

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

---

A YEAR OF  
ADAPTATION,  
FLEXIBILITY AND  
INNOVATION



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

01

---

About  
ABAAD

02

---

A word  
from our  
Founder  
and  
Director

03

---

Gender-  
based  
violence  
prevention  
and  
response

06

---

Our  
response  
to multiple  
crises

14

---

Capacity  
building

15

---

Policy and  
advocacy

18

---

Campaigns

21

---

Resources

22

---

Donors and  
partners

# ABOUT ABAAD

---

Founded in 2011, ABAAD – Resource Centre for Gender Equality is a UN ECOSOC-accredited organisation that aims to achieve gender equality as an essential condition to sustainable, social and economic development in the Middle East and North Africa region. The dynamic team is comprised of dedicated activists, lawyers, consultants, social workers, volunteers and researchers, who creatively test new approaches as part of a larger effort to achieve an equitable society, free of hegemonic masculinities and violence against women.

## OUR 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.

## OUR VALUES

Integrity  
Transparency  
Inclusion  
Equality

# A WORD FROM OUR FOUNDER & DIRECTOR

---



**Dear readers, supporters and friends,**

In a year like no other, as the world faced a global pandemic, Lebanon was struggling with overlapping crises. Between the spread of the COVID-19 virus at alarming rates and the devastating explosion in Beirut killing more than 200 people, the situation in Lebanon has pushed tens of thousands people into poverty. With growing financial uncertainties, heightened tensions in households and disruption of life-saving services amidst lockdown, risks of gender-based violence were exacerbated.

ABAAD therefore took unprecedented action to reduce GBV risks nationwide and to alleviate the impacts of these crises. Since the onset of the pandemic, ABAAD developed a plan to ensure continuity of life-saving services while putting the best interest of the people we serve as priority and at the centre of the response. We developed remote internal case management guidelines to provide crisis phone counselling and emergency support services, and updated the policies of ABAAD emergency safe shelters to ensure operation in a COVID-secure way. We expanded to include isolation centres. Additionally, in an effort to push for an enhanced national response to GBV, we worked with various UN agencies and CSOs to present the government with an effective plan to combat domestic abuse amidst lockdown. In the aftermath of the Beirut explosion, our response plan ensured reaching out to the most vulnerable women and girls in the affected areas for specialized GBV follow up. Despite all challenges, more than 17,000 women and girls benefited from these services through ABAAD's Safe Spaces and Emergency Temporary Shelters. While full focus was given to effectively respond to unfolding events at the national level, we continued to bring the voices of women and girls at the global stage. ABAAD was one of the few local organizations to be selected as a co-lead of the United Nations Generation Equality Action Actions Coalition on Gender-Based Violence. Working together with stakeholders from across sectors, ABAAD helped shape a blueprint that will deliver concrete progress towards gender equality and the realization of girls' and women's human rights around the world.

This was a year that tested our resilience, and while we faced many hardships, we continue to learn from these experiences in order to develop better mechanisms and responses. We owe it to the people we serve, to our communities, our country.

*Ghida Anani*



# GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION & RESPONSE

## Emergency Temporary Safe Housing – "Al-Dar"

Located in three different governorates in Lebanon, ABAAD's three Emergency Safe Houses are free and temporary safe shelters for women at risk or survivors of GBV offering:

- Immediate safe-housing (24/7)
- Crisis counselling
- Emergency support and information on legal rights and court representation
- Psychosocial support/ healing through art activities
- Mental Health Care
- Life Skills' building activities enhancing women employability probability post-exit from shelter
- Forensic Medical care/ PEP services for survivors of sexual assault
- Referrals for the provision of welfare, social services, and income assistance, as needed

**152**

single and married women, dependent children and adolescent girls accessed the services of "Al-Dar".



