
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN LEBANON

Impact evaluation of the project 'Women's access to justice in the Middle East and North Africa region'

Effectiveness Review Series

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Oxfam GB's Global Performance Framework is part of the organisation's effort to better understand and communicate its effectiveness, as well as enhance learning across the organisation. Under this Framework, a small number of completed or mature projects are selected at random each year for an evaluation of their impact, known as an 'Effectiveness Review'. One key focus is on the extent to which they have promoted change in relation to relevant Oxfam GB global outcome indicators.

During the 2014/15 financial year, one of the projects randomly selected for an Effectiveness Review was the project 'Women's Access to Justice in the MENA region'. The project was funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) with a budget of US\$1.3 million, and was implemented in three countries: Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq. Phase I of the project started in May 2011 and finished with no-cost extension in July 2014. Phase II of the project is scheduled to operate from December 2014 to December 2017

The focus of this Effectiveness Review is on the Lebanon project component only. The project worked at four levels of intervention: individual, community, institutional, and policy. The key activities conducted at each level can be summarised as follows:

Individual level

- The organisation of awareness-raising sessions (ARS) through the training of 50 women from six different NGOs, 13 of whom became paralegals and started offering ARSs.
- The provision of free consultation to women who decided to bring their case to court. This service has been promoted during the awareness-raising sessions and through the media (TV, radio, and social media).

Community level

- The provision of awareness-raising sessions to community leaders who were viewed as potential actors for change. These community leaders included: members of political parties, religious leaders, and municipal employers.
- The establishment of a men's forum with 10 men who were trained and engaged in raising awareness.

Institutional level

The project worked with the Beirut Bar Association and religious court, in order to raise awareness around women's right among lawyers and judges. This intervention aimed to create a better environment that women could more easily have access to.

The activities for this project started in May 2011, but work with community leaders and court officials was intensified from January 2013 onwards. They originally started in El Metn and then spread to all Mount Lebanon region.

EVALUATION APPROACH

This Effectiveness Review used a quasi-experimental evaluation design to assess the impact of project activities implemented at individual and community level on women's empowerment. Oxfam recognises women's empowerment to be a complex, multi-dimensional concept. While not arguing for a standard set of women's empowerment characteristics that are applicable to all contexts, Oxfam has developed a multi-

dimensional index to support measurement of this hard to measure area that sets out 5 dimensions of women's empowerment that the organisation considers to be important in all contexts. Recognising the importance of context, however, each effectiveness review begins by identifying a set of characteristics under these 5 dimensions that are considered to be important to the particular context of the project that has been selected, even if not all are necessarily directly linked to the project activities.

The review was carried out in El Metn (where a sample of project beneficiaries was selected) and in the three regions of Deir El Ahmar, Zahle and Marjeyoun where women in the comparison group were selected. The sample of project participants included 225 women, whereas the sample from the comparison communities included 450 women. The statistical method of propensity-score matching was used to control for baseline differences between the households in the project and comparison communities, to increase confidence when making estimates of the project's impact.

RESULTS

Survey results provide compelling evidence that the project has been successful in improving women's empowerment overall. When looking at the level of change underlying the index, the evidence gathered suggests that the project is being successful in changing empowerment at environment level and personal level. In particular the dimensions of '*power from within*', which look at personal self-confidence as psychological strength, and '*power to*', which measures women's ability to exercise the agency and carry out the action have been positively affected by the project intervention.

This evaluation looked at women's empowerment in dimensions of power and level of change. It found evidence of change attributable to the project in the dimension of *Power from within*, which measures changes in which a woman sees and perceives herself and other women in the society. The project had a positive impact on attitudes and beliefs concerning gender rights, acceptability of gender-based violence, and recognition of care. Quite surprisingly, the evaluation also found very high levels of knowledge around justice systems for both the intervention and comparison groups, not identifying differences between the two groups. There is also no evidence suggesting improved self-esteem and self-confidence as a result of the project, as these were not intended to be affected by it.

The project was found also to have a positive impact on the dimension of *Power to*, which captures a woman's ability to exercise agency and carry out the action. In particular, there is evidence of improved personal autonomy. The evaluation found no evidence of higher willingness to take legal action among women who participated in the project. However, it should be noted that these values are particularly high for both the intervention and comparison groups.

Limited evidence was found around changes in the relations within the women's networks. The relational level includes the dimension of *Power with*, which recognises that empowerment is a collective process that requires the support and interaction of other peers and the organisation, and the dimension of *Power over*, which represents changes taking place in the power relationship between individuals.

The evaluation found evidence that the project was successful in improving women's social capital. It also explored the perception of attitudes and beliefs of the persons close to the women interviewed, in particular men and community leaders. While community leaders' attitudes are not different between intervention and comparison groups, estimates suggest that men in the comparison group are more supportive of women than men in the intervention group. This could be interpreted as a failure of the project. Alternatively, it could be due to differences in perception amongst interviewees of what it means for a man to be supportive.

The evaluation also explored indicators looking at women’s involvement in household decision-making; control over household assets; independent income; and experience of violence. The project did not intend to impact directly any of these indicators, but these have been investigated because they are recognised to be important indicators for women’s empowerment in the context under analysis. It came to no surprise to find no evidence of change attributable in any of these areas.

Characteristics of women’s empowerment examined in this Effectiveness Review

| Level | Dimension | Characteristic | Linked to project theory | Evidence of impact | Comments | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---|--|
| Personal | <i>Power from within</i> | Self-esteem | No | No | The project had a positive impact on attitudes and beliefs concerning gender rights, acceptability of gender based violence, and recognition of care. There is no evidence suggesting improved self-esteem and self-confidence as a result of the project. Impact on knowledge remains unclear. | |
| | | Self-confidence | No | No | | |
| | | Individual capability (knowledge) | Yes | Not clear | | |
| | | Women’s opinions (attitude beliefs): | | | | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women’s economic role Gender rights Acceptability GBV Recognition of care | No | No | | |
| | <i>Power to</i> | Individual capability (apply knowledge) | Yes | No | There is some evidence of improved personal autonomy. Willingness to take legal action is extremely high both among intervention and comparison group. | |
| | | Personal autonomy (meetings) | Yes | Yes | | |
| | | Personal autonomy (VAW) | Yes | No | | |
| | Relational | | Social capital | Yes | Yes | The project was successful in improving woman’s social capital. The evaluation investigated attitudes toward community leaders and men. While attitudes towards community leaders are not different between intervention and comparison group, estimates are suggesting that men in the comparison group were more supportive than men in the intervention group. This could be interpreted as a failure of the project. Alternatively, it could be due to differences in perception amongst interviewees of what it means for a man to be supportive. |
| | | | Participation in community groups | No | No | |
| Political participation | | | No | No | | |
| <i>Power with</i> | | Attitudes and beliefs of the persons close to the woman: | | Yes | Yes | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men’s support on women’s right Community leaders support to encourage women’s access to court | Yes | No | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | <i>Power over</i> | Involvement in household decision- | No | No | The project did not intend to impact directly any of | |

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--|-----|----------------|--|
| | making | | | these indicators; it therefore came to no surprise to find no evidence of change attributable in any of these areas. |
| | Independent income | No | No | |
| | Influence over decisions and use of household strategic assets | No | No | |
| | Experience of GBV | No | No | |
| Environmental | Accessibility of legal services | Yes | Yes | The project increased accessibility to legal services and decreased the emotional costs involved in filing a case. |
| | Quality of legal services | Yes | To some extent | |

Finally, the evaluation investigated changes taking place in the broader environment, and found evidence that the project activities have had a positive impact on both accessibility and quality of legal services for the women involved in the project. Firstly, the evaluation found evidence that the project has increased accessibility to legal services, with more women being aware of free legal services if needed. Secondly, there is evidence that the project has decreased the emotional costs involved in filing a case, and increased the belief among women that going to court can help in solving problems.

LEARNING CONSIDERATIONS

Some important lessons have emerged from the evaluation that can be applied to other projects of this type in Lebanon and elsewhere. The programme team are encouraged to consider in particular the following:

Link more explicitly women’s access to justice with gender rights

This evaluation has raised questions on how projects focused on women’s access to justice (and legal rights) should also include broader women’s rights components. Despite not being directly linked with the original theory of change of the project, the evaluation identified positive and significant impacts on indicators measuring attitude and beliefs with regard to women’s rights. It is therefore advisable for future programmes on women’s access to justice to articulate how they will promote other aspects of women’s rights within their interventions, making it explicit in the theory of change.

Identifying the right balance between intervention at community level, advocacy and citizens’ movements

Results from this evaluation identified that women’s perception of whether men are supporting women is statistically different between project participants and the control group.

In order to be more effective in achieving sustainable change the programme team recognises the necessity of working not only directly with individual women and key stakeholders (like judges), but also supporting wider citizens’ movements demanding improved institutions and equal access to justice.

The evaluation therefore suggests looking to find the right balance between interventions with individuals at the personal community level, advocacy, and the creation of broader citizens’ movements for change.

Investigate further the high levels of understanding around women's access to justice

The evaluation identified high levels of juridical knowledge, and willingness to file a lawsuit if needed, in both the intervention and comparison groups with no statistically significant difference between the two groups.

These findings do not necessarily mean a failure of the project as number of internal and external factors have been identified as possible influencing factors on this indicator (for example, advocacy with the national Maronite court, TV advertisements). Unfortunately, despite having the monitoring system in place – which included a baseline and endline – the quality of data did not provide sufficient information to track or understand adequately this change.

Given the high levels of knowledge in both groups, the programme team is encouraged to explore if lack of knowledge still represents an impediment to accessing justice, and to consider greater investment in the other factors impeding women's access to justice.

Invest in improvements to the monitoring and evaluation system

Despite having a monitoring and evaluation system in place, the programme team is encouraged to promote a more robust monitoring system, particularly at outcome level, which allows the collection of indicators for improving: targeting, project implementation, and influencing.

Collecting and analysing the socio-economic characteristics of women accessing legal services could provide useful information for improving future targeting. For example, monitoring data on geographical and socio-economic characteristics could be used to target women for future interventions. Similarly, collecting and analysing information on legal cases can support project implementation by providing useful learning on the determinants of success and failure of legal cases in court. Both sources of information can also be used to raise awareness with campaigns and influencing activities on the problems in the legal system.

This monitoring system should be designed and implemented recognising the sensitivity of the data involved, particularly considering the risk involved in exposing women in a vulnerable situation.

1 INTRODUCTION

Oxfam GB's Global Performance Framework is part of the organisation's effort to better understand and communicate its effectiveness, as well as enhance learning across the organisation. Under this Framework, a small number of completed or mature projects are selected at random each year for an evaluation of their impact, known as an 'Effectiveness Review'. One key focus is on the extent they have promoted change in relation to relevant Oxfam GB global outcome indicators.

During the 2014/15 financial year, one of the projects that was randomly selected for an Effectiveness Review was the project 'Women's Access to Justice in the Middle East and North African (MENA) Region'. This project was carried out by Oxfam in partnership with the SIDA, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, in three countries: Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. It started in May 2011 and finished with no-cost extension in July 2014.

For this Effectiveness Review we will focus on the project component in Lebanon only, where the activities were implemented from January 2013 onwards. They originally started in El Metn and then spread to all the Mount Lebanon region.

The key activities of this project were to contribute to improving the status and lives of women and girls in the Mena region. The project aimed to do this by improving the quality of legal services for poor and vulnerable women in the Middle East and North Africa. This Effectiveness Review, for which fieldwork was carried out in December 2014, was aimed at evaluating the success of this project in enabling women's access to the legal system by means of a four-pronged intervention, at the individual, community, institutional and policy level.

This report presents the findings of the Effectiveness Review. Section 2 briefly reviews the activities and the intervention logic of the project. Section 3 describes the evaluation design used, and section 4 describes how this design was implemented. Section 5 presents the results of the data analysis, based on the comparison of outcome measures between the intervention and comparison groups. Section 6 concludes with a summary of the findings and some considerations for future learning.

Figure 1.1: Map of Lebanon



2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project under review aimed to enhance women's access to justice in the Middle East and North Africa region. The programme encompassed individual projects in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen, together with a regional component focusing on civil society networking and policy and advocacy with regional institutions.

Women's access to justice in the MENA region remains poor due to:

1. low levels of legal literacy
2. cultural attitudes that dissuade women from filing complaints in court
3. the patriarchal leanings of many male police officers, judges and lawyers. Given the social discrimination experienced by women, they hesitate to approach male lawyers, particularly for issues such as abuse or rape.

More broadly, for women to access justice, for instance to get a divorce, to claim their rights to land, or to challenge sexual harassment at work, requires a functioning justice system that responds to women's rights. Vulnerable people most in need of legal aid

and protection, such as victims of domestic violence, forced marriage, or abandonment, are unable to find the legal guidance to protect them. In the absence of access to justice, vulnerable women are unable to exercise their rights, have their voice heard, challenge discriminatory practices, hold decision-makers accountable, or be protected from violence.

Across the region, personal status laws are widely seen as one of the primary sources of discrimination against women in legislation and practice. In Lebanon, for example, systematic bias is reflected in discriminatory provisions of the multiple personal status laws that apply to citizens based on their religion. The penal codes in most Arab countries also treat women and men differently, particularly with regard to provisions related to honour crimes, rape, and adultery.

Poor women living in Lebanon lack legal knowledge and awareness. In particular, women abandoned by their husbands, left without child alimony or having been physically and sexually abused, are not aware of legal measures that protect their rights and are unable to access services in cases of rights violation. The fact that literacy is a prerequisite to initiating legal proceedings in many countries is particularly disadvantageous to uneducated females.

This Effectiveness Review focuses on the Lebanon component of the project, which took place from January 2013 to July 2014. The project is working on four levels of intervention: individual, community, institutional, and policy.

At **individual level** it is working under the assumption that:

- Women do not have knowledge of their rights. Personal Status Law (PSL).

In order to address this point the project organised awareness-raising sessions (ARSs) aiming to reach more than 2,000 women. It trained 50 women from six different NGOs. Of these, 13 became paralegals and started giving ARSs themselves. It started in Metn, and then all of Mount Lebanon. During the ARSs a booklet and brochure with a simplified version of the PSL was also distributed. The beneficiaries of these activities were mainly Christian Maronites, and represented women coming from a mixed socio-economic background characterised by having familiar problems.

