Privacy	9
1.2 Methodology	5	4.3 Menstrual Hygiene Management	9
2. Site and Population Profile	5	4.4 Disability-Inclusive WASH	9
2.1 Geographic Coverage	5	4.5 Protection Information in WASH Areas	9
2.2 Site Typology	5	5. Distribution Sector Findings	10
2.3 Population Demographics	6	6. Critical Protection Gaps	11
3. Shelter Sector Findings	6	7. Recommendations	12
3.1 Physical Safety and Infrastructure	6	8. Conclusion	13
3.2 Privacy and Gender-Sensitive Arrangements	7		

67

COVERAGE: SITES ACROSS 8
GOVERNORATES

58

ASSESSMENT TOOL: INDICATORS ACROSS 3
SECTORS

3,886

DATASET: OBSERVATIONS REVIEWED

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of ABAAD's Gender Audit of collective displacement shelters across Lebanon, conducted between March and July 2026. A total of 67 sites were assessed across eight governorates, hosting 9,752 displaced persons. The audit evaluated compliance across three key sectors: Shelter, WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), and Distributions, using a structured observational tool developed in line with international humanitarian standards.

67 SITES AUDITED	65% COMPLIANT	29% NON-COMPLIANT	6% NOT OBSERVED
---------------------	------------------	----------------------	--------------------

The overall compliance rate across all 3,886 observations stands at 65%, with 29% non-compliant responses and 6% not observed. While this reflects meaningful progress in some areas, critical gaps persist in shelter privacy, gender-sensitive infrastructure, and protection information.

Key Headline

Functional internal door locks are absent in half of assessed shelters (49% non-compliant). Dedicated safe spaces for women and girls do not exist in 48% of sites. PSEA awareness materials are visible in only 22% of shelter areas and 16% of WASH facilities. These are not incidental gaps; they represent structural failures that directly compromise the safety and dignity of displaced women, girls, and vulnerable individuals.

Summary of Findings by Sector

Across the three sectors, the audit recorded the following aggregate compliance:

Sector	Compliant	Non-Compliant	Not Obs.
Shelter (all indicators)	70%	25%	5%
WASH (all indicators)	55%	40%	5%
Distributions	69%	18%	14%
Overall	65%	29%	6%

1. Introduction

The 2026 escalation of hostilities in Lebanon generated mass displacement at a national scale and intensified existing protection risks. Following the ceasefire announced on 19 June 2026, large-scale return movements began. As of 9 July 2026, OCHA reports that 732,594 people have returned to their areas of origin, while 430,000 people remain displaced. Of these, 33,343 internally displaced persons, over 53 per cent of them women and girls, remain in 325 collective shelters. The Ministry of Public Health has recorded at least 4,321 deaths and 12,204 injuries due to hostilities since 2 March 2026.

The caseload remaining in collective shelters is therefore both smaller and more vulnerable than at the peak of displacement. Those who remain are disproportionately households without the means, the property, or the security conditions to return: female-headed households, families with members with disabilities, and those

1.1 About ABAAD

ABAAD, Resource Center for Gender Equality, is a Lebanon-based civil society organization working to advance gender equality and protection from gender-based violence. ABAAD combines survivor-centered services, prevention, advocacy, capacity strengthening, and humanitarian action to support safer, more equitable communities.

1.2 Methodology

The audit was conducted by ABAAD social workers deployed to 67 sites across eight governorates. Each site was assessed using a structured observational checklist covering 58 indicators across three sectors: Shelter, WASH, and Distributions. Responses were recorded as compliant (Yes), non-compliant (No), or Not Observed. Qualitative observations in Arabic and English were recorded to provide context for non-compliance. Donor partners supporting the audit included NPA, World Vision (WV), Solidarités International (SI), Diakonia, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), UNHCR, and FCDO.

Limitations

The audit is based on direct observation at a single point in time and reflects conditions at the moment of assessment. Conditions in collective shelters change rapidly, and this report should be read as a baseline snapshot rather than a definitive or static picture. Some indicators could not be assessed due to access or time constraints, hence the 'Not Observed' category. Fieldwork spanned March to July 2026 and therefore straddles the 19 June ceasefire and the subsequent return movements. Sites assessed earlier in the period were observed under peak occupancy; a number have since closed or reduced in population. Findings describe the conditions encountered at the time of each visit and should not be read as a current census of open shelters.