The Chargée d'affaires of the Netherlands in Lebanon, Ambassador Frederique de Man, visits one of ABAAD's shelters

## Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS)

Located at the Social Development Centres (SDCs) of the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs, ABAAD's seven WGSSs provide direct GBV prevention and response services across Lebanon. ABAAD also operates four Family Support Units in different areas of Lebanon that provide holistic care for vulnerable women and girls, as well as men and boys, and offer free, confidential psychological follow-up in men's clinics.



## Men Centre

ABAAD's consistent community outreach through WGSS has led to an increased number of referrals for men to case management and to participate in anger and stress management and in support groups' sessions.

**64**

**men were served by qualified psychotherapists  
from ABAAD Men Centre**

### ABAAD'S MEN CENTER...

Is a safe space. It provides mental health and psychosocial support to men on individual, couple, family and community levels, to dispel singular and patriarchal notions of masculinity and commit to healthy, non-violent and gender equitable masculinities upon which they can model their lives. It aims to promote human rights, gender equality and non-violent behaviours and reinforce positive familial and social relationships by offering sessions to:

- Men seeking change in their lives and behaviours
- Couples facing difficulties in their relationships
- Family members seeking to improve relationships
- Groups through emotional support therapy

# OUR RESPONSE TO MULTIPLE CRISES

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC

### The Figures

In early 2020, we began to see the indirect impacts that COVID-19 is having on the health, economy and wellbeing of people. While everyone is affected by this pandemic, it goes without saying that the impacts are felt by some more than others. Marginalized and vulnerable groups such as refugees, people with disabilities, women, children and those falling below the poverty line are hit the hardest. With domestic and unpaid care responsibilities and as frontline health and social sector responders, women and girls are increasingly exposed to COVID-19. Furthermore, gender-based violence risks at home and public spaces are exacerbated due to self-isolation, misuse of power, heightened tensions, financial uncertainties, and disruption of life-saving services and other pressures.

In order to accurately reflect the reality on the ground and the magnitude of the GBV issue in Lebanon, ABAAD assigned IPSOS to conduct a survey according to which:

**10%**

of men and women, out of a total of 500, have observed an increase in harassment/violence/abuse against women and girls since the COVID-19 outbreak in Lebanon

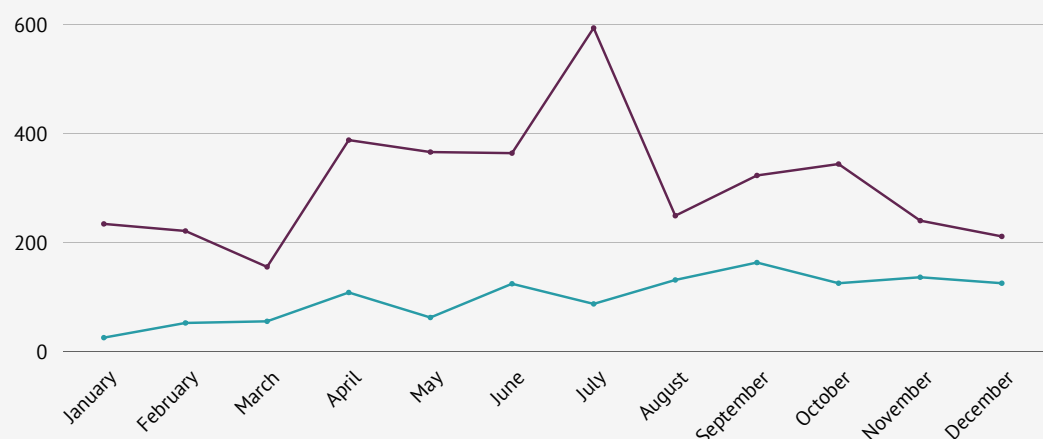
**37%**

of women and girls, out of a total of 250, reported feeling less safe since the COVID-19 lockdown in Lebanon

### A SPIKE IN CALLS TO THE HELPLINE

In 2020, ABAAD received 3,689 calls to its 24/7 helpline compared to 1,193 in all of 2019