- Women that intend to undertake a legal case do not have money to bring the case to court.

In order to address this problem the project provided lawyers free of charge. Two lawyers working on the project provided free consultation to women who decided to bring their case to court. More than 700 legal consultations and 127 legal representations have been presented to court.

At **community level** the project recognised the following problem:

- There is limited social support from local leaders for women that intend to undertake a legal case into the court

To address this issue the project identified community leaders as actors of change, including: members of political parties, religious leaders, and municipal employers. The project targeted approximately 400 community leaders (of whom roughly 250 were religious leaders) to receive awareness-raising sessions under the assumption that it would improve women's legal rights awareness and the participants would go on to advocate for women's justice and rights.

The project also established a forum with 10 men who were trained and engaged in raising awareness through billboards and television spots on local TV stations such as Charity TV and Tele Lumiere.

At ***institutional level*** the project identified three problems:

- No pro bono support from lawyers for PSL cases
- Court fees
- Discrimination from the court

The project worked with the Beirut Bar Association in order to raise awareness around women's right among lawyers and judges. This intervention aimed to create a better environment for women to access to the judicial system.

3 EVALUATION DESIGN

The central problem in evaluating the impact of any project or programme is how to compare the outcomes that result from that project with *what would have been the case* without that project having been carried out. In the case of this Effectiveness Review, information about the situation of women in the project communities was collected through an individual questionnaire – but clearly it was not possible to know what their situation would have been had the project activities not been carried out. In any evaluation, that 'counterfactual' situation cannot be directly observed: it can only be estimated.

In the evaluation of programmes that involve a large number of units (whether individuals, households, or communities), common practice in order to estimate impact is to make a comparison between units that were subject to the programme and those that were not. As long as the two groups can be assumed to be similar in all respects except for the implementation of the specific project, observing the situation of those where the project was not implemented can provide a good estimate of the counterfactual.

An ideal approach to an evaluation such as this is to select the sites in which the programme will be implemented at random. Random selection minimises the probability of there being systematic differences between the project participants and non-participants, and so maximises the confidence that any differences in outcomes are due to the effects of the project.

In the case of the project examined in this Effectiveness Review, the project implemented its activities at the individual, community, and institutional level. The activities were implemented in the region of El Metn, a neighbouring region of Beirut, mainly populated by Christian Maronites. In order to identify differences that are attributable to the project alone the evaluation had to identify regions that share similar socio-economic characteristics, but that did not receive the project set of interventions. This set up allowed the use of a 'quasi-experimental' evaluation design, in which the experience of women in the non-project areas was assumed to mimic a reasonable counterfactual for the experience of women in the project areas. Section 4 will provide a detailed explanation of the criteria and the selection process of the respondents for this evaluation. Oxfam has developed a multi-dimensional index to support measurement of women's empowerment. This approach is discussed in more detail in Section 5.

Women in project areas were 'matched' with women with similar characteristics in non-project (or 'comparison') areas. The matching of the groups was performed on the basis of a variety of characteristics – including number of groups in which the woman was active, proportion of personal contribution to household income, religion, marital status, self-reported quality of the relationship with the husband, age, education, number of children, and other socio-economic characteristics. Since some of these characteristics may have been affected by the project itself, the group matching was

carried out on the value of these indicators *before* the implementation of the project. Baseline data were not available, therefore survey respondents were asked to recall some basic information about their household's situation in 2011, before the project was implemented. Although recall data are unlikely to be completely accurate, they should not bias significantly the estimates as long as measurement errors due to the recall data are not significantly different between respondents in the intervention and in the comparison groups.

The survey data provided a large number of baseline household characteristics on which matching could be carried out. One practical problem is that it would be very difficult to find households in the comparison regions that correspond exactly in all these characteristics to households in the project region. Instead, these characteristics were used to calculate a 'propensity score', the conditional probability of the household being in an intervention community, given particular background variables or observable characteristics. Households in the project and comparison communities were then matched based on their having propensity scores within certain ranges. Tests were carried out after matching to assess whether the distributions of each baseline characteristic were similar between the two groups. Technical details on this approach are described in Appendix 2.

As a check on the results derived from the propensity-score matching process, results were also estimated using alternative matching procedures as well as other multivariate regression models. Appendix 3 is providing these estimates, and notes will be provided if estimates in the main body are different from the estimates in the robustness checks.

It should be noted that both propensity-score matching and multivariate regression rely on the assumption that the 'observed' characteristics (those that are collected in the survey and controlled for in the analysis) capture all of the relevant differences between the two groups. If there are 'unobserved' differences between the groups, then estimates of outcomes derived from them may be misleading. This is a cause for particular caution when evaluating a project in which participants were to some extent self-selected. The evaluation design and the selection of respondents were intended to minimise any potential for unobserved differences, but this possibility cannot be excluded and must be borne in mind when interpreting the results.

4 DATA

4.1 SAMPLING INTERVENTION AND COMPARISON COMMUNITIES

The first stage in identifying an appropriate comparison group for a quasi-experimental evaluation is to understand the process by which participants were selected. The project started in January 2013 conducting project activities in the EI Metn region of Lebanon. Communities were involved in project activities using awareness-raising meetings in order to promote legal services. Often these activities were implemented by contacting local authorities using already existing social networks. One characteristic of these communities is that the vast majority of them are Christian Maronite.

In order to provide a valid comparison group the evaluation had to identify communities with similar characteristics and within those communities identify a pre-existing network of women from which to draw a valid sample. The evaluation identified the communities of Marjeyoun, Zahle and Deir El Ahmar to be mainly populated by Christian Maronites. Within those communities, contacts were established with local authorities (mainly

archbishops) in order to gain access to informal existing networks of women in those communities.

So that the impact of the project could be assessed, this evaluation conducted 225 interviews among a stratified sample of direct beneficiaries. The sample frame included the 127 women who received legal representation, 707 women who received legal consultation, and more than 2,000 women who participated in awareness-raising sessions.

Table 4.1: Geographical distribution of surveyed households

| Region | Project participants | Women surveyed |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Metn | 1987 | 225 |
| Der El Ahmar | - | 135 |
| Merjeyoun | - | 90 |
| Zahle | - | 225 |
| Total | | 675 |

Some considerations should be kept in mind about this sample. Firstly, among those who participated in the training only a small fraction of women decided to leave their name and phone number. Those women who decided to leave their details might be different from the majority of those who participated. Secondly, due to the sensitive nature of the project, the partner organisation removed from the sample frame the most sensitive cases of women who were still suffering from family conflicts, in particular domestic violence. This was done in accordance with the principle to ‘not harm’ women involved into the project evaluation. Additional precautions were also undertaken during the fieldwork. For example, respondents were contacted first by phone, and they agreed where to meet for the interview depending on their ability and preference. Given these considerations it is possible that the impact of the project was underestimated as it was hard to reach the most vulnerable women involved in the project.

For the comparison group, women were identified in the regions of Zahle, Deir el Ahmar and Marjeyoun, as they are largely Christian Maronite. Initial contact was made with the archbishops of those three regions who granted support to the survey, indicating pre-existing formal and informal women’s groups. In this case no formal sample frame was available; therefore enumerators had to randomly select women who were indicated by the local leaders to be involved in the informal social networks, such as community or religious groups. When this was not enough to reach the desired sample size, additional women had to be identified outside the known informal social networks.

Table 4.1 illustrates the sample composition.

4.2 ANALYSIS

Women in project and comparison villages were compared in terms of their demographic socio-economic characteristics back in 2011 before the project began. These data are based on information recalled by respondents during the survey questionnaire or reconstructed from the household composition at the time of the survey.

Table 4.2 provides a mean comparison between the samples of women interviewed in the intervention and comparison sites. Some important differences were found between the two groups. The most significant differences were in the following areas:

- 30 per cent of the respondents in the intervention group were the head of the household, against only 11 per cent of the respondents in the comparison group.
- 42 per cent of the respondents in the intervention group reported they had a good relationship with their husband compared to 64 per cent in the comparison group. Conversely, 8 per cent of women in the project sample reported having a problematic or very problematic relationship with their husbands against only 3 per cent in the comparison group. Only 3 per cent of the comparison women stated having a marital relationship with a lot of ‘ups and downs’ as opposed to 8 per cent in the sample of project beneficiaries.
- At baseline in 2011, comparison sampled women were much less wealthy than intervention sampled women, scoring on average a wealth index of -0.006 compared to 0.01 for project beneficiaries.
- On average women in the project were more educated than those sampled in the comparison group, reporting to have completed on average a one level higher degree of schooling.

These differences, some which characterise the two samples before the beginning of the project, have the potential to bias any comparison of the project’s effects in the two groups. As described in Section 3, the main approach used in this Effectiveness Review to control for the baseline differences was propensity-score matching (PSM). The full details of the matching procedure applied are described in Appendix 2. After matching, women in the project and comparison villages were reasonably well-balanced in terms of the recalled baseline data, with few significant differences between them.

Table 4.1: Comparison in means between intervention and comparison groups before matching

| Variable | Mean Intervention | Mean Comparison | Difference |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1[respondent is head of HH] | 0.30 | 0.11 | 0.19*** |
| 1[Respondent is married and relation is good] | 0.42 | 0.64 | -0.22*** |
| 1[Respondent is married and has ups and downs] | 0.08 | 0.03 | 0.05*** |
| 1[Respondent is married and relation is problematic/ v. Problematic] | 0.08 | 0.03 | 0.06*** |
| 1[Respondent is Maronite] | 0.78 | 0.66 | 0.12*** |
| 1[Respondent is Catholic] | 0.13 | 0.26 | -0.13*** |
| 1[Respondent had access to internet in 2011] | 0.71 | 0.59 | 0.12*** |
| Age of the respondent | 45 | 45 | 0.06 |
| Education level of the respondent | 5.31 | 4.38 | 0.93*** |
| Wealth index in 2011 | 0.01 | -0.01 | 0.02 |
| 1[1st wealth quintile 2011] | 0.21 | 0.20 | 0.007 |
| 1[2nd wealth quintile 2011] | 0.18 | 0.20 | -0.02*** |
| 1[3rd wealth quintile 2011] | 0.16 | 0.22 | -0.05 |
| 1[4th wealth quintile 2011] | 0.23 | 0.18 | 0.05 |
| 1[5th wealth quintile 2011] | 0.21 | 0.19 | 0.02 |
| Number of children in the household | 0.65 | 0.97 | -0.32*** |
| | | | |
| Number of observation (# women interviewed) | 225 | 450 | |

5 RESULTS

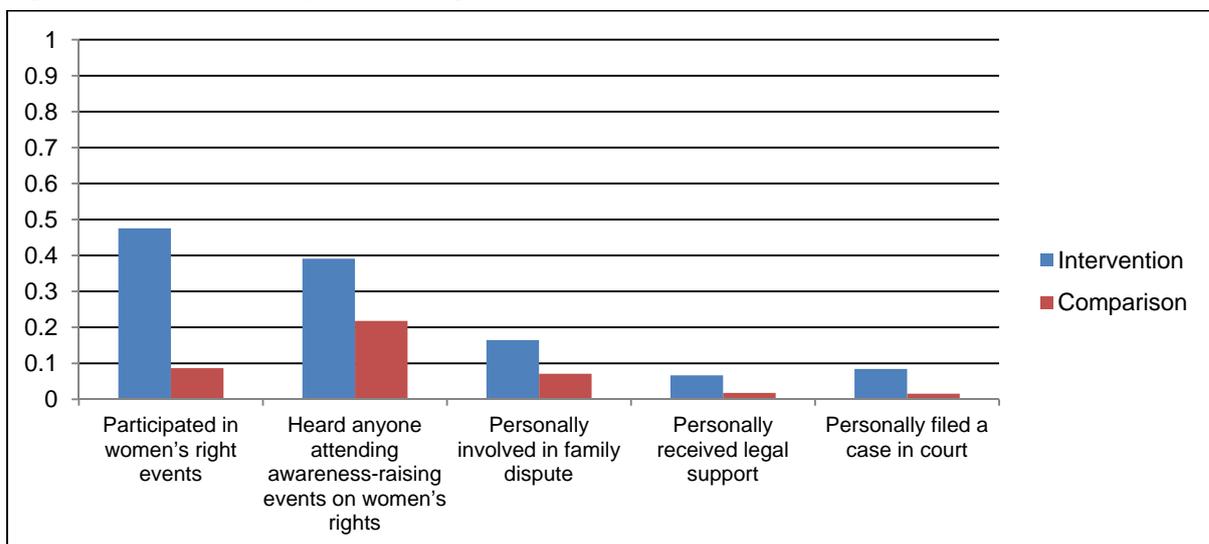
This report is intended to be free from excessive technical jargon, with more detailed technical information being restricted to the appendixes and footnotes. However, there are some statistical concepts that cannot be avoided in discussing the results. In this report, results will usually be stated as the average difference between women who participated in project activities (that is the 'intervention group') and the matched women in villages where the project was not implemented (named the 'comparison group').

In the tables of results on the following pages, statistical significance will be indicated by asterisks, with three asterisks (***) indicating a p-value of less than 10 per cent, two asterisks (**) indicating a p-value of less than 5 per cent and one asterisk (*) indicating a p-value of less than 1 per cent. The higher the p-value, the less confident we are that the measured estimate reflects the true impact. Results with a p-value of more than 10 per cent are not considered to be statistically significant.

5.1 INVOLVEMENT IN PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Before considering the project's effect on outcomes, it is important to examine whether all the respondents report experience with personal disputes in the family and their experience in activities related to this project.

Figure 5.1: Women's exposure to rights and awareness events



In all five areas where women were asked to explain their personal experience, it emerged that in the three years prior to the interview date (so since 2011) 50 per cent of the women in intervention areas reported having participated in women's rights events; compared with less than 10 per cent in the comparison group, suggesting that this group was not being exposed to project-related activities.