2. Site and Population Profile

2.1 Geographic Coverage

The 67 assessed sites span all eight Lebanese governorates, with the highest concentration in Mount Lebanon (16 sites), Bekaa (15 sites), and Baalbek-El Hermel (12 sites). This round extends coverage to Beirut, which was not represented in the previous assessment.

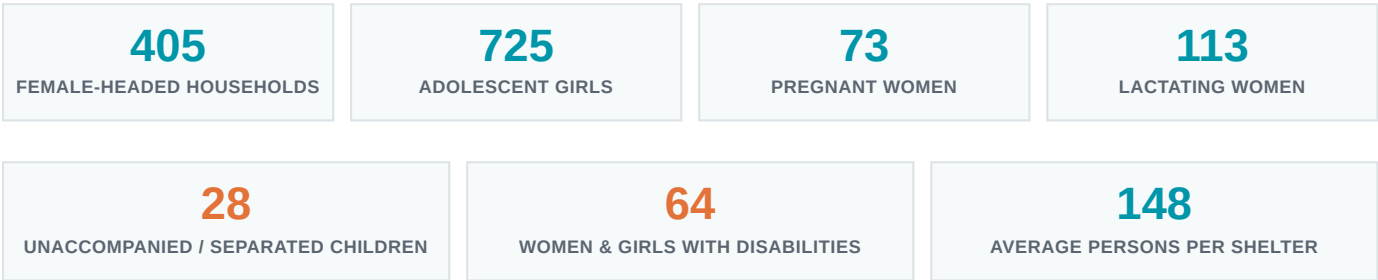
Governorate	Sites	% of Total
Mount Lebanon	16	24%
Bekaa	15	22%
Baalbek-El Hermel	12	18%
Akkar	7	10%
El Nabatieh	7	10%
South	5	7%
North	4	6%
Beirut	1	1%
Total	67	100%

2.3 Population Demographics

The 67 assessed sites host a combined 9,752 displaced persons, with an average of 148 people per shelter. The maximum recorded occupancy at a single site is 640 persons, more than four times the average, reflecting severe overcrowding in the most impacted locations. The minimum recorded occupancy is 21 persons.



The population includes a significant proportion of groups with heightened protection needs:



Context

The presence of 405 female-headed households, 725 adolescent girls, 73 pregnant women, 113 lactating women, 28 unaccompanied or separated children, and 64 women and girls with disabilities within the assessed shelter population underscores the acute importance of gender-responsive programming. These groups face compounded vulnerability in collective shelter settings and require dedicated, specialized measures.

3. Shelter Sector Findings

The shelter sector assessment covered 31 indicators examining physical safety, privacy, space adequacy, access for vulnerable groups, staff conduct, and the availability of protection information. Aggregate shelter compliance stands at 70%, with 25% non-compliance and 5% not observed. The following findings reflect conditions observed across all 67 sites.

3.1 Physical Safety and Infrastructure

Lighting

78% of sites were found to have adequate lighting in shelter areas. However, 14 sites (21%) reported significant lighting deficiencies. Field notes consistently identified irregular electricity supply as the primary driver, with near-total reliance on solar power that suffers from malfunctions, limited operating hours, and frequent maintenance failures. State electricity supply and generator access are severely rationed or entirely absent in some cases.

Particularly concerning is the lighting situation in essential facilities: restrooms, access corridors, and outdoor areas are frequently unlit after dark. This forces residents to resort to unsafe alternatives such as candles and hand torches that create serious safety risks, especially for women and girls accessing sanitation facilities at night. Full lighting on key access routes and at key facilities is confirmed at only 76% of sites.

Door Locks: Critical Gap

Only 49% of sites have functional internal locks on room doors, with an equal 49% assessed as non-compliant. This is one of the most critical findings of the audit. In half of assessed shelters, rooms and sanitation facilities cannot be secured from the inside. Where keys exist, they are frequently held by school administration or site management rather than distributed to residents, effectively denying families the ability to control access to their own living spaces.