**This is an increase of more than 200%**

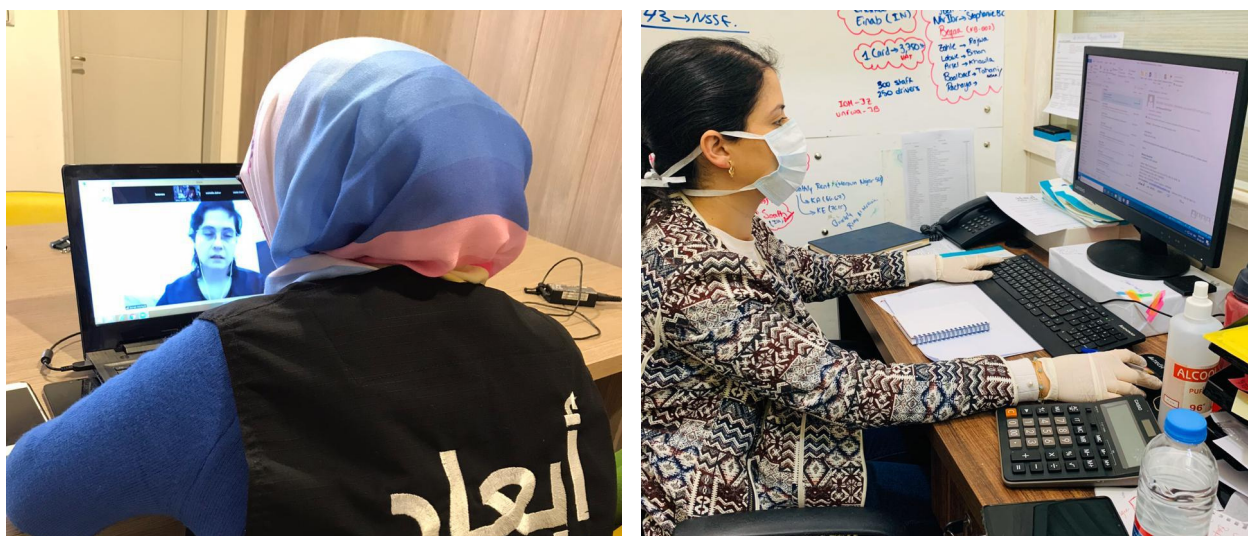




## **The Response**

### **Crisis phone counselling, emergency support services and awareness raising**

ABAAD developed internal case management guidelines to provide crisis phone counselling and emergency support services via phone, and face-to-face for high-risk cases. The specialised team also provided community-based awareness sessions on COVID-19 and psychosocial support sessions via conference calls and Whatsapp groups.



ABAAD Caseworkers providing online awareness and e-counselling sessions

### **Safe sheltering with adapted policies & guidelines**

ABAAD's Emergency Safe Shelters continued to operate amidst lockdown with new guidelines and procedures that ensure the protection of the staff and right holders from the spread of COVID-19.

During the lockdown, I was repetitively abused by my husband and when he started to physically hurt my children, I decided to seek refuge at ABAAD's shelter with the support of my friend. I've been receiving emotional and psychological support. The team is also supporting with how to deal with my youngest child who suffers from Autism

**35-year old mother of four children**

## Distribution of hygiene kits, dignity kits and food parcels

As part of ABAAD's GBV prevention and response during the COVID-19 pandemic, we equipped vulnerable families with materials and knowledge necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and ensured that women have access to appropriate items to support hygiene, health, dignity and well-being. Considering the gendered dimensions of the COVID-19 outbreak, especially in regards to its impact on GBV, the purpose of the distribution was to mitigate the increase of domestic violence in families. In situations of increased stress and vulnerability, as this, it is documented that men release anger towards their family and children. Abusers may withhold money used to obtain necessary items (e.g. hand sanitizer or disinfectants), share misinformation about the pandemic in order to control or frighten survivors, or feel more justified to escalate isolation tactics (in light of the encouraged social distancing measures). Where women are primarily responsible for procuring and cooking food for the family, increasing food insecurity as a result of the crises may place them at heightened risk of intimate partner and other forms of domestic violence due to heightened tensions in the household. The distribution therefore targeted GBV survivors and vulnerable women rightholders from ABAAD centres across the country.