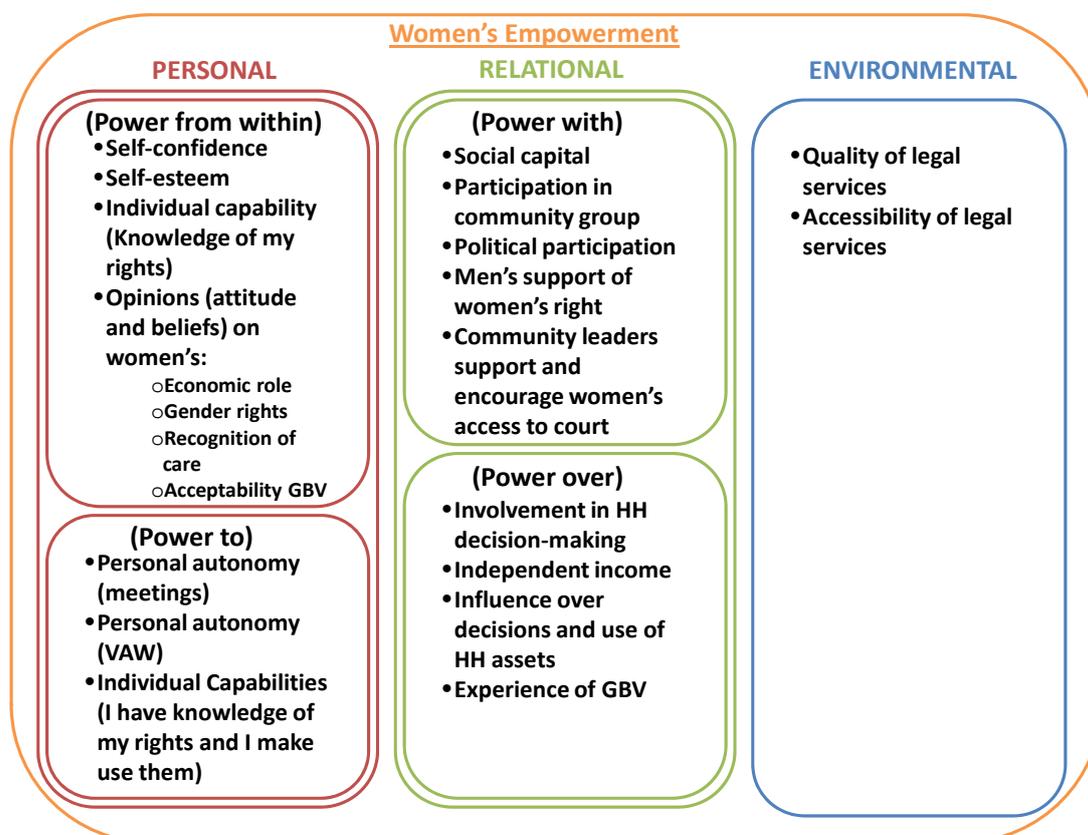
5.2 ANALYSIS OF OUTCOMES – OVERALL MEASURE FOR WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

This section will examine the differences between a sample of women involved in the project and matched women in comparison communities on outcome measures capturing women’s empowerment

The project under review was specifically aimed at increasing women’s empowerment. Oxfam recognises women’s empowerment to be a complex, multi-dimensional concept. While not arguing for a standard set of women’s empowerment characteristics that are applicable to all contexts, Oxfam has developed a multi-dimensional index to support measurement of this hard to measure area that sets out dimensions of women’s empowerment that the organisation considers to be important in all contexts.

This approach builds on the ‘Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index’ (WEAI) developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). Oxfam combined this multidimensional approach to women’s empowerment with a theoretical framework to empowerment provided by the literature (VeneKlasen and Miller (2002), Rowlands (1997), and CARE (2009)). The index used for this Effectiveness Review looked at indicators associated with empowerment, grouped around three possible levels of change: personal, relational and environmental, and four dimensions of change in power.

Figure 5.2: Key dimensions of women’s empowerment



There is no generic set of ‘women’s empowerment’ characteristics that are applicable to all contexts. The definition of indicators used to define and measure women’s empowerment was constructed in collaboration and accordance with programme staff

and partner organisations, with the explicit intent to define what empowerment means for a woman in Lebanon. It is important to note at this stage that while not all characteristics considered in this Effectiveness Review may be directly linked to the project activities, all are deemed to be important to a women's empowerment in this particular context.

A questionnaire was designed and tested in order to include questions capturing each of the characteristics listed in Table 5.1. For each characteristic, a benchmark was defined, based on what it means for a woman to be faring reasonably well in relation to the characteristic in question. The particular benchmarks used for each characteristic are described in Appendix 1. Recognising that there is inevitably a degree of arbitrariness in defining such cut-off points the sections that follow will present estimates of the same indicators without cut-off points, explaining in more detail the indicators and dimensions under analysis.

Table 5.1: Characteristics of women's empowerment examined in this Effectiveness Review

| Level | Dimension | Characteristic | Linked to project theory | |
|--|--------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Personal</i> | <i>Power from within</i> | Self-esteem | No | |
| | | Self-confidence | No | |
| | | Individual capability (knowledge) | Yes | |
| | | Women's opinions (attitude beliefs): | | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's economic role • Gender rights • Acceptability GBV • Recognition of care | No No Yes No | |
| | <i>Power to</i> | Individual capability (apply knowledge) | Yes | |
| | | Personal autonomy (meetings) | Yes | |
| | | Personal autonomy (VAW) | Yes | |
| | <i>Relational</i> | <i>Power with</i> | Social capital | Yes |
| | | | Participation in community groups | No |
| Political participation | | | No | |
| Attitudes and beliefs of the persons close to the woman: | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men's support of women's right • Community leaders support to encourage women's access to court | | | Yes Yes | |
| <i>Power over</i> | | Involvement in household decision making | No | |
| | | Independent income | No | |
| | | Influence over decisions and use of household strategic assets | No | |
| | | Experience of GBV | No | |
| <i>Environmental</i> | | | Accessibility of legal services | Yes |
| | | Quality of legal services | Yes | |

In this section we will consider how project participants differ from comparison women in each of the women's empowerment characteristics listed in Table 5.1. First, however, we examine how all of the characteristics combine to provide an overall measure of women's empowerment. The measure of overall women's empowerment is the proportion of characteristics in which the women scored positively, which we define as the *empowerment index*.

The first column in Table 5.2 presents the differences between the women surveyed in the project and comparison communities in terms of this overall women's empowerment index, including all the indicators identified in Table 5.1. The second column refers to the index looking only at the indicators explicitly linked to the project's theory.

Table 5.2: Overall women's empowerment index

| | Women's empowerment index | Women's empowerment index – project specific |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| <i>Intervention group mean:</i> | 0.699 | 0.764 |
| <i>Comparison group mean:</i> | 0.636 | 0.697 |
| <i>Difference:</i> | 0.063*** | 0.067*** |
| | (0.014) | (0.018) |
| | | |
| <i>Observations intervention group:</i> | 218 | 218 |
| <i>Observations:</i> | 658 | 658 |

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01; PSM estimates are bootstrapped with 1,000 repetitions. All means are calculated after matching.

Women involved into the project score positively in on average 69.9 per cent of the 21 dimensions of empowerment, compared with 63.6 per cent of the comparison group. This difference is significantly different from zero, suggesting that there is a difference between women that participated in the project activities and the comparison groups.

The second column in Table 5.2 provides estimates for a multidimensional women's empowerment index looking only at those indicators the project explicitly aimed at changing. Estimates suggest that there is also a positive and statistically significant difference between intervention and comparison groups for this indicator. However, the size of the difference remains the same.

Table 5.3 presents the indicators of the four levels of power: *power within*, *power to*, *power with*, and *power over*, and three dimensions of change. It suggests that the project was successful in improving half of the power relations, namely '*power within*' (measuring changes in personal self-confidence and self-esteem, personal opinions, attitudes and beliefs) and '*power to*' (measuring woman's ability to exercise the agency and carrying out actions). It also suggests that the project was successful in making changes within the environment.

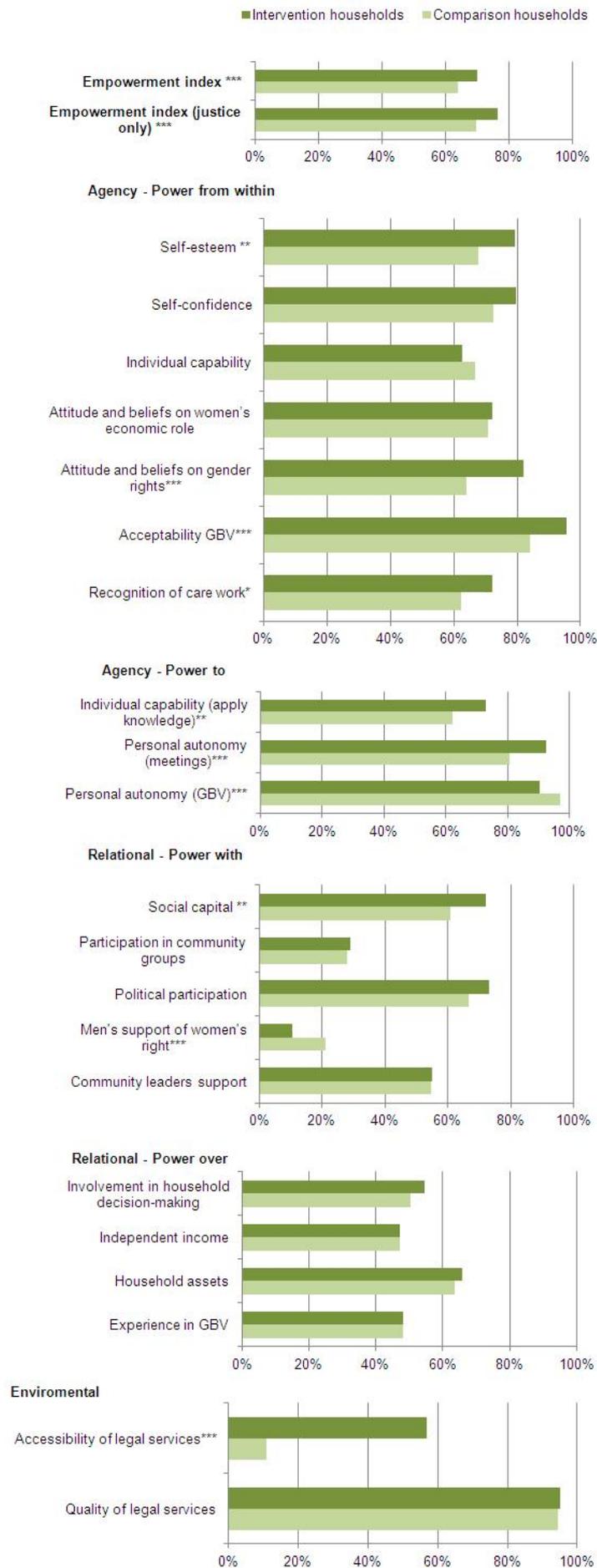
Table 5.3: Women’s empowerment – power dimensions

| | Personal | | Relational | | Environmental |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | <i>Power within</i> | <i>Power to</i> | <i>Power with</i> | <i>Power over</i> | |
| <i>Intervention group mean:</i> | 0.784 | 0.855 | 0.602 | 0.539 | 0.757 |
| <i>Comparison group mean:</i> | 0.711 | 0.798 | 0.588 | 0.520 | 0.527 |
| <i>Difference:</i> | 0.073*** | 0.056** | 0.014 | 0.019 | 0.231*** |
| | (0.022) | (0.023) | (0.027) | (0.025) | (0.027) |
| | | | | | |
| <i>Observation intervention:</i> | 218 | 218 | 218 | 218 | 218 |
| <i>Observations:</i> | 658 | 658 | 658 | 658 | 658 |

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01; PSM estimates are bootstrapped with 1,000 repetitions. All means are calculated after matching.

In what follows, each indicator underlying a different dimension of women’s empowerment will be reported to compare the impact of the project on intervention and comparison women to offer a more nuanced understanding of the overall index presented above.

Figure 5.3: Breakdown indicators



5.2.1 Personal

The level of empowerment for which we explore changes generated by the project refers to changes from within the person. This level power can be expressed either from within or to.

Power from within

Power from within measures changes in personal self-confidence and self-esteem, personal opinions, attitudes and beliefs. These dimensions establish a change that a woman sees and perceives in herself and other women in the society. However, this change in perception does not require any consequent change in behaviour.

In the context under analysis the following indicators have been identified:

- Self-esteem
- Self-confidence
- Individual capability (knowledge)
- Attitude towards and beliefs about:
 - Women’s economic role
 - Gender rights
 - Acceptability around GBV
 - Recognition of care work.

Table 5.4: Power from within

| | <i>Self-esteem – number</i> | <i>Self-confidence – number</i> | <i>Individual capability – number</i> | <i>1[Women's Economic Role]</i> | <i>Gender rights – number</i> | <i>Acceptability of GBV – number</i> | <i>Recognition of care – number</i> |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Intervention group mean: | 3.679 | 2.885 | 3.794 | 0.725 | 2.784 | 2.913 | 1.706 |
| Comparison group mean: | 3.675 | 2.778 | 3.793 | 0.701 | 2.588 | 2.789 | 1.593 |
| Difference: | 0.004 | 0.107 | 0.001 | 0.024 | 0.197*** | 0.124*** | 0.113** |
| | (0.063) | (0.080) | (0.120) | (0.045) | (0.057) | (0.048) | (0.056) |
| Observations intervention group: | 218 | 218 | 218 | 218 | 218 | 218 | 218 |
| Observations: | 658 | 658 | 658 | 658 | 658 | 658 | 658 |

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01; PSM estimates are bootstrapped with 1,000 repetitions. All means are calculated after matching.

Self-esteem indicators measure the respondent’s attitude towards herself.

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others
- I feel that I have a number of good qualities
- I feel I do not have much to be proud of
- I am equal to my peers (e.g. sisters, friends, colleagues, etc.)

Self-confidence indicators were also added as a separate set of questions for women to respond to the following statements:

- I do not feel intimidated to confront my husband
- I often do what my family or my husband tell me to do even if I don't like it
- I am not afraid of asking for support when I need it
- I would not be afraid to go to court even if my family does not support me

The first two columns in Table 5.4 provide estimates of the number of responses indicating women's self-esteem and self-confidence in the intervention and comparison groups. Out of the four statements around self-esteem, women in both the intervention and comparison group reported 3.68 answers indicating self-esteem, and in the four statements around self-confidence they provided 2.9 and 2.8 positive answers respectively. In both cases the group differences were not found to be statistically significant.