Critical Risk



The absence of internal door locks, particularly in sites where unrelated men and women share spaces or corridors, constitutes a direct protection risk. Single women, female-headed households, and unaccompanied children are especially vulnerable. Improvised solutions such as wedging furniture against doors or tying handles with cloth are widely used but wholly inadequate.

Emergency Exits

Emergency exits are clearly marked, accessible, and verified safe in only 49% of assessed sites. In 39% of sites, emergency exits are inadequate or unmarked; 12% could not be assessed. The majority of sites have a single entry and exit point shared for both regular access and emergencies. This represents a life-safety risk for the thousands of persons housed in these facilities, particularly at night when lighting is minimal.

Controlled Access and Movement

Controlled access at the site, including a reception check-in and check-out register, is in place at 72% of sites. Walkways allowing safe movement within the shelter are adequate at 91% of sites; in the remaining six shelters, narrow corridors, poor lighting, and structural barriers such as stairs restrict free movement, pushing residents to rely on courtyards and playgrounds for mobility.

3.2 Privacy and Gender-Sensitive Arrangements

Partition Walls

Internal partition walls between families or between male and female residents are present in only 55% of sites, with 42% non-compliant. In close to half of assessed shelters, there is no structured separation. Families rely on blankets, bed sheets, furniture, and improvised barriers to create minimal privacy. Where multiple, unrelated families share the same room, these improvisations are often the only barrier between sleeping spaces.

Visual Privacy

76% of sites have adequate shelter materials and design to prevent visual intrusion from outside. In the remaining 24% of sites (16 shelters), windows, corridor openings, and doorway glass panels are left exposed, allowing outsiders to see directly into sleeping and living areas. Residents self-manage this gap by covering windows with cloth, towels, newspapers, and paper, makeshift solutions that provide no structural guarantee of privacy.

Separation of Single Women and FHHs

Single women and female-headed households (FHHs) are not assigned to shared sleeping spaces with unrelated men in 79% of sites. However, in 12 sites (18%), field workers observed situations where gender-

3.3 Access for Vulnerable Groups

Access for women (91%), girls (91%), and boys (94%) was rated adequate in the large majority of sites. However, access for persons with disabilities was assessed as adequate in only 60% of sites, with 39% rated non-compliant. Access for older women stands at 79%. The multi-storey structure of most educational facilities, without ramps, elevators, or accessible sanitation on ground floors, creates significant mobility barriers. Elderly persons, pregnant women in advanced stages, and persons with physical disabilities depend entirely on family members or other residents for movement between floors.

Safe access observed for	Compliant	Non-Compliant	Not Obs.
Boys	94%	4%	1%
Women	91%	9%	0%
Girls	91%	9%	0%
Older women	79%	16%	4%
Persons with disabilities	60%	39%	1%

3.4 Staff Conduct and Safeguarding

Staff conduct represents a clear area of strength. Respectful and inclusive behaviour toward all beneficiaries was observed in 99% of sites. Implementing teams respected physical distance with children in 94% of sites and with adolescent beneficiaries in 93%. Shelter activities involving direct contact with female beneficiaries were carried out by a team including a female staff member in 91% of sites; only two shelters lacked female staff leading activities. Distribution of additional plastic sheeting and construction materials for privacy and safety needs, provided free of charge, was observed at only 63% of sites, pointing to a supply gap rather than a conduct gap.

3.5 Protection Information

The absence of protection information materials is one of the most consistent and alarming findings across the entire audit. Across 67 sites:

! PSEA materials visible in only 22% of sites

Survivors and at-risk individuals cannot report abuse or exploitation if they do not know their rights or the channels available to them. The near-absence of Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) materials leaves the overwhelming majority of shelter residents without any visible information about reporting mechanisms.

! GBV awareness materials visible in only 15% of sites

Gender-based violence is a known risk in collective shelter settings, heightened by overcrowding, loss of privacy, and the breakdown of community support structures. Yet fewer than 1 in 6 assessed sites displays any GBV awareness or referral information.

! Disability and inclusion materials visible in only 7% of sites

Persons with disabilities and their caregivers are among the most invisible populations in humanitarian response. The near-total absence of disability-inclusive communication materials at assessed sites reflects a systemic gap in inclusion-responsive programming.