**4,365** women and girls received dignity kits

**1,000** women and girls received sanitary pads

**879** households received COVID-19 hygiene kits

**3,613** households received food kits

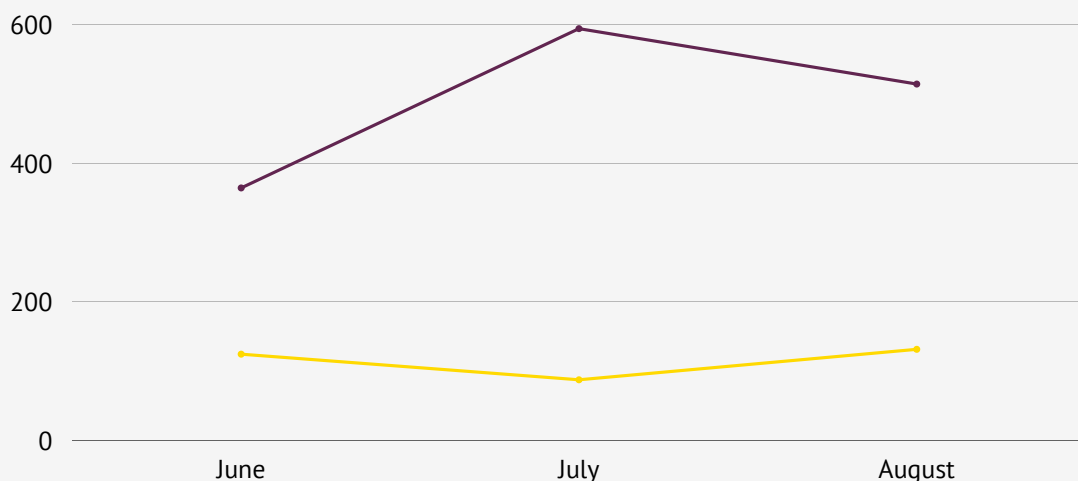
## BEIRUT BLAST

In August 2020, a devastating explosion occurred in Beirut further exacerbating the country's already existing socio-economic crisis. The scale and magnitude of the disaster left hundreds of thousands of people in need of immediate aid including food, shelter, water, fuel, protection, as well as support to rebuild their lives and livelihoods. The people affected also suffered from psychological distress and trauma due to the blast which led to a tragic loss of lives, with many missing and thousands injured, in addition to the damages on properties, homes and businesses. Amidst these multiple crises, ABAAD doubled its efforts, put together a Rapid Disaster Response Plan and identified priorities to help alleviate the impacts of the crisis. We scaled up our specialized services in order to ensure provision of life-saving services to the affected people.



### PUTTING THINGS TO PERSPECTIVE REGARDING THE DRASTIC INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CALLS TO ABAAD HELPLINE

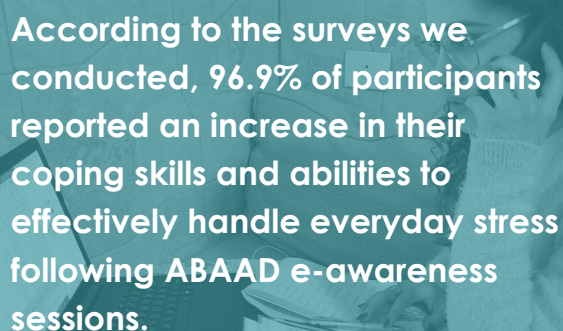
In June, July and August 2020, ABAAD received 1,472 calls to its 24/7 helpline compared to just 342 during the same period in 2019