Individual capability measures women's knowledge about accessing the justice system. This evaluation assessed women's knowledge by asking each respondent the following questions.¹

- A woman has the right to ask for alimony to her husband (True)
- A woman doesn't have the right of custody over her son or taking care of him (False)
- A Lebanese woman married to a foreigner cannot give her nationality to their children (True)
- Women have the right to request a reduction of court fees (True)
- A single woman has no right to ask for registering her kids (False)
- If an husband keep not paying his alimony he can eventually be put in jail (True)

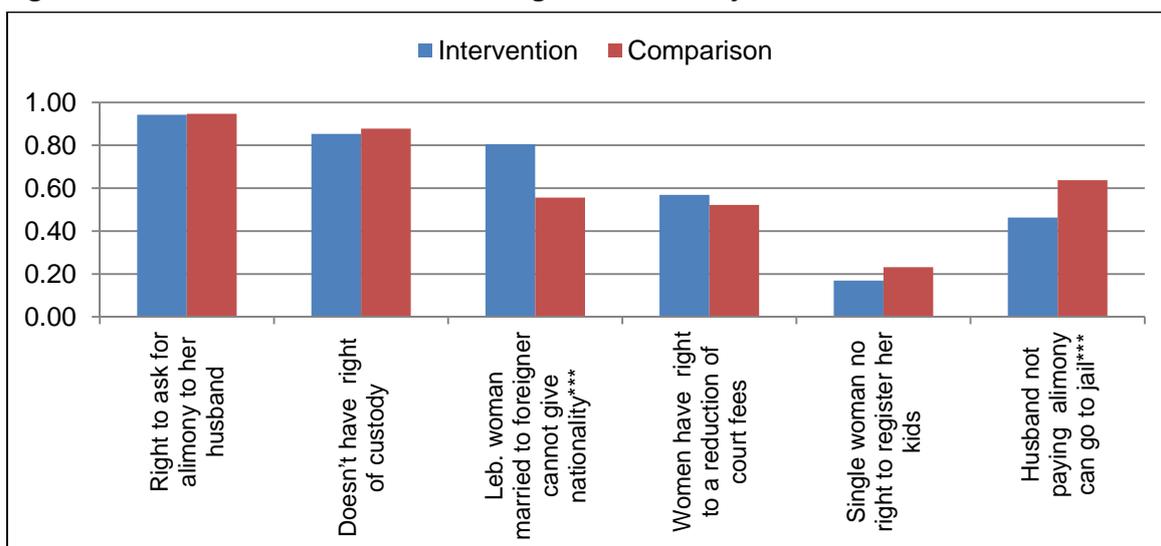
The third column in Table 5.4 suggested that on average 3.8 correct responses were given among both the intervention and comparison groups suggesting knowledge of legal justice, but again with no indication of any statistically significant difference between the groups, suggesting that the project was not successful in improving knowledge on the accessibility of the justice system. However this data should be treated with caution as alongside the face-to-face meetings the project also implemented awareness-raising sessions broadcast on national television. It is therefore possible that, if these activities were successful, women from the comparison group were also exposed to this intervention.

Figure 5.3 illustrates the difference between intervention and comparison groups in each measure of women's knowledge in accessing the justice. It suggests that awareness regarding the first two statements is particularly high, reaching more than 90 per cent in both the intervention and comparison groups, with no indication of project beneficiaries being more knowledgeable than comparison respondents. This seems to suggest that knowledge is high in both the intervention and comparison groups. It is however not possible to attribute these high levels to the broadcasting services, however it cannot be excluded as a possibility.

The only 'knowledge' area where the project was clearly impactful was in improving significantly women's knowledge of the fact that '*A Lebanese woman married to a foreigner cannot give her nationality to their children*'.

It still remains unclear why the comparison group presented a higher correct response rate in the questions investigating knowledge about the consequences for husbands of not paying alimony.

Figure 5.3 Measures of women’s knowledge of access to justice



The fourth column in Table 5.4 provides estimates on attitudes and beliefs regarding **women’s economic role**. Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the following statement:

- A man’s job is to work; a woman’s job is to look after the home and family

On average it appears that 72.5 per cent of the women involved in the project disagreed with this statement, compared with 70 per cent of women in the comparison group; a result that again suggests no difference between the intervention and comparison group in relation to the opinion on women’s economic role.

Three statements tried to establish women’s opinion on **gender rights**:

- A good marriage is more important for a girl than good education
- I prefer to send my son to university rather than my daughter
- Women are as good as men as political leaders

In 2.8 of these statements women in the intervention group displayed opinions in favour of equal gender rights, whereas comparison group women had similar opinions on average in 2.6 statements. The difference in gender rights opinion was found to be statistically significant, suggesting a positive impact of the project in this area.

The **Acceptability towards GBV** measures the extent to which a woman considers violence against women acceptable. Respondents were asked whether they believed it is acceptable for a man to hit his wife in the following cases:

- If she disobeys her husband
- If her husband suspects that she has been unfaithful
- If she neglects the children

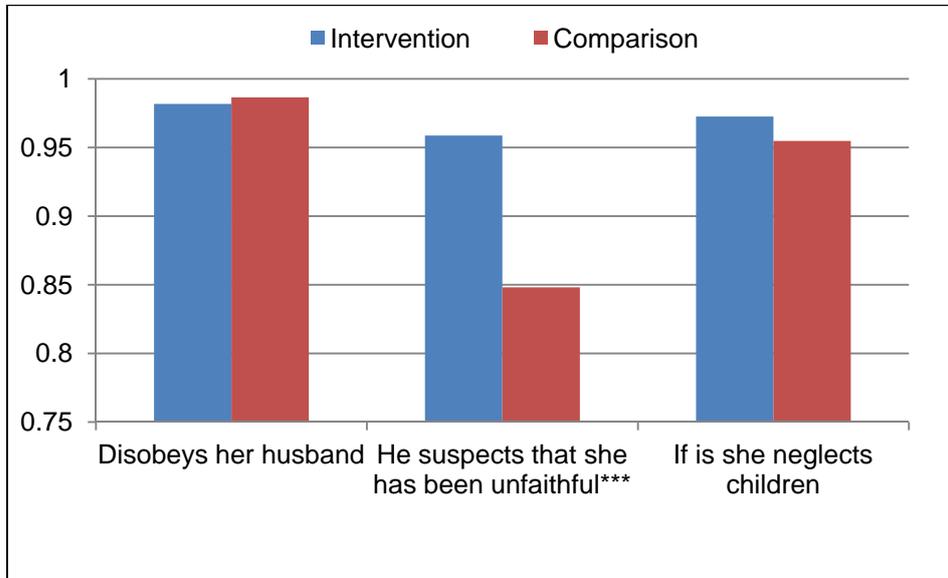
Column six in Table 5.4 provides estimates of the number of questions in which the respondent found the statements unacceptable, with an indicator ranging from zero to three. On average women in the intervention group rejected the idea that it is acceptable for a man to hit his wife in approximately 2.9 cases out of 3, whereas in the comparison group, women on average found unacceptable 2.8 statements out of 3. The difference was found to be statistically significant between the intervention and comparison groups, suggesting that the project was successful in changing attitudes towards gender-based violence.

Figure 5.4 show the distribution between intervention and comparison groups disaggregated by statement. It can be seen that women in the intervention group found

the statement about husbands hitting their wives if they suspected them of having been unfaithful significantly more unacceptable.

In general acceptability is very low in both intervention and comparison areas. This observation might be explained by the fact that in April 2014 the Lebanese parliament debated and approved a law on domestic violence, which generated a public opinion debate in the entire country. This evaluation cannot exclude that was this debate that contributed to the achievement of such low self-reported levels of acceptability on GBV both in the intervention and comparison areas.

Figure 5.4: Unacceptable areas of GBV: intervention and comparison groups



The last dimension of power from within was **recognition of care work**. This indicator measures the extent to which a woman recognises unpaid and care work, and to what extent she believes care work should be distributed equally in the household. Respondents were asked for the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- Housework and care of persons is as important as income-generating work
- Only women should be responsible for housework and care of persons

Results in the last column in Table 5.4 suggest that women in the intervention group reported statements in favour of the recognition of care work in 1.7 out of two areas, in contrast with comparison women who found the importance of care work on average in 1.6 out of two areas. This difference is statistically significant, suggesting yet another area of impact of the project.

Power to

This second dimension of power measures changes in individual agency, meaning the capability to decide actions and carry them out. The key feature of this dimension is that, contrary to *power within* where the focus was a woman’s ability to perceive herself differently as an internal process, the *power to* dimension captures a woman’s ability to exercise the agency and carry out the action.

In the specifics of this project, women’s *power to* indicators were identified by their:

1. Personal autonomy (participating in meetings)
2. Personal autonomy (domestic violence)
3. Individual capability (to apply knowledge)

Table 5.5 shows the results for this dimension.

Table 5.5: Power to

| | 1[Personal autonomy (participating in meetings)] | 1[Personal autonomy (domestic violence)] | Individual capability (apply knowledge) – number |
|---|--|--|--|
| Intervention group | 0.922 | 0.904 | 2.610 |
| Comparison group mean: | 0.801 | 0.971 | 2.479 |
| Difference: | 0.121*** | -0.068*** | 0.131 |
| | (0.038) | (0.022) | (0.083) |
| Observations intervention group: | 218 | 218 | 218 |
| Observations: | 658 | 658 | 658 |

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01; PSM estimates are bootstrapped with 1,000 repetitions. All means are calculated after matching.

Personal autonomy is the capacity to decide for oneself and pursue a course of action in one's life, often regardless of any particular moral content. This has been divided into two aspects: the first investigating the possibility of participating in meetings discussing women's rights without having to seek permission, the second investigating respondents' behaviour in cases of domestic violence.

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

- If I wanted to participate to meetings discussing women's rights, my husband (or father, or mother-in-law) would decide whether or not I can go

Women in the intervention group reported 12 percentage point higher levels of personal autonomy than women in the comparison group. This indicator seems to suggest that the project was successful in increasing personal autonomy with regard to women's ability to participate in meetings discussing women's rights, without having the husband, father, or mother-in-law deciding for them.

Given that the majority of legal cases involve domestic violence, respondents were asked the following question to investigate their behaviour and personal autonomy in cases of domestic violence:

- If your sister was beaten by her husband, would you advise her to:
 - Stay calm and not say anything [no]
 - Seek support from her father and family [yes]
 - Go to the police [yes]
 - Get a lawyer [yes]
 - Contact an organisation supporting women [yes]
 - Go to forensic doctor [yes]
 - Other _____ [?]

The second column of Table 5.5 provides estimates of the proportion of answers in line with the advice provided during training and is expressed here in brackets. On average 90 per cent of the women in the intervention group, and 97 per cent of the women in the comparison group reported answers in line with high personal autonomy. This difference is statistically significantly different from zero.

Figure 5.5: Personal autonomy and domestic violence

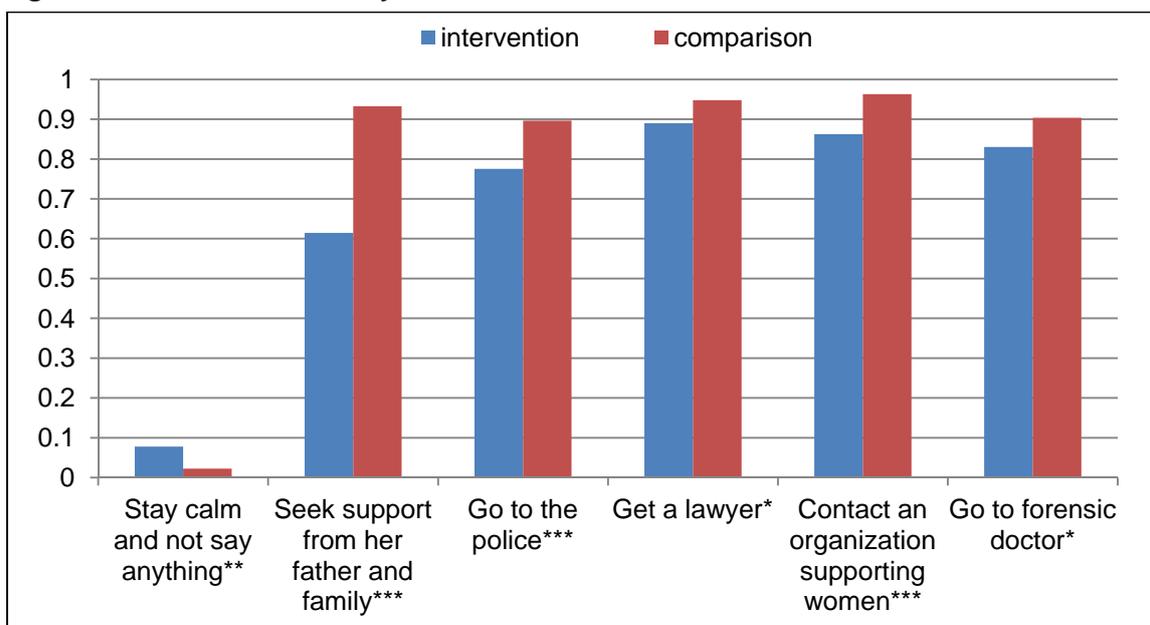


Figure 5.5 graphically illustrates the difference between the intervention and matched comparison groups on each of the options listed above. It appears that only a tiny proportion of women would recommend not acting in response to violence – 7 per cent in the intervention group and 2 per cent in the comparison group. A bigger difference is found in the response suggesting seeking support from a family member, with 61 per cent of the women in the intervention group and 93 per cent in the comparison group agreeing with the statement. This difference might reflect a more traditional approach to conflict resolution in the comparison group than in the intervention group. On the other hand it is surprising to find that the comparison group is also more likely to advise going to the police, getting a lawyer, contacting an organisation supporting women, and going to a forensic doctor than the intervention group. It is hard to explain why that might be the case.

Estimates from the two indicators investigating personal autonomy suggest that the project was successful in improving personal autonomy concerning decisions regarding participation in meetings. However, interpretation of the estimates for personal autonomy concerning domestic violence is not so clear.