4. WASH Sector Findings

The WASH sector assessment covered 19 indicators examining proximity, privacy, sex-segregation, physical accessibility, menstrual hygiene management (MHM), and protection information at WASH facilities. WASH is the weakest sector in this round, with aggregate compliance of 55%, non-compliance of 40%, and 5% not observed.

4.1 Proximity and Accessibility

85% of sites have water points, latrines, and WASH facilities within the required maximum distance of 50 meters from shelter areas. Easy accessibility of WASH facilities from shelter areas is confirmed at 85% of sites. However, field notes from the remaining sites describe scenarios where functioning toilets are located in distant school yards, on inaccessible upper or lower floors, or shared with adjacent buildings, effectively increasing travel distance and reducing safety, particularly at night. Monitoring of queues at water points by staff is in place at only 67% of sites; in the remainder, queue management is left to residents.

4.2 Sex Segregation and Privacy

Sex-segregated WASH facilities are available at 72% of sites, a critical standard that is unmet in 28% of assessed shelters. In these cases, men and women share the same sanitation facilities, creating acute privacy and dignity concerns. Visual privacy within WASH facilities is adequate at 76% of sites; in the remaining 24%, facilities lack functioning doors, proper screening, or adequate lighting, with some residents resorting to cloth barriers for privacy. Well-demarcated facilities with separate entries for men and women are confirmed at 78% of sites, and adequate lighting at latrines and on the paths to them at 75%.

Latrines can be locked from the inside in 67% of sites. The 31% non-compliance rate mirrors the shelter-level finding on door locks and reflects a systemic gap in basic security infrastructure. Combined with inadequate visual privacy and shared facilities, this creates conditions where women and girls face serious risks when using sanitation at night.

4.3 Menstrual Hygiene Management

Menstrual hygiene materials (MHM supplies) are available and regularly distributed at only 42% of assessed sites, a critically low figure. 57% of sites have no MHM materials available, leaving women and girls to manage menstruation without dignified means in already difficult conditions. Private mechanisms for MHM, including bins in latrines for disposal and private areas for washing or drying clothes, are present in only 54% of sites.

4.4 Disability-Inclusive WASH

WASH facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities in only 52% of assessed sites. The structural barriers identified in the shelter section, such as stairs, multi-storey layouts, and the absence of ramps, are equally present in WASH areas. Special measures to ensure water provision for those with access or mobility difficulties (older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, child-headed households) are in place at only 42% of sites, with 46% non-compliant.

4.5 Protection Information in WASH Areas

As with shelter areas, the presence of protection information in WASH facilities is near-absent:

Aid-is-free information		73%
Complaint mechanism information		40%

5. Distribution Sector Findings

The distribution sector assessment evaluated 9 indicators covering team composition, conduct, safety of access, and the visibility of protection information at distribution points. Aggregate compliance stands at 69%, with 18% non-compliance and a comparatively high 14% not observed, reflecting sites where no distribution took place during the assessment window. Distribution conduct remains a clear area of relative strength, while protection messaging at distribution points remains the weakest element.

5.1 Team Composition and Conduct

90% of distribution activities include female staff on the distribution team, a critical standard for ensuring that women and girls can safely approach distribution points and receive assistance. In the single case where female staff were absent, this was flagged for corrective action.

Staff conduct was assessed as respectful and inclusive towards all beneficiaries in 91% of observations, with zero recorded non-compliance. Assistance was delivered without requesting anything in return (pictures, phone numbers, money) in 90% of assessed activities. In the two cases of non-compliance, residents reported that they were aware the aid should be free, suggesting the issue is not systemic.

5.2 Safe Access and Prioritization

Distribution locations are organized in a way that is safe for women and girls to access in 88% of assessed activities. In two cases, access was restricted: one distribution was held in an uncovered outdoor courtyard that was inaccessible to all residents, and one was described by residents as disorganized and unequal in access. Prioritization of people with special needs (older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women) was observed at 81% of distributions; in three shelters, residents reported that no priority was given.