**In the months of June, July and August combined, ABAAD reached out to 3527 unique rightholders to provide various services, in addition to 664 individuals who continue to benefit from case management (open active cases).**

<b>65</b>	<b>2233</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>15</b>
Capacity Building	E-awareness sessions	E-emotional support group/ E-PSS	E-sensitisation sessions	Community-based groups	Case management	Anger and stress management



**According to the surveys we conducted, 96.9% of participants reported an increase in their coping skills and abilities to effectively handle everyday stress following ABAAD e-awareness sessions.**



**98% of participants reported feeling satisfied with the content provided in the sessions and that the topics covered were relevant to their realities.**

In the aftermath of the devastating explosion in the port of Beirut, ABAAD identified priorities to help alleviate the impacts of the crisis and scale up its specialised services in order to ensure provision of life-saving services to the affected people. In addition to the field centres through which various interventions are provided, ABAAD deployed two emergency response field teams to ensure presence at the heart of the affected area to increase access for rightholders to information and services.

ABAAD launched a dedicated information hotline (24/7) for affected communities to manage urgent requests, such as basic needs (food, hygiene and dignity kits), mental health, protection and GBV services in addition to referrals to other specialised agencies in WASH, shelter and health services.

**900+** **affected individuals were reached by ABAAD field team a month after the Beirut blast**



## **ABAAD's Emergency Appeal**

ABAAD launched an emergency appeal to highlight critical areas of humanitarian interventions to protect the lives of the people who are mostly affected by the Beirut Port explosion and its immediate socio-economic impacts. The appeal brings forward the set of activities required to support people to cope with the impact of the explosion within one coherent frame, and is designed to advance activities from joint work plans and a common budgetary framework.

**Read our Rapid Disaster Response Plan [here](#)**



**ABAAD thanks its partners and donors who continued to generously support our programs and interventions amidst the difficult times in Lebanon.**



**UN Women Lebanon** ✓  
@unwomenlebanon

'The support provided by @UN\_Women via @CAREGlobal & @AbaadMENA is another light in the darkness of a tunnel. These women represent the magnitude of suffering and despair. We have to address their demands and assist them as they are the future of 🇱🇧' @rochdi\_najat #BeirutExplosion



Lydia Canaan and 4 others

4:07 PM · Oct 2, 2020 · Twitter Web App

14 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 42 Likes

# STORIES FROM THE FIELD

## Emergency Cash Assistance Program Reopens a Small Women-led Business after the Beirut Blast

The neighborhood of Basta al-Tahta was among the areas heavily affected by the Beirut Port explosion. In this popular area bursting with life despite the August 4th trauma, Sahar Dbouk continues operating her mini-market shop and bakery, which keeps busy with customers all day long

Sahar is fifty years old and lives with her family and five children in Basta al-Tahta, where she also grew up. Everyone who lives in that area describes Sahar as a "Busy Bee". For over twenty years, she has managed her small shop, which supported her family's expenses and children tuition fees. On the day of the disastrous explosion, her business was almost entirely destroyed.



With the support of ABAAD as part of the Emergency Cash Assistance Program funded by NCA, Sahar was able to reopen her shop and to repair the doors, windows and furniture including the oven and shelves, in addition to purchasing new merchandise. A confident and strong woman, Sahar is now able to pursue her business. Her two daughters also work with her at the bakery. She has many dreams for the future, such as establishing an education center for people with learning difficulties and special needs. "With the help and support of organizations such as ABAAD, I was able to receive psychological, social and financial support. I advise every woman and girl, at any age, whether in her work or in her personal life, to never give up on her goals and to turn every challenge into an opportunity to reach her dreams", she said.