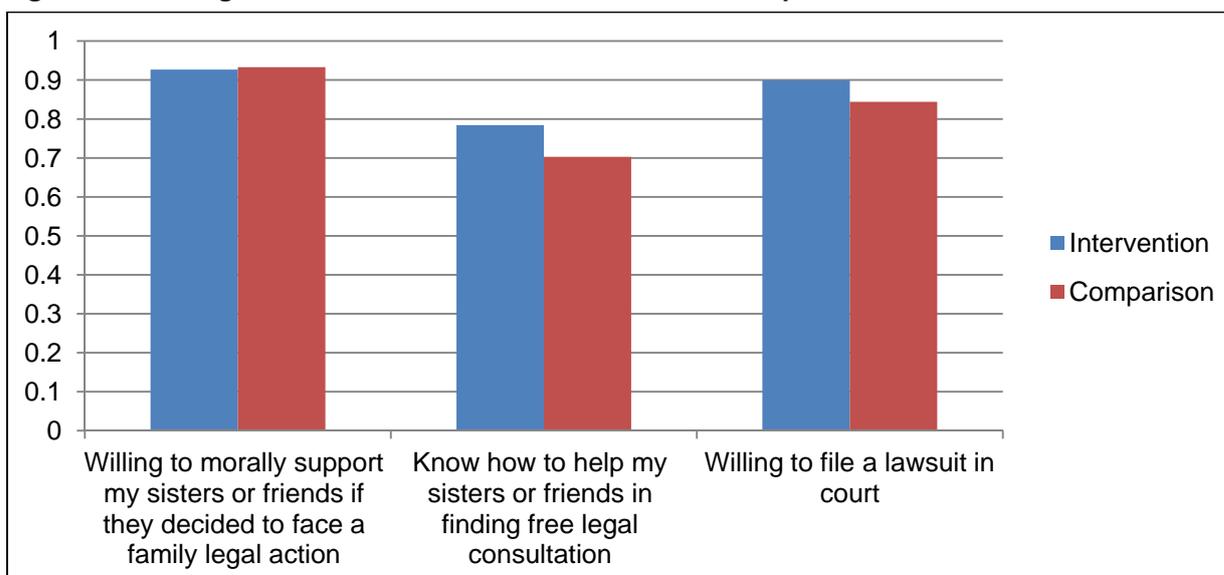
Individual capability measures the extent to which women’s knowledge is used and applied in the context of access to justice. In order to understand their willingness and knowledge to take action legally if required respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- I am willing to morally support my sisters or friends if they decided to face a family legal action
- If needed I know how to help my sisters or friends in finding free legal consultation
- If needed I would be willing to file a lawsuit in court

On average, both intervention and comparison women expressed their willingness to take legal action in nearly two out of the three instances, with no statistically significant difference in this measure of empowerment.

Figure 5.6 suggests that nearly 90 per cent of the women in the intervention group reported being willing to file a lawsuit, compared with 85 per cent of the women in the comparison group. These estimates, however, should be taken with caution as they are only representing self-reported willingness, and might be different from figures in real life.

Figure 5.6: Willingness to file a lawsuit: intervention and comparison



5.2.2 Relational

Changes taking place at this level refer to changes in power relations with the woman's surrounding network. Dimensions '*power with*' and '*power over*' are both relational dimensions, they both require changes in power interactions with other actors.

Power with

This dimension reflects the notion that empowerment is a *collective process*, which requires the support and interaction of peers and other organisations.

Table 5.6: Power with

| | Social capital – number | 1[Participation in community groups] | Political participation – number | 1[Attitude and beliefs; Men's support] | 1[Attitude and beliefs; Leaders' support] |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Intervention group mean: | 1.468 | 0.289 | 2.670 | 0.106 | 0.546 |
| Comparison group mean: | 1.242 | 0.265 | 2.625 | 0.213 | 0.560 |
| Difference: | 0.226** | 0.024 | 0.044 | -0.108*** | -0.014 |
| | (0.096) | (0.054) | (0.058) | (0.041) | (0.052) |
| Observations intervention | 218 | 218 | 218 | 218 | 218 |
| Observations: | 658 | 658 | 658 | 658 | 658 |

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01; PSM estimates are bootstrapped with 1,000 repetitions. All means are calculated after matching.

In the context of the project this evaluation identified the following five indicators of *power within*:

1. Social capital
2. Participation in community groups
3. Political participation
4. Attitude and belief of men surrounding the woman
5. Attitude and belief of leaders.

Table 5.6 provides estimates for the outcome measure identified for this dimension.

Social capital measures to what extent a woman has access to a network of people or groups to support her, and to which extent she makes use of that network. Discussions with the partner organisation revealed that using social media, such as Facebook, and mobile applications, such as WhatsApp, is a sign of women's empowerment.

Respondents were asked the extent to which they thought each of the following statements was true or false for themselves:

- I have an account in Facebook or other social networks [*existence of social capital*]
- I use social networks like Facebook and WhatsApp to communicate with my friends and peers [*making use of the social capital*]

Estimates in the first column of Table 5.6 suggest that on average women in the intervention group reported a level of social capital of 1.47 out of 2, compared with 1.24 out of 2 for the comparison group. This indicator was found to be significant and a clear area of success of the project in improving social capital among participants.

Participation in community groups measures to what extent a woman participates in groups and therefore has access to other people.

Respondents were asked if they regularly attend meetings of the following groups: cooperatives, political parties, religious groups, women's associations, local NGOs, any other group. According to the estimates in Table 5.6, participation in community groups is not found to be affected by the project with 28.9 and 26.5 per cent of women in intervention and comparison groups respectively involved in at least one group.

Political participation measures to what extent women are involved in political participation and engagement. Women were asked to what extent they thought each of the following statements was true or false for themselves:

- I do not have problems in sharing my opinion in front of other people
- When it comes to elections my husband (or other household members) instruct me to choose who to vote for
- When it comes to elections my husband (or other household members) instruct me who to vote for
- I would consider voting for a woman if she was running for election

Estimates reported in the third column in Table 5.6 show that on average women in the intervention and the comparison groups reported political participation 2.67 and 2.63 out of 3 times, respectively, with no significant difference between groups.

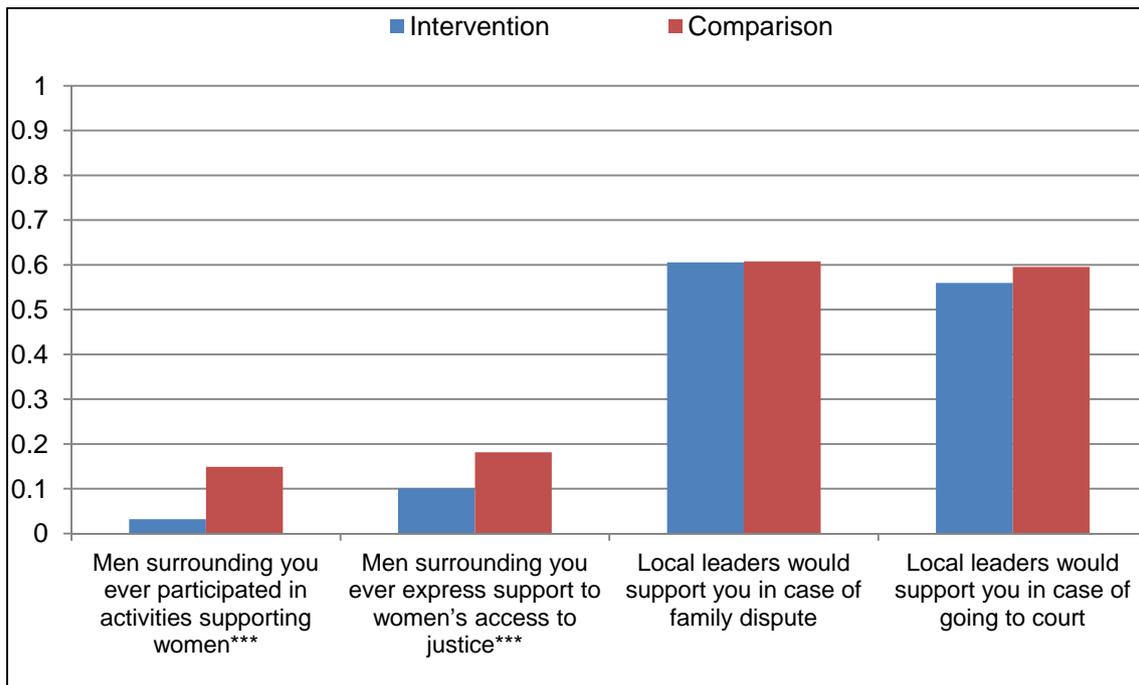
Attitudes and beliefs of people close to the person measuring the level of support women may receive from men or community leaders to encourage their access to court. In order to measure **men's support of women's rights** respondents were asked if each of the following statements was true or false:

- In the last three years, did any men surrounding you ever participate in activities supporting women (e.g. International Women's Day, women's marathon)?
- In the last three years, did any men surrounding you ever express support of women's access to justice?

Estimates reported in the fourth column in Table 5.6 suggests that on average slightly more than 10 per cent of the women in the intervention group reported that at least one statement was true, compared with 21 per cent of women in the comparison group. This difference of 11 percentage points is statistically significant different from zero. These estimates, however, should be treated with caution. Firstly because alternative matching procedures in Appendix 3 suggest similar differences but are not statistically significant. Secondly, and more importantly, because there is no common definition on

what ‘supporting’ means and these differences might be reflecting different levels of awareness and higher levels of expectations within the intervention group.

Figure 5.7: Attitudes and beliefs of people close to women



Finally, in order to measure **community leaders’ support and encouragement of women’s access to court** respondents were asked if each of the following statements was true or false for themselves:

- In case of family dispute do you think your local leaders (priest, sisterhood, major, etc.) would support you?
- In case of going to court how do you think your local leaders (priest, sisterhood, major, etc.) would support you?

Estimates reported in the final column in Table 5.6 suggests that on average 54.6 per cent of the women in the intervention group and 56 per cent of the women in the comparison group reported that both statements were true.

Figure 5.7 provides a graphical representation of the questions investigating attitudes and beliefs of people close to women.

Power over

This dimension measure changes in the power of the strong over the weak and represents changes taking place in the power relationship between individuals. In the context of the project, this evaluation identified the following indicators:

- Involvement in household decision-making
- Control over household assets
- Independent income
- Experience of violence

Table 5.7 provides estimates for the indicators measure for this dimension.

Table 5.7: Power over

| | Involvement in HH decision making | Control over household assets | Independent income | Experience of violence |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Intervention group mean: | 0.567 | 0.714 | 35.298 | 6.339 |
| Comparison group mean: | 0.521 | 0.697 | 34.991 | 5.992 |
| Difference: | 0.046 | 0.017 | 0.307 | 0.348 |
| | (0.042) | (0.044) | (4.16) | (0.278) |
| Observations intervention group: | 218 | 218 | 218 | 218 |
| Observations: | 658 | 658 | 658 | 658 |

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01; PSM estimates are bootstrapped with 1,000 repetitions. All means are calculated after matching.

Involvement in household decision-making measures to what extent the respondent is involved in decisions taking place in her household. Each respondent was asked who normally takes the decisions about the following:

- Keeping and managing cash
- What food to buy and consume
- How children should be educated
- Approval of marriage
- Inheritance of property
- Transfer of property to a relative or any other person
- How many children to have
- Purchase of furniture for the house
- How much money to invest in business activities
- Housework and care of persons

If the woman reported not to be the one responsible or not to be the only one responsible, than she was asked to what extent she thinks she could influence the decision, on a scale from 'not at all' to 'a large extent'. Estimates in the first column in Table 5.7 report the proportion of activities in which the respondent is taking the decision by herself or she is able to influence to a large extent. On average it seems women in both groups are involved in roughly half of the household decisions, and there is no statistically significant difference between the women in the intervention and comparison groups.

Control over household assets. To establish women's ownership and control over different household assets, respondents were asked about their household's ownership from a list of 13 types of assets. As a follow-up to these questions, they were asked to specify which household member could make decisions about whether to sell, trade or give away an item if need be. This information was used to examine which types of assets women themselves have access to.

Estimates in the second column in Table 5.7 report the proportion of assets in which a woman has joint control over 75 per cent of strategic household assets. On average 71 per cent of the women in the intervention group reported having decision-making power over at least 75 per cent of the assets own by the household, and there was no statistically significant difference in these averages between groups.

The independence in income measures whether a woman has access to income independently of her spouse or other household members. To assess this, respondents

were asked to estimate the proportion of household income that they personally contribute to the household. Not surprisingly the project was found to have had no significant influence in this area as it was not part of the intended outcome of the project.

Finally, **women's experience with gender-based violence** was investigated asking each respondent if in the previous 12 months someone had done any of the following to women close to her:

- Said something to humiliate her in front of others
- Threatened to hurt or harm her or someone she cares about
- Insulted her or make her feel bad about herself
- Pushed her, shaken her, slapped her or thrown something at her
- Twisted her arm or pulled her hair
- Punched her with a fist or with something that could hurt her
- Threatened or attacked her with a knife, gun or other weapon
- Physically forced her to have sexual intercourse or any other sexual acts she did not want to

The last column of Table 5.7 suggests that on average both intervention and comparison women reported six out of eight areas where women close to them had been exposed to violence. While on average experience of violence is found to be high for both groups, the difference is not statistically significant, therefore suggesting no impact from the project. It should be made clear that the questionnaire did not ask directly for the respondent's own experience, but inquired for women close to her as a proxy for her own experience on GBV. It is therefore possible that the measure might not be able to fully measure this phenomenon.

5.2.3 Environmental

The final level of empowerment measures changes taking place in the broader environment. In the context of this project the evaluation identified the following two indicators:

1. Quality of the legal services
2. Accessibility of the legal services

In the project context this dimension looked at the **quality of legal services**, specifically asking women whether they were satisfied with:

- a. time/money spent on legal process
- b. the emotional cost involved in the process
- c. the quality of the procedure

Respondents were asked for the extent to which they thought each of the following statements was true or false for themselves:

- Filing a case in the court would be too expensive
- Because legal cases take long time to be finalised, it is not worth starting them
- The emotional cost involved in a court process is too high to be acceptable
- In some cases going to court can help in solving problems related to personal status law
- Judges in court are generally able to understand women's point of view
- Judges in courts usually treat equally men and women

Table 5.8 reports the average number of sentences where women answered in a way that indicated satisfaction on time, emotional costs, and quality of the procedure. On average women in the intervention group were satisfied in 2.7 areas out of 6, whereas

women in comparison group were satisfied in 2.5 areas, with no statistically significant difference in their average level of satisfaction with the quality of the service as captured by this indicator.

