



The KIP Project on Gender and Sexuality Private Roundtables Summary

As part of the KIP Project activities, five private roundtable discussions were held throughout the month of November at the American University of Beirut around gender and sexuality, for the purpose of discussing and identifying areas of research and data gaps that need to be addressed in order to move forward within this field, in Lebanon.

The private roundtable discussions revolved around gender and sexuality in relation to: (1) Education, (2) Economic Opportunity and Empowerment, (3) Health and Well-being, (4) Politics and (5) Legal and Civil Rights. Roundtable participants included stakeholders from academia, civil society, legal, private and public sectors interested in or working around gender and sexuality under one – or more – of the abovementioned areas. Throughout the discussions, key research questions were identified and fed into the development of a Call for Proposal that was disseminated among individuals and stakeholders interested in conducting research around the topic. The questions identified throughout the discussions were grouped under the below major themes:

- (1) **Sexual Harassment and other forms of abusive behaviors or discrimination** disproportionately targeting women and other marginalized groups at work, at school, in universities, and in other traditional or nontraditional structures in Lebanon.
- (2) Barriers and facilitators affecting **participation and representation of women and other marginalized groups** at work, in government, in management and leadership as well as in other decision making roles in traditional or nontraditional structures in Lebanon.
- (3) The current **health and wellbeing practices and perceptions** around of gender and sexuality in Lebanon.
- (4) The next generation: the perceptions, attitudes and the current practices of **youth and young adults in relation to gender equality and sexuality** in Lebanon.
- (5) **Conceptual etymology and legal genealogy of gender, sexuality, and bodily rights** in Lebanon

Following the call for proposal, a total of 15 KIP-funded grants focused on examining issues relating to gender and sexuality with the aim of positively contributing to the empowerment of women and other marginalized groups will be awarded by the KIP Project. The 15 sub-awards will be divided as per the below:

- A total of **9 grants of \$5,000 USD each** will fund documentation projects where researchers gather information and data pertaining to gender and sexuality issues in public, judicial, legal, syndicated, private business, and civil society organizations.
- A total of **6 grants of \$10,000 USD each** will fund theory-driven and knowledge-generating academic research projects.

Within the same process of data gathering and dissemination of knowledge, a 6th roundtable was held on the 27th of January, 2016 at the American University of Beirut with major donors potentially interested in supporting efforts within the area of gender and sexuality. The roundtable was held for the purpose of sharing the major areas of need within the gender and sexuality field in Lebanon identified by stakeholders, in order to inform future funding decisions.

Private Roundtable discussion

Identified research questions

I. Gender and Sexuality in Education

- Conducting a study on the current sexual practices of the Lebanese youth, and their perception of sexuality.
- Conducting a study on the sexual harassment policies that are currently established in educational institutions.
- Conducting a study on the sexual awareness among teachers/ students in different schools around Lebanon.
- Studying the attitudes of teachers, students, parents and school administrators on gender and sexuality and their representation of gender and sexuality.
- Studying the impact of popular culture and pre-mature sexualization in media on children in a variety of schools in Lebanon (e.g. public, private, religious, secular, international, etc.).
- Conducting a study on the school programs that are introducing sexual awareness in Lebanon.
- Studying the extent to which gender equity is represented in School textbooks.
- Conducting a study on the way gender is reflected/ portrayed in the informal curriculum.
- Conducting a study on whether gender is integrated in teacher preparation (pre-service) and teacher training (in-service) programs – and on the ways gender is represented in those training, if this is case.
- Conducting a study on attitudes towards LGBT in schools.
- Conducting a study on career orientations in schools and their impact on the choice of specialization at the university level.
- Conducting a study on gender mainstreaming in career orientation practices
- Conducting a study on unmarried mothers and the implication on kids' education.
- Conducting a study on the definition of masculinity within the Lebanese society.

- Conducting a study on the gender composition of teachers across levels as well as the composition of school principals and the implications this has on gender norms constructions among students.

II. Gender and Sexuality in relation to Economic Opportunity and Empowerment

- Conducting a study around the perceptions and attitudes toward having a female quota in private and public sectors.
- Conducting a study around the Sexual Harassment policies that are available in private organizations and the mechanisms that are being implemented by employers to protect their employees, knowing that the Lebanese Labor law does not cover sexual