# STORIES FROM THE FIELD

## NCA and ABAAD Support a School's Library

After the Beirut Port explosion on the 4th of August, many suburbs around it were heavily damaged, with broken facades of houses, shops and schools, and shattered glass covering the streets.

Zoqaq al-Blat, a popular neighborhood overlooking the Port was highly impacted. In particular, the Lebanese Green School, affiliated to the Arab Institute founded in 1958, was greatly destroyed leaving its employees and students shocked and concerned about the future of them and their school. Hiam Yateem, the Supervisor and Educational Director of the school, explains: "We were left by ourselves. ABAAD were the first to contact us and provided much needed psychological support to alleviate the impact of the great disaster on us. Through the money provided by the organization's emergency response program with funding from NCA, we were also able to replace the portal of the library that was destroyed".

Adjacent to the Green Lebanon School, the schools' library which belongs to the Arab Institute, used to supply the neighborhood with books and school supplies. The library's employees include Samar, a mother whose salary supports her family of five children, one of whom suffers from a mental disorder. The money provided by the project allowed her activity at the library to resume. We were able to fix the windows and to repair the broken material inside the shop. Despite the situation, Samar is thankful that the library was able to reopen with the least possible losses.





# CAPACITY BUILDING

In light of the increase in the number of domestic abuse cases amidst lockdown, ABAAD provided Training of Trainers to officers from the Internal Security Forces (ISF) on how to respond to GBV survivors, in person and through the helpline.



**875+**

participants from other agencies received trainings from ABAAD on PSS, Masculinities, PSEA, Gender and GBV Core Concepts, GBV Prevention and Response among others...

# POLICY & ADVOCACY

---

## The demand for a gendered disaster response in Lebanon

In the aftermath of the Beirut blast, ABAAD joined its voice to feminist activists and women's rights organizations in Lebanon to demand a gendered disaster response plan. A charter of demands was signed by more than 40 entities, demanding:

- A gender assessment of needs and priorities
- Women's representation, leadership, and inclusion
- Food security, shelter and sustainable livelihoods
- Prevention and response to violence against women and girls
- Access to health services and sexual and reproductive health rights



## ABAAD was one of the few local organizations selected as co-lead of the United Nations Generation Equality Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence

Action Coalitions are global, innovative, multi-stakeholder partnerships that are mobilizing governments, civil society, international organizations, and the private sector to:

- catalyze collective action
- spark global and local conversations among generations,
- drive increased public & private investment,
- deliver concrete, game-changing results for girls and women.

The 65 initial leaders of the Action Coalitions represent Member States, diverse feminist and women's rights organizations, youth-led organizations, philanthropic entities, UN agencies and other international organizations. The Action Coalitions' leaders were selected by the Generation Equality Forum Core Group, which includes France, Mexico, Civil Society and UN Women. Five criteria were followed to select the leaders, including evidence of leaders' commitment and past record of achievement in the respective Action Coalitions' themes.

Amidst the increase of GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic, the 15 leaders of the Action Coalition for Gender-Based Violence issued a strong statement, and outlined steps needed to immediately respond with targeted and effective actions.

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ACTION COALITION



Photo: UN Women/Mahmudul Karim

We can make 2021 a landmark year for gender equality. But only if we all

**#ACTFOREQUAL**

Join us on social and

**SPREAD THE CALL**



Men being part of the problem, they cannot be excluded from the solution.

**Ghida Anani**

FOUNDER AND MANAGER OF ABAAD -  
RESOURCE CENTRE FOR GENDER EQUALITY



As **co-lead** of the Generation Equality Action Coalition on GBV, ABAAD took part in a high-level meeting convened by UN Women, on the margins of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, with the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Member States, UN agencies, activists, the private sector and philanthropies.

## Shedding light globally on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on GBV and relevant considerations in its humanitarian response

In 2020, ABAAD continued to serve as co-chair of the NGO Working Group of Call to Action, a multi-stakeholder initiative launched in 2013 to fundamentally transform the way GBV is addressed in humanitarian emergencies. A statement was issued by the Call to Action on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on GBV and relevant considerations in its humanitarian response.