Table 5.8: Environmental change

| | Quality of legal services | Accessibility of the legal services |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Intervention group mean: | 2.674 | 0.927 |
| Comparison group mean: | 2.541 | 0.161 |
| Difference: | 0.133 | 0.765*** |
| | (0.145) | (0.075) |
| Observations intervention group: | 218 | 218 |
| Observations: | 658 | 658 |

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01; PSM estimates are bootstrapped with 1,000 repetitions. All means are calculated after matching.

Figure 5.8 shows the disaggregated figures of the indicator measuring the broader environment. These figures suggest that the vast majority of women (both in the intervention and comparison) agree in considering filing a case in court to be too expensive. The project activities seems to have decreased the emotional costs involved in a court process and improved the belief that going to court can help in solving problems related to personal status.

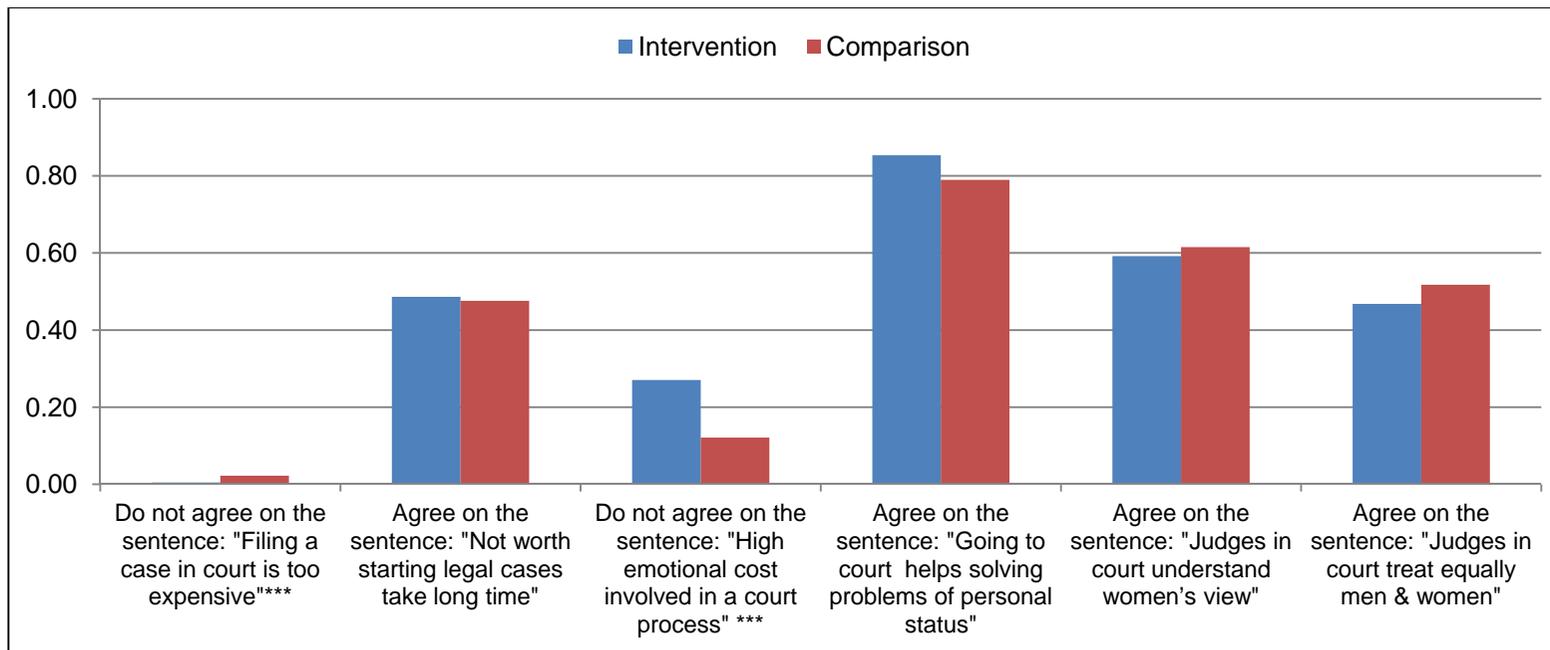
There seems to be no evident change in terms of perception that judges in court understand and treat men and women equally. This does not imply that some judges might not have changed their behaviour, as these estimates are simply capturing women’s perceptions. It is also possible that higher levels of awareness lead women to demand higher standards from judges in understanding and treating them equally, leading to lower perceptions of equality.

Finally, in order to measure **accessibility to legal services** respondents were asked if each of the following statements was true or false:

- Do you know if in your community there are structures providing legal advice?
- Do you know if in your community there are structures supporting women on legal support for free?

The second column in Table 5.8 reports estimates from a variable ranging from zero to two, if the respondent reported that the previous two statements were true. Estimates suggest that there is a positive and significant difference between the intervention and comparison groups, implying a statistically significant increase in accessibility to legal services attributable to the project.

Figure 5.8: Areas where women were satisfied with quality of legal service



6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

Survey results provide compelling evidence that the project has been successful in improving women's overall empowerment. When looking at the dimensions underlying the index, the evidence gathered suggests the project being successful in changing empowerment in the broader environment and at personal level. In particular the dimensions of '*power from within*', which looks at personal self-confidence as psychological strength, and '*power to*', which measures women's ability to exercise the agency and carry out the action, have been positively affected by the project intervention.

This evaluation looked at women's empowerment in the a number of dimensions of power and level of change.

The evaluation found evidence of change attributable to the project in the dimension of *power from within*, which measures changes in which a woman sees and perceives her-self and other women in the society. There is evidence that the project had a positive impact on attitudes and beliefs concerning gender rights, acceptability of gender-based violence, and recognition of care. Quite surprisingly the evaluation also found very high levels of knowledge about justice systems both for the intervention and the comparison groups not identifying any differences between the two groups. There is also no evidence to suggest improved self-esteem and self-confidence as a result of the project.

The project was found also to have had a positive impact on the dimension of *power to*, which captures a woman's ability to exercise the agency and carry out the action. The evaluation found evidence of improved personal autonomy. It also found no evidence of higher willingness to take legal action among women who participated into the project, although these values are particularly high both for the intervention and comparison groups.

Limited evidence was found around changes in the relations within the woman's networks. The relational level includes the dimension of *power with* which recognises that empowerment is a collective process that requires the support and interaction of other peers and organisations, and the dimension of *power over*, which represents changes taking place in the power relationship between individuals. This evaluation finds evidence that the project was successful in improving woman's social capital. On the other hand, there is no evidence of project impact in supporting higher participation in community or political groups.

The evaluation also explored indicators looking at women's involvement in household decision-making; control over household assets; independent income; and experience of violence. The project did not intend to impact directly any of these indicators; but these have been investigated because they are recognised as being important indicators of women's empowerment in the context under analysis. It came to no surprise to find no evidence of change attributable in any of these areas.

Finally, the evaluation investigated changes taking place in the broader *environment*, and found evidence that the project activities have a positive impact both on accessibility and quality of legal services for the women involved in the project. Firstly, the evaluation found evidence that the project has increased accessibility to legal services, with more women being aware of free legal services if needed. Secondly, there is evidence that the project has decreased the emotional costs involved in filing a

case, and increased the belief among women that going to court can help in solving problems.

6.2 PROGRAMME LEARNING CONSIDERATIONS

Some important lessons have emerged from the evaluation that can be applied to other projects of this type in Lebanon and elsewhere. The programme team in particular are encouraged to consider the following:

- **Link more explicitly women's access to justice with gender rights**

This evaluation has raised questions on how projects focused on women's access to justice (and legal rights) should also include broader women's rights components. Despite not being directly linked with the original theory of change of the project, the evaluation identified positive and significant impacts on indicators measuring attitude and beliefs with regard to women's rights. It is therefore advisable for future programmes on women's access to justice to articulate how they will promote other aspects of women's rights within their interventions, making it explicit in the theory of change.

- **Identifying the right balance between intervention at community level, advocacy and citizens' movements**

Results from this evaluation identified that women's perception of whether men are supporting women is statistically different between project participants and the control group.

In order to be more effective in achieving sustainable change the programme team recognises the necessity of working not only directly with individual women and key stakeholders (like judges), but also supporting wider citizens' movements demanding improved institutions and equal access to justice.

The evaluation therefore suggests looking to find the right balance between interventions with individuals at the personal community level, advocacy, and the creation of broader citizens' movements for change.

- **Investigate further the high levels of understanding around women's access to justice**

The evaluation identified high levels of juridical knowledge, and willingness to file a lawsuit if needed, in both the intervention and comparison groups with no statistically significant difference between the two groups.

These findings do not necessarily mean a failure of the project as number of internal and external factors have been identified as possible influencing factors on this indicator (for example, advocacy with the national Maronite court, TV advertisements). Unfortunately, despite having the monitoring system in place – which included a baseline and endline – the quality of data did not provide sufficient information to track or understand adequately this change.

Given the high levels of knowledge in both groups, the programme team is encouraged to explore if lack of knowledge still represents an impediment to accessing justice, and to consider greater investment in the other factors impeding women's access to justice.

- **Invest in improvements to the monitoring and evaluation system**

Despite having a monitoring and evaluation system in place, the programme team is encouraged to promote a more robust monitoring system, particularly at outcome level,

which allows the collection of indicators for improving: targeting, project implementation, and influencing.

Collecting and analysing the socio-economic characteristics of women accessing legal services could provide useful information for improving future targeting. For example, monitoring data on geographical and socio-economic characteristics could be used to target women for future interventions. Similarly, collecting and analysing information on legal cases can support project implementation by providing useful learning on the determinants of success and failure of legal cases in court. Both sources of information can also be used to raise awareness with campaigns and influencing activities on the problems in the legal system.

This monitoring system should be designed and implemented recognising the sensitivity of the data involved, particularly considering the risk involved in exposing women in a vulnerable situation.

APPENDIX 1: THRESHOLDS FOR CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

| Level | Dimension | Characteristic | Threshold: a women scores positively if she... | Coherent with estimates in the report | Estimate difference |
|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---|--|---------------------|
| <i>Personal</i> | <i>Power from within</i> | <i>Self-esteem</i> | <p>agreed with *ALL* of the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others. • I feel that I have a number of good qualities. • I am equal to my peers (e.g. sisters, friends, colleagues, etc.) <p>and disagreed with the following statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel I do not have much to be proud of. | No (not significant when continues) | 0.104** (0.048) |
| | | <i>Self-confidence</i> | <p>agreed with the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I do not feel intimidated to confront my husband • I am not afraid to go to court even if my family does not support me • I am not afraid asking for support <p>and disagree with following statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I often do what my family or my husband tell me to do even if I don't like it <p>for at least ¾ of the sentences.</p> | Yes | 0.064 (0.047) |

| Level | Dimension | Characteristic | Threshold: a women scores positively if she... | Coherent with estimates in the report | Estimate difference |
|-------|-----------|--|--|--|---------------------|
| | | <i>Individual capability (knowledge)</i> | thought at least four (4) of the first following statements are or true or false for the last two statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A woman has the right to ask for alimony to her husband. • Women have the right to request a reduction of court fees. • A Lebanese woman married to a foreigner cannot give her nationality to their children. • If a husband keeps not paying his alimony he can eventually be put in jail. • A woman doesn't have the right of custody over her son or taking care of him. • A single woman has no right to ask for registering her kids. | No (both continues and binary estimates are not significant but they have different sign) | -0.048 (0.052) |
| | | <i>Attitude and beliefs on women's economic role</i> | disagreed with the following statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I give my income to my husband or my family • A men's job is to work; a women's job is to look after the home and family. | Yes | 0.024 (0.045) |
| | | <i>Gender rights</i> | disagreed with *ALL* of the following statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good marriage is more important for a girl than good education • I prefer to send my son to university rather than my daughter. and agreed with *ALL* of the following statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boys and girls should be given equal opportunities to education • Women are as good as men as political leader | Yes | 0.175*** (0.045) |
| | | <i>Acceptability around GBV</i> | believes it is acceptable for a man to hit his wife in *ALL* of the following cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She disobeys her husband • He suspects that she has been unfaithful • She neglects the children | Yes | 0.120*** (0.030) |
| | | <i>Recognition of care</i> | agreed with the following statement: | Yes | 0.100* |

| Level | Dimension | Characteristic | Threshold: a women scores positively if she... | Coherent with estimates in the report | Estimate difference |
|-------------------|-------------------|--|--|--|----------------------|
| | <i>Power to</i> | <i>work</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housework and care of persons is as important as income-generating work and disagreed with the following statement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only women should be responsible for housework and care of persons | | (0.052) |
| | | <i>Personal autonomy (participating into meetings)</i> | disagreed with the following statement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If I wanted to participate to meetings discussing women's right, my husband (or father, mother in law) would decide whether if I can go or not | Yes | 0.121*** (0.038) |
| | | <i>Personal autonomy (domestic violence)</i> | would advise to take action in *ANY* of the following ways if her sister/friend was beaten by her husband: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go to the police [good] Not say anything [no] Get a lawyer [good] Contact an organisation [good] Go to forensic doctor [good] Other _____ [?] | Yes | -0.068*** (0.022) |
| | | <i>Individual capability (apply knowledge)</i> | agreed with *ALL* of the following statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am willing to morally support my sisters or friends if they decided to face a family legal action If needed I know how to help my sisters or friends in finding free legal consultation If needed I would be willing to file a lawsuit in court | No (same direction but not significant when continuous) | 0.116** (0.050) |
| Relational | <i>Power with</i> | <i>Social capital</i> | said that *BOTH* the following statements were true for themselves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have an account in Facebook or other social networks [<i>existence of social capital</i>] | Yes | 0.109*** (0.041) |