5.3 NFI Card Issuance

NFI and ration cards are issued in a way that allows women and other at-risk groups to receive them directly in only 51% of cases where this was applicable, with 21% non-compliant and 28% not observed, as no NFI cards were distributed at a number of sites. In the majority of assessed distributions where cards are used, cards and kits are issued to the designated head of household, who is typically male. This practice, while administratively convenient, systematically excludes women, including FHHs, separated women, and women in difficult marital situations, from direct access to essential supplies.

5.4 IEC and PSEA Materials at Distribution Points

Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) banners informing beneficiaries that aid is free and providing PSEA reporting mechanisms are visible at distribution points in only 34% of assessed activities. PSEA and GBV messages in distributed NFI kits are present in only 31% of cases. Functional, visible, and accessible complaint and feedback mechanisms were observed at 63% of distributions. The majority of distribution activities lack any accompanying protection messaging, representing a missed opportunity to reach large numbers of displaced persons with critical rights information.

Distribution indicator	Compliant	Non-Compliant	Not Obs.
Respectful, non-discriminatory delivery	91%	0%	9%
Female workers on distribution team	90%	3%	7%

6. Critical Protection Gaps

The following gaps, based on the audit data, are assessed as the most urgent protection risks requiring immediate action. They are presented in order of severity and reach: the combination of how many people are affected and the severity of the protection risk posed.

1

Functional door locks absent in half of shelters (49% non-compliant)

Functional internal locks for room doors and sanitation facilities are absent in half of assessed shelters. This is the single most widespread and actionable physical protection gap. Residents, particularly single women, FHHs, and those sharing spaces with unrelated persons, cannot secure their living spaces. Improvised solutions such as furniture against doors and tied handles are entirely inadequate. Keys, where they exist, are often controlled by administration rather than residents.

2

Protection information near-absent across all sectors

PSEA materials are visible at only 22% of shelter sites, 16% of WASH areas, and 34% of distribution points. GBV awareness materials reach 15% of shelter sites and 13% of WASH areas. Disability and inclusion materials appear at just 7% of shelter sites and 7% of WASH areas. This near-total absence means the vast majority of displaced persons have no visible information about their rights, available services, or reporting channels, and signals that protection mainstreaming is not consistently integrated into shelter programming.

3

Safe spaces for women and girls absent in 48% of sites

Close to half of assessed sites have no dedicated safe space for women and girls. This eliminates a critical mechanism for confidential case management, GBV service referral, psychosocial support, and dignified distribution of hygiene and dignity items. Overcrowding is the most commonly cited reason, but even low-cost interim solutions (designated room corners with privacy screens, scheduled time-based access to shared rooms) are rarely employed.

4

MHM materials available at only 42% of sites

Menstrual hygiene materials are absent at 57% of assessed sites, with no regular resupply mechanism. Close to half of sites also lack private disposal mechanisms and washing or drying areas. This is not only a dignity issue but a health risk, and disproportionately impacts adolescent girls (725 recorded in the assessed population) who may have had no prior experience managing menstruation in a collective setting.

5

Internal partitions absent in 42% of shelters

Over four in ten shelters have no structured internal division between families or between male and female residents. This means unrelated men and women, and unrelated families, sleep, dress, and conduct daily activities in shared, undivided spaces. Blankets and furniture are the primary coping mechanisms. This represents a fundamental breach of privacy and dignity, and creates ongoing protection risks.

6

Emergency exits inadequate or unmarked in 39% of sites

The majority of assessed shelters rely on a single entry-exit point. Emergency exits are not clearly marked, adequately lit, or verified safe for use at night in 39% of sites, with a further 12% unable to be assessed. For facilities hosting hundreds of persons, many with mobility limitations, this represents a life-safety risk.

Disability-inclusive access failing across shelter and WASH

Safe access for persons with disabilities is adequate at only 60% of shelter sites, WASH facilities are accessible at only

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this audit, ABAAD recommends the following actions, organized by urgency and timeline. These recommendations are addressed to implementing partners, site management authorities, the Shelter Sector, and the Protection Cluster.