**CALL TO ACTION** on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies

JOINT STATEMENT ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE & COVID-19

## Arab Regional Review of Beijing+25 in Amman

ABAAD took part in the high-level conference on progress made in the implementation of Beijing after 25 Years, hosted by UN ESCWA, UN Women, the League of Arab States and the Arab Women Organization. The outcome of this conference would feed into the global review taking place during CSW64 in March 2020.



## National Technical Policy Consultations on SRHR in Lebanon

ABAAD, in partnership with the Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center of the American University of Beirut, launched the National Technical Policy Consultation on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Lebanon. Representatives of all concerned ministries, UN agencies, INGOs and local NGOs working in the field discussed evidence-based international recommendations from the Guttmacher-Lancet Commission Report (2018) and explored ways to contextualize them to respond to the local SRHR issue.



## Global Consultation on Child Marriage in Humanitarian Settings

This conference highlighted the need for programming guidance and tools on how to address marriage in the humanitarian-development continuum. It allowed participants to map a way forward for integrating actions to prevent and respond to child marriage in humanitarian settings, in close collaboration with global partners.



## Turning #MeToo Into Law

ABAAD, Global 16 Days Campaign, Human Rights Watch, International Domestic Workers Federation and International Trade Union Confederation brought together speakers from around the world to address the legal advances of C190 in the context of global #MeToo movements, the Covid-19 pandemic, and economic recession. The conversation highlighted concrete examples of national campaigns, successes, and challenges, and how national organizations are using the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention to leverage lasting change.



WEBINAR | MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16  
Turning #MeToo Into Law: Using C190 and National Law Reform to End Gender-Based Violence at Work



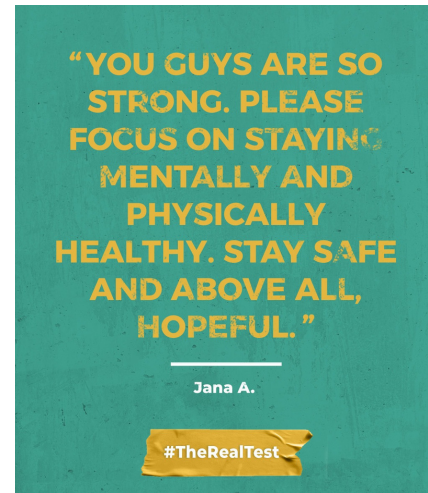
# CAMPAIGNS

## The Real Test

During the first months of the pandemic, ABAAD in partnership with the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), the World Health Organization (WHO), UNDP, and UNICEF launched a public awareness campaign as part of the MOPH National Mental Health Programme.

'The Real Test' campaign aimed to support the population affected by the Covid-19 crisis with this message fighting social stigma: "The real test is not to turn fear for our health into fear of each other".

These messages of hope were developed into a video and visuals broadcasted on major local TV stations, newspapers and online outlets. In addition, the campaign was relayed massively on social media and endorsed by celebrities and influencers on their accounts, reaching a total number of 55 million impressions. The campaign was coupled with e-awareness workshops conducted by ABAAD to raise awareness on safety measures to prevent the spread of the virus.



#TheRealTest Campaign Billboard

[Full press release](#)



## Lockdown not lockup

In April 2020, Lebanon had entered total lockdown. In view of the increasing reports on domestic violence while victims were locked at home with their perpetrators, ABAAD launched its 'Lockdown Not Lockup' public awareness campaign, claiming: "Together we stop violence against women inside their homes". The activation included spreading a call to share the ABAAD Hotline number from balconies on April 16, which was followed massively across the country, with many municipalities joining the fight. In addition, a series of camouflage videos with journalists, influencers and celebrities were also released on TV stations and on their social media accounts increasing the spread of the hotline number, embedded in subtitles or tutorials. The immediate effects were to encourage victims of abuse to report domestic violence and seek assistance, raising the number of calls received by ABAAD to be multiplied by five in the weeks following the campaign compared to previous months' average. The campaign generated important media coverage and publications in hundreds of local, regional, and international media outlets on TVs, radio, newspapers, and online portals, and was broadly shared on all social media platforms. With over 693 million impressions it widely raised public awareness on GBV in times of the pandemic.