| Level | Dimension | Characteristic | Threshold: a women scores positively if she... | Coherent with estimates in the report | Estimate difference |
|-------|-------------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I use social networks like Facebook and What's up to communicate with my friends and peers [<i>making use of the social capital</i>] | | |
| | | <i>Participation in community groups</i> | regularly attends meetings of at least one of the following groups: cooperatives, political parties, religious groups, women's associations, local NGOs, any other group | Yes | 0.024 (0.054) |
| | | <i>Political participation</i> | <p>agreed with the first and last statement, and disagreed with the 2nd one:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do not have problems in sharing my opinion in front of other people When it comes to elections my husband (or other household members) instruct me to choose who to vote for I would consider voting for a woman if she was running for election? | Yes | 0.078 (0.049) |
| | | <i>Attitudes and beliefs of the persons close to the woman (Men's support of women's rights)</i> | <p>said at least ONE of the following statements was true for themselves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the last three years, did any men surrounding you ever participated in activities supporting women (e.g. international women's day, women's marathon)? In the last three years, did any men surrounding you ever express support to women's access to justice? | Yes | -0.108*** (0.041) |
| | | <i>Attitudes and beliefs of the persons close to the woman</i> | <p>said that at least ONE of the following statements was true for themselves:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> In case of family dispute do you think your local leaders (priest, sisterhood, major, etc) would support you? In case of going to court how do you think your local leaders (priest, sisterhood, major, etc) would support you? | Yes | -0.014 (0.052) |
| | <i>Power over</i> | <i>Involvement in household decision making</i> | <p>could influence the decision, on a scale from 'not at all' to 'a large extent' in at least HALF of the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping and managing cash What food to buy and consume How children should be educated | Yes | 0.033 (0.056) |

| Level | Dimension | Characteristic | Threshold: a women scores positively if she... | Coherent with estimates in the report | Estimate difference |
|----------------------|-----------|---|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approving marriage • Inheritance of property • Transfer of property to a relative or any other person • Deciding how many children to have • Purchase of furniture for the house • How much money to invest in business activities • Housework and care of persons | | |
| | | <i>Independent income</i> | estimated the proportion of household income she personally contributed to being at least 25% | Yes | 0.01 (0.052) |
| | | <i>Influence over decisions and use of household strategic assets</i> | was either alone or jointly responsible to make decisions of at least 75% of a list of household owned strategic assets | Yes | 0.02 (0.055) |
| | | <i>Experience in GBV</i> | has NOT heard in the past 12 months that someone had done <u>any</u> of the following to a woman close to her: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Said something to humiliate her in front of others • Threatened to hurt or harm her or someone she cares about • Insulted her or make her feel bad about herself • Pushed her, shake her, slap her or thrown something at her • Twisted her arm of pull her hair • Punched her with his fist or with something that could hurt her • Threatened or attack her with a knife, gun or other weapon • Physically forced her to have sexual intercourse or any other sexual acts she did not want to | Yes | 0.011 (0.052) |
| Environmental | | <i>Quality of legal service</i> | thought at least ONE of the following statements false for themselves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File a case in the court would be too expensive • Because legal cases take long time to be finalised, it is not worth | Yes | 0.009 (0.022) |

| Level | Dimension | Characteristic | Threshold: a women scores positively if she... | Coherent with estimates in the report | Estimate difference |
|-------|-----------|--|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | <p>starting them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The emotional cost involved in a court process is too high to be acceptable <p>or least ONE of the following statements true for themselves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In some cases going to court can help solving problems related to personal status law Judges in court are generally able to understand women's point of view Judges in courts are usually treating equally men and women. | | |
| | | <i>Accessibility of legal services</i> | <p>said that at least ONE of the following statements was true for themselves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you know if in your community there are structures providing legal advice? Do you know if in your community there structures supporting women on legal support for free? | Yes | 0.489*** (0.030) |

APPENDIX 2: METHODOLOGY USED FOR PROPENSITY-SCORE MATCHING

The analysis of outcome variables, presented in Section 5 of this report, involved group mean comparisons using propensity-score matching (PSM). The basic principle of PSM is to match each participant with a non-participant that was observationally similar at baseline and to obtain the treatment effect by averaging the differences in outcomes across the two groups after project completion. Unsurprisingly, there are different approaches to matching, i.e. to determining whether or not a household is observationally 'similar' to another household. For an overview, we refer to Caliendo and Kopeinig (2008).² This appendix describes and tests the specific matching procedure followed in this Effectiveness Review.

Estimating propensity scores

Given that it is extremely hard to find two individuals with exactly the same characteristics, Rosenbaum and Rubin (1983) demonstrated that it is possible to match individuals using a prior probability for an individual to be in the intervention group, naming it *propensity score*. More specifically, propensity scores are obtained by pooling the units from both the intervention and comparison groups and using a statistical probability model (e.g. a probit regression) to estimate the probability of participating in the project, conditional on a set of observed characteristics.

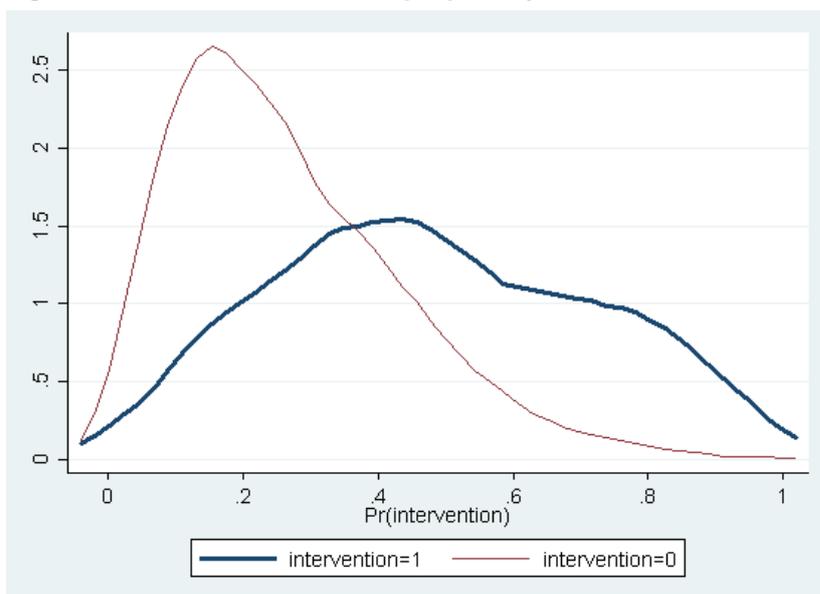
Table A2.1 presents the probit regression reporting marginal effects results used to estimate the propensity scores in our context. To guarantee that none of the matching variables were affected by the intervention, we only included variables that could influence the probability of a woman joining the project, but not being affected by the outcome of project participation. For example, we included variables referring to the period prior to the project and those that are specific to each individual (e.g. whether the respondent was the head of the household, the number of children in the household) (Caliendo and Kopeinig, 2008).

Table A2.1: Estimating the propensity score

| | (1) |
|--|----------------------|
| | . |
| Number groups participating – 2011 | 0.154* (0.084) |
| Share of respondent income in HH income in 2011 | 0.003* (0.002) |
| 1[Respondent is head of HH] | 0.519*** (0.172) |
| 1[Respondent's religion Maronite in 2011] | 0.034 (0.202) |
| 1[Respondent's religion Catholic in 2011] | -0.453** (0.227) |
| 1[Respondent was married in 2011] | -0.094 (0.146) |
| 1[Respondent was separated/divorced in 2011] | 0.813*** (0.295) |
| 1[Respondent's marriage in 2011 had 'ups and downs'] | 0.826*** (0.248) |
| 1[Respondent's marriage in 2011 had 'problems'] | 1.231*** (0.269) |
| Age of the respondent | 0.010* (0.005) |
| Education level of the respondent | 0.168*** (0.033) |
| 1[2nd wealth quintile] | -0.401** (0.183) |
| 1[3rd wealth quintile] | -0.061 (0.180) |
| 1[4th wealth quintile] | 0.050 (0.184) |
| 1[5th wealth quintile] | 0.139 (0.185) |
| Number of children in the household | -0.109* (0.059) |
| Constant | -1.804*** (0.397) |
| Observations | 665 |

Figure A2.1 shows the distribution of the propensity score for the intervention and comparison group.

Figure A2.1: Distribution of the propensity score

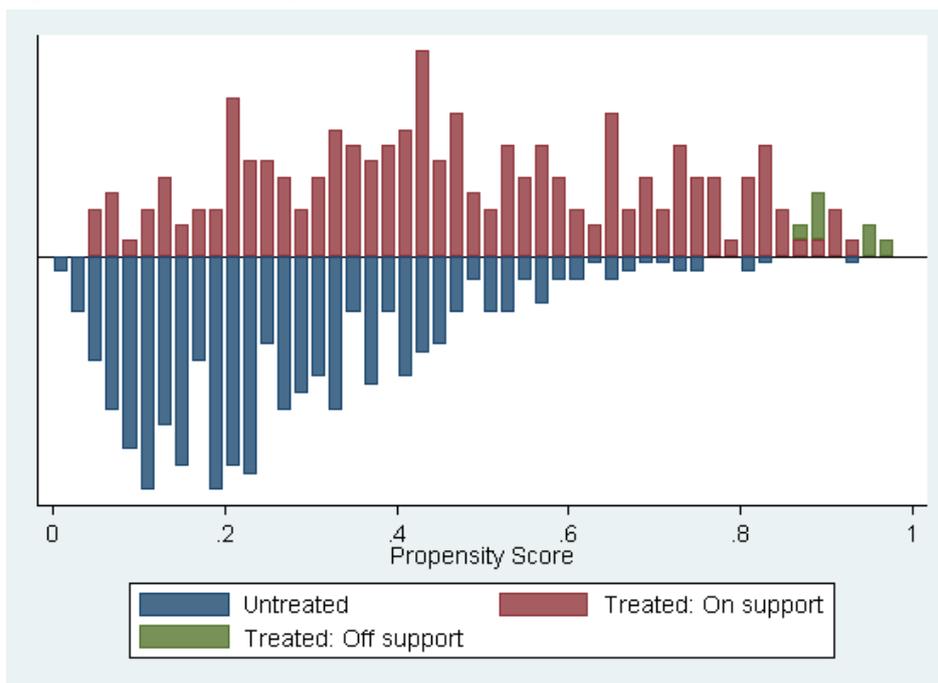


Defining the region of common support

After estimating the propensity scores, the presence of a good *common support area* needs to be checked. The area of common support is the region where the propensity score distributions of the treatment and comparison groups overlap. The common support assumption ensures that ‘treatment observation have a comparison observation “nearby” in the propensity score distribution’ (Heckman, LaLonde and Smith, 1999). Since some significant differences were found between the intervention and comparison groups in terms of their baseline characteristics (as detailed in Section 4.2), some of the women in the intervention group are too different from the comparison group to allow for meaningful comparison. We used a minima and maxima comparison, deleting all observations whose propensity score is smaller than the minimum and larger than the maximum in the opposite group (Caliendo and Kopeinig, 2008). Seventy seven of the 225 women interviewed in the project communities were dropped because they lay outside the area of common support. The consequence of dropping project participant households is that the estimates of differences in outcome characteristics between the various treatment groups only apply to those intervention households that were not dropped; that is, they do not represent the surveyed population as a whole.

Figure A2.2 illustrates the propensity scores and show the proportion of women lying on and off the areas of common support, by treatment group.

Figure A2.2: Propensity score on and off area of common support



Matching intervention and comparison women

Following Rosenbaum and Rubin (1983), after estimating the propensity scores and defining the area of common support, individuals are matched on the basis of their propensity score. The literature has developed a variety of matching procedures. For the main results presented in this Effectiveness Review we chose to employ the method of kernel matching. Kernel-matching weights the contribution of each comparison group member, attaching greater weight to those comparison observations that provide a better match with the treatment observations. One common approach is to use the normal distribution with mean zero as a kernel, and weights given by the distribution of the differences in propensity score. Thus 'good' matches are given greater weight than 'poor' matches.

The *psmatch2* module in Stata was used with a bandwidth of 0.04 and with the analysis restricted to the area of common support.

When using PSM, standard errors of the estimates were bootstrapped using 1,000 repetitions (clustered by village), to account for the additional variation caused by the estimation of the propensity scores and the determination of the common support.³

Check balancing

For PSM to be valid, the intervention group and the matched comparison group need to be balanced, in that they need to be similar in terms of their observed baseline characteristics. This should be checked. The most straightforward method to do this is to test whether there are any statistically significant differences in baseline covariates between the intervention and comparison group in the matched sample. None of the variables implemented for the matching are statistically significant in the matched sample.

Table A2.4: Balancing test

| Variable | Unmatched Matched | Mean Treated Control | %reduct | | t-test | V_e(T)/ V_e(C) |
|---|----------------------|----------------------------|---------|---------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| | | | %bias | bias | t p>t | |
| Number groups participating – 2011 | U | .35111 .24222 .34404 | 17.4 | | 2.15 0.032 -1.45 | 1.19 |
| | M | .46122 | -18.7 | -7.6 | 0.147 | 0.62* |
| Share of respondent income in HH income in 2011 | U | 34.311 16.247 32.523 | 51.4 | | 6.59 0.000 -0.21 | 1.44* |
| | M | 33.324 | -2.3 | 95.6 | 0.835 | 0.89 |
| 1[Respondent is head of HH] | U | .30222 .10889 .27982 | 49.2 | | 6.44 0.000 -0.13 | 1.78* |
| | M | .28559 | -1.5 | 97 | 0.894 | 1 |
| 1[Respondent's religion Maronite in 2011] | U | .78222 .65848 .77982 | 27.8 | | 3.33 0.001 0.77 | 0.76* |
| | M | .74858 | 7 | 74.8 | 0.443 | 1 |
| 1[Respondent's religion Catholic in 2011] | U | .12889 .25893 .13303 | -33.3 | | -3.91 0.000 -0.05 | 0.59* |
| | M | .13475 | -0.4 | 98.7 | 0.958 | 0.99 |
| 1[Respondent was married in 2011] | U | .58667 .70444 .60092 | -24.8 | | -3.07 0.002 -0.04 | 1.18 |
| | M | .60286 | -0.4 | 98.3 | 0.967 | 0.99 |
| 1[Respondent was separated/divorced in 2011] | U | .10667 .01778 .08716 | 37.4 | | 5.22 0.000 0.68 | 4.20** |
| | M | .06967 | 7.3 | 80.3 | 0.498 | 1.1 |
| 1[Respondent's marriage in 2011 had 'ups and downs'] | U | .08444 .03111 .08716 | 23 | | 3.05 0.002 -0.57 | 2.49** |
| | M | .10308 | -6.9 | 70.1 | 0.572 | 0.93 |
| 1[Respondent's marriage in 2011 had 'problems'] | U | .08444 .02667 .08257 | 25.4 | | 3.40 0.001 0.37 | 2.84** |
| | M | .07317 | 4.1 | 83.7 | 0.715 | 1.14 |
| Age of the respondent | U | 45.12 45.058 45.142 | 0.5 | | 0.06 0.950 0.71 | 1.01 |
| | M | 44.326 | 6.8 | -1217.2 | 0.481 | 1.15 |
| Education level of the respondent | U | 5.3111 4.3772 5.2661 | 47.5 | | 5.69 0.000 -0.15 | 0.79* |
| | M | 5.2931 | -1.4 | 97.1 | 0.885 | 0.84 |
| 1[2nd wealth quintile] | U | .15556 .22273 | -17.2 | | -2.05 0.041 | 0.81 |