7.1 Immediate Actions (Within 4 Weeks)

1. Install and repair functional internal door locks on all room doors and WASH facility doors across the 33 sites assessed as non-compliant. Ensure keys are distributed to and held by the household residing in each room, not only by administration.
2. Conduct an immediate sweep of all 67 sites to post PSEA, GBV, and disability and inclusion awareness materials in both Arabic and English in shelter areas, WASH facilities, and at distribution points. Include reporting hotlines prominently.
3. Develop and implement a standardized Protection Information Package (PIP) to be posted at every collective shelter site and WASH facility, including PSEA hotlines, GBV referral pathways, and disability-inclusive communication in accessible formats.
4. Designate and secure a dedicated safe space for women and girls at every assessed site. Where full rooms are unavailable, work with site management to schedule timed, exclusive access to shared spaces, and install privacy screens.
5. Procure menstrual hygiene kits for distribution at the 38 sites where MHM materials are absent, and establish a monthly resupply schedule in coordination with NFI sector actors.
6. Procure and distribute plastic sheeting, curtains, or partition materials to all sites where internal partitions are absent. Prioritize sites with more than 10 families per shared space.
7. Ensure emergency exits are clearly marked with visible signage and emergency lighting at all 67 assessed sites. Conduct a rapid fire-safety assessment where only one entry and exit point exists.
8. Establish gender-responsive complaint and feedback mechanisms (CFMs) at all sites, with dedicated female staff members responsible for receiving and following up on complaints from women and girls.

7.2 Short-Term Actions (1 to 3 Months)

1. Review NFI card issuance protocols at all active distributions to allow direct issuance to any adult household member, with specific provisions to enable FHHs and separated women to receive cards independently.
2. Install private disposal bins for MHM products in all female WASH facilities. Designate and screen a private area in each site for washing and drying undergarments.
3. Conduct basic accessibility assessments at multi-storey sites and identify interim measures to support persons with disabilities and older residents in accessing WASH facilities and services, including relocation of vulnerable households to ground-floor rooms where feasible.
4. Install ramps, accessible sanitation, and mobility aids at priority sites identified as inaccessible to persons with disabilities and older residents.
5. Establish special water-provision measures (assisted collection, ground-floor water points, dedicated collection times) at the 31 sites where no such measures currently exist.
6. Strengthen access monitoring and site management at all sites to ensure consistent presence, controlled entry and exit, and documented check-in and check-out of residents.
7. Advocate with site management authorities and the DRM Unit to fully utilize underused shelter capacity (locked floors, unused rooms) to reduce overcrowding and enable proper family-based room allocation.
8. Address the electricity and lighting deficit through solar system maintenance and expansion, prioritizing restrooms

8. Conclusion

Lebanon's collective displacement shelters are hosting thousands of vulnerable individuals under conditions that frequently fall short of minimum humanitarian standards. The Gender Audit findings presented in this report reveal a system under extraordinary pressure: understaffed, underfunded, and operating in facilities never designed for habitation.

The 65% overall compliance rate reflects the genuine efforts of implementing partners, social workers, and site management authorities working in extraordinarily difficult circumstances. The strength in distribution practices, including respectful conduct, female staff inclusion, and safe access for women, demonstrates that gender-responsive programming is achievable even in emergency contexts. Shelter sector compliance at 70% shows measurable capacity where standards are clearly defined and resourced.

But the failures documented here, including absent door locks in half of sites, no safe spaces for women in 48% of sites, near-zero protection information across all three sectors, a menstrual hygiene crisis affecting 57% of sites, and a WASH sector compliance rate of just 55%, are not inevitable. They are addressable gaps with known solutions, most of which require coordination and resources, not impossibly complex interventions.

67

SITES AUDITED

9,752

PERSONS REACHED

3,886

OBSERVATIONS

1,109

NON-COMPLIANT FINDINGS

Next Round

ABAAD will repeat this audit on a quarterly basis. The next round will prioritize the WASH sector, disability-inclusive access, and the visibility of protection information, and will track progress against the immediate actions set out in Section 7.1.

ABAAD, Resource Center for Gender Equality

51 Bustani Str., Sector 2, Najjar Bldg, Furn El Chebbak
P.O. Box 50-048 Beirut, Lebanon
+961 1 28 38 20/1 | +961 70 28 38 20
abaad@abaadmena.org | www.abaadmena.org