**Hundreds of people took part in ABAAD's initiative across Lebanon, sharing messages of hope and telling women that they don't have to suffer in silence.**



## Safety for Safekeepers

On the occasion of the international 16 Days of Activism to end violence against women and girls, ABAAD launched its campaign "Safety for Safekeepers" in November 2020. It highlighted how women create safe spaces, build a safe country, yet don't feel safe in their own country. GBV, especially in the form of sexual harassment and abuse, remains a major issue for every woman in Lebanon. They face this threat every day in both public and private arenas: in the workplace, on the streets, and even sometimes in their own home.

The first phase of the campaign included releasing a video and a virtual exhibition of portraits featuring 16 heroic women who played key roles in the past year providing safety to others. The campaign received excellent feedback and was widely shared across national TVs and by celebrities, activists and journalists on social platforms. In a second phase, content by Lebanese influencer, Remie Akl, was broadcasted on social media and created a viral phenomenon with a record engagement rate from viewers (likes, comments, and shares). It created a massive conversation and debate in particular in the MENA region and beyond (it was translated in over 9 languages), which amplified its message to end GBV among an international audience of viewers. The 'Safety for Safekeepers' overall campaign reached 26 million views and 262 million impressions.

**In the month following the campaign, Lebanon's Parliament endorsed the landmark Law criminalizing sexual harassment, also amending a controversial domestic violence law.**



# RESOURCES

The Pilot of Program  
P-ECD in Lebanon:  
Evaluation Results and Lessons Learned



## The Pilot of Program P-ECD in Lebanon: Evaluation Results and Lessons Learned

Promundo and ABAAD, funded by UN Women and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, led an effort to pilot Program P-ECD among Lebanese and Syrian couples in Lebanon. Program P-ECD is a gender-transformative curriculum that engages men and their partners in nonviolent, equitable parenting for early childhood development (ECD).



## Joint Assessment: Impact of COVID-19 on the SGBV Situation in Lebanon

This joint rapid assessment by UN Women, UNHCR, UNICEF, ABAAD, CARE, DRC, IRC and Intersos, assesses the gendered impact of COVID-19 on women and girls as well as their access to sexual and gender-based violence services in Lebanon.



## A Rapid Gender Analysis of the August 2020 Beirut Port Explosion: an Intersectional Examination

This joint rapid gender analysis (RGA) of the Beirut port explosion by UN Women, CARE, UN ESCWA, ABAAD and UNFPA assesses how diverse women, men, girls, boys, and gender minorities were affected by the events of August 4, with a close look at the specific impact on older, disabled, refugee, migrant, and LBQT (lesbian, bisexual, queer, and trans) women.



**ABAAD recognizes the importance of publishing content related to GBV in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic to spread knowledge and share best practices with CSOs working in the same field. We have therefore made all our adapted guidelines and toolkits available on our website and the team is regularly updating the list.**



# FUNDING

---



## Available Funds for 2020

10,625,858.42 USD



## Expenditures

8,344,572.71 USD

Core burn project

**78.53%**



## Expenditures

8,344,572.71 USD

# DONORS & PARTNERS



Thank you all for your partnership and valuable support.  
We Couldn't have done it without you.

*The ABAAD Team*

Website: [www.abaadmene.org](http://www.abaadmene.org)  
Email: [abaad@abaadmene.org](mailto:abaad@abaadmene.org)  
Tel: +961 1 28 38 20/1



/ABAADMENA