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|--|-------|------|-------------------------|------|
| | M | .16055 .17305 | | -3.2 | 81.4 | -0.35 0.727 | 0.88 |
| 1[3rd wealth quintile] | U | .18222 .20909 | | -6.8 | | -0.82 0.413 | 0.9 |
| | M | .1789 .17934 | | -0.1 | 98.4 | -0.01 0.990 | 0.99 |
| 1[4th wealth quintile] | U | .20889 .19545 .21101 | | 3.3 | | 0.41 0.683 -0.05 | 1.06 |
| | M | .21308 | | -0.5 | 84.6 | 0.958 | 0.99 |
| 1[5th wealth quintile] | U | .23556 .18182 .23394 | | 13.2 | | 1.64 0.101 -0.21 | 1.25 |
| | M | .24262 | | -2.1 | 83.9 | 0.832 | 1.02 |
| Number of children in the household | U | .54667 .80444 .54587 | | -24.1 | | -2.91 0.004 -0.54 | 0.83 |
| | M | .59691 | | -4.8 | 80.2 | 0.588 | 1.06 |

* if 'of concern', i.e. variance ratio in [0.5, 0.8) or (1.25, 2]

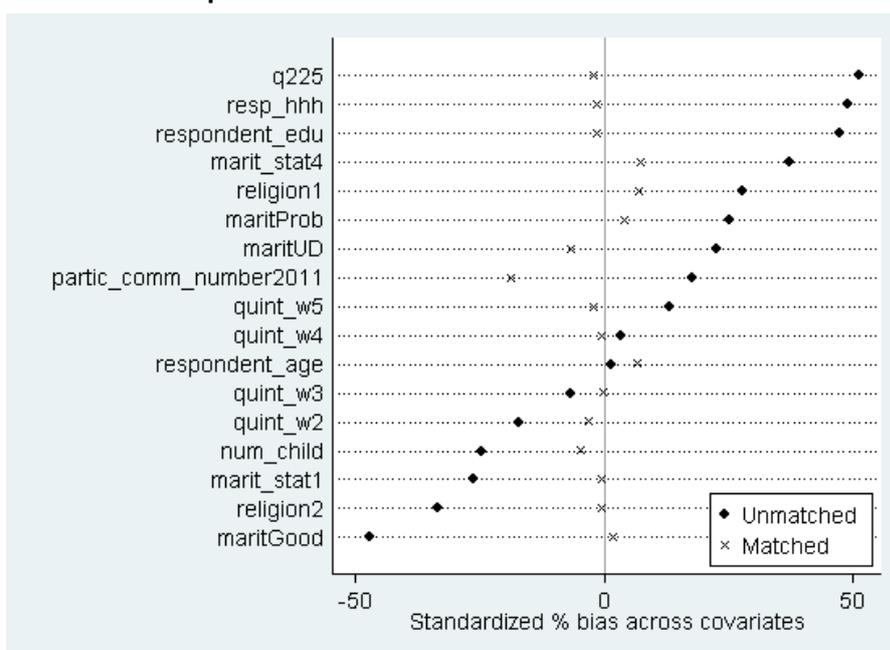
** if 'bad', i.e. variance ratio <0.5 or >2

| Sample | Ps R2 | LR chi2 | p>chi2 | MeanBias | MedBias | B | R | %concern | %bad |
|-----------|-------|---------|--------|----------|---------|--------|------|----------|------|
| Unmatched | 0.176 | 149.43 | 0 | 25.1 | 24.5 | 104.8* | 1.6 | 31 | 19 |
| Matched | 0.01 | 5.98 | 0.988 | 4.2 | 2.7 | 23.2 | 0.54 | 6 | 0 |

* if B>25%, R outside [0.5; 2]

Figure A2.3 shows the standardised percentage of bias across matching variables for matched and unmatched samples.

Figure A2.3: Standardised % of bias across matching variables for matched and unmatched samples



APPENDIX 3: ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

In order to address the validity of the results presented in Section 5, a series of robustness checks are carried out to check if the preferred matching algorithm is the one that best performs the matching between intervention and comparison groups. This section presents a number of alternative matching algorithms used to test the robustness of the estimates presented in Section 5.

1 Multivariate regression

The first basic specification for estimating the impact of project participation is an OLS model (when the dependent is continuous) or probit model when the dependent is binary.

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Project participation}_i + \delta' X_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Where Y_i is the dependent variable; X_i is a vector of household covariates used in the model in table A2.1; finally the variable of interest is the dummy variable *Project Participation* that assumes value equal to one when the household is enrolled in the project, zero otherwise. When the dependent variable Y_i is binary variable, a probit model replaces the OLS specification. It is important to note that in absence of randomised allocation of the project among the population in our sample, OLS and probit models fail to identify the causal effect of the programme, and can only be used as additional qualitative checks for the non-parametric estimates. Only the estimate of β_1 will be reported.

2 Propensity Score Matching – Nearest Neighbour

The Nearest Neighbour (NN) matching algorithm finds an observation from the comparison group to be matched with an observation from a treated individual that is closest in terms of their propensity score. Several variants of NN matching are possible, e.g. NN matching 'with replacement' and 'without replacement'. In the former case, an untreated individual can be used more than once as a match, whereas in the latter case it is considered only once. Matching with replacement involves a trade-off between bias and variance. If we allow replacement, the average quality of matching will increase and the bias will decrease. This is of particular interest with data where the propensity score distribution is very different in the treatment and the control groups (Caliendo and Kopeinig, 2008).

3 Propensity Score Matching – Caliper

NN matching faces the risk of bad matches if the closest neighbour is far away. This can be avoided by imposing a tolerance level on the maximum propensity score distance (caliper). Imposing a caliper works in the same direction as allowing for replacement. Bad matches are avoided and hence the matching quality rises. However, if fewer matches can be performed, the variance of the estimates increases. Applying caliper matching means that an individual from the comparison group is chosen as a matching partner for a treated individual that lies within the caliper ('propensity range') and is closest in terms of propensity score. Estimates in this analysis will impose a caliper of 0.05.

4 Propensity Score Weighting

Following the example of Hirano and Imbens (2001)⁴ we implemented a regression adjustment with weights based on the propensity score. The average treatment effect can be estimated in a parametric framework as follows:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Project participation}_i + \delta_2' Z_i + \delta_1' X_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Where Y_i represents the outcome of interest; Project participation $_i$ is a dummy binary variable equal to one if an individual/household is enrolled into the programme and zero otherwise; X_i is a vector of matching covariates used to estimate the propensity score match; and Z_i is a vector of control variables which cannot be used for the matching as they are not supposed to influence project participation. The regression is estimated with weights equal to one for the treated units and $\hat{e}(x)/(1 - \hat{e}(x))$ for control units.

This parametric regression analysis framework has the advantage of exploring heterogeneity in the treatment effect. Moreover it allows controlling for variables that cannot be included in the propensity score equation. The robustness check tables will only report β_1 .

Table A3.1: Overall women’s empowerment index

| | (1) OLS / probit | (2) PSM NN | (3) PSM Caliper | (4) Propensity Score Weighting |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Women’s empowerment index | 0.066*** (0.012) | 0.068*** (0.016) | 0.068*** (0.017) | 0.064*** (0.012) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| Women’s empowerment index (justice) | 0.068*** (0.015) | 0.094*** (0.014) | 0.094*** (0.014) | 0.079*** (0.014) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |

Robust standard errors in parentheses. PSM estimates bootstrapped 1,000 repetitions.

* p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Table A3.2: Women’s empowerment – power dimensions

| | (1) OLS / probit | (2) PSM NN | (3) PSM Caliper | (4) Propensity Score Weighting |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Personal – Power within | 0.378*** (0.100) | 0.327** (0.165) | 0.327* (0.170) | 0.296*** (0.111) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| Personal – Power to | 0.080 (0.050) | 0.107 (0.075) | 0.107 (0.075) | 0.065 (0.049) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| Relational – Power with | 0.181** (0.071) | 0.144 (0.139) | 0.144 (0.140) | 0.178** (0.071) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| Relational – Power over | 0.017 (0.073) | 0.053 (0.105) | 0.053 (0.105) | 0.051 (0.073) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| Environmental | 0.222*** (0.029) | 0.264*** (0.041) | 0.264*** (0.041) | 0.239*** (0.029) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |

Robust standard errors in parentheses. PSM estimates bootstrapped 1,000 repetitions.

* p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Table A3.3: Power from within

| | (1) OLS / probit | (2) PSM NN | (3) PSM Caliper | (4) Propensity Score Weighting |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Self-esteem – number | 0.045 (0.052) | 0.000 (0.076) | 0.000 (0.077) | 0.014 (0.059) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| Self-confidence – number | 0.081 (0.074) | 0.144 (0.104) | 0.144 (0.103) | 0.061 (0.077) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| Knowledge – number | -0.079 (0.103) | -0.072 (0.152) | -0.072 (0.151) | 0.027 (0.102) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| Women's Economic Role – number | 0.196 (0.122) | 0.041 (0.057) | 0.041 (0.055) | 0.034 (0.133) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| Gender rights – number | 0.198*** (0.050) | 0.144* (0.079) | 0.144* (0.080) | 0.180*** (0.051) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| Acceptability of GBV – number | 0.151*** (0.042) | 0.171** (0.076) | 0.171** (0.076) | 0.120*** (0.045) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| Recognition of care – number | 0.140*** (0.044) | 0.153* (0.079) | 0.153** (0.078) | 0.117** (0.046) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |

Robust standard errors in parentheses. PSM estimates bootstrapped 1,000 repetitions.

* p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Table A3.4: Power to

| | (1) OLS / probit | (2) PSM NN | (3) PSM Caliper | (4) Propensity Score Weighting |
|---|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1[Personal autonomy (participating meetings)] | 0.582*** (0.152) | 0.144*** (0.053) | 0.144*** (0.052) | 0.560*** (0.161) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| 1[Personal autonomy (GBV)] | -0.567*** (0.173) | -0.063** (0.026) | -0.063** (0.026) | -0.629*** (0.171) |
| N | 633 | 665 | 665 | 633 |
| Individual capability (apply knowledge) | 0.149** (0.067) | 0.131 (0.107) | 0.131 (0.108) | 0.089 (0.069) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |

Robust standard errors in parentheses. PSM estimates bootstrapped 1,000 repetitions.

* p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Table A3.5: Power from with

| | (1) OLS / probit | (2) PSM NN | (3) PSM Caliper | (4) Propensity Score Weighting |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Social capital – number | 0.214*** (0.074) | 0.275** (0.119) | 0.275** (0.121) | 0.260*** (0.071) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| Participation in community groups | 0.241 (0.153) | 0.009 (0.070) | 0.009 (0.069) | 0.086 (0.172) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| Political participation – number | 0.024 (0.051) | 0.054 (0.074) | 0.054 (0.073) | 0.029 (0.053) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| Leaders' support – binary | -0.037 (0.087) | -0.113 (0.119) | -0.113 (0.115) | 0.041 (0.097) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| Men's support – binary | -0.112** (0.046) | -0.122 (0.085) | -0.122 (0.085) | -0.135** (0.055) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |

Robust standard errors in parentheses. PSM estimates bootstrapped 1,000 repetitions.

* p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Table A3.6: Power over

| | (1) OLS / probit | (2) PSM NN | (3) PSM Caliper | (4) Propensity Score Weighting |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Involvement in HH decision making | 0.051 (0.032) | 0.038 (0.054) | 0.038 (0.052) | 0.057 (0.035) |
| N | 664 | 664 | 664 | 664 |
| Control over household assets | -0.016 (0.035) | 0.006 (0.059) | 0.006 (0.055) | -0.000 (0.037) |
| N | 664 | 664 | 664 | 664 |
| Independent income | -0.367 (1.596) | 0.279 (5.111) | 0.279 (4.981) | 0.463 (1.976) |
| N | 663 | 663 | 663 | 663 |
| Experience of violence | 0.283 (0.202) | 0.459 (0.329) | 0.459 (0.326) | 0.199 (0.252) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |

Robust standard errors in parentheses. PSM estimates bootstrapped 1,000 repetitions.

* p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Table A3.7: Environmental change

| | (1) OLS / probit | (2) PSM NN | (3) PSM Caliper | (4) Propensity Score Weighting |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Quality of legal services | 0.328*** (0.119) | 0.149 (0.177) | 0.149 (0.174) | 0.200 (0.125) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |
| Accessibility of the legal services | 0.686*** (0.067) | 0.842*** (0.089) | 0.842*** (0.087) | 0.805*** (0.069) |
| N | 665 | 665 | 665 | 665 |

Robust standard errors in parentheses. PSM estimates bootstrapped 1,000 repetitions.

* p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

NOTES

- 1 The correct answer is reported in brackets.
- 2 Caliendo, M. and Kopeinig, S. 2008. Some Practical Guidance for the Implementation of Propensity Score Matching, *Journal of Economic Surveys*, Wiley Blackwell, vol. 22(1), pages 31–72.
- 3 Bootstrapping is a statistical procedure where repeated samples are drawn from the original sample with replacement. This results in a statistical distribution of parameter estimates (the sampling distribution). The bootstrapped standard error is the standard deviation of this sampling distribution and it can be shown that as the number of repeated samples becomes large, provided certain technical conditions are met this is a good estimate for the standard error of the estimate.
- 4 Hirano, K. & Imbens G.W. (2001), “Estimation of Causal Effects using Propensity Score Weighting: An Application to Data on Right Heart Catheterization” *Health Services & Outcomes Research Methodology*, vol. 2, pp. 259–278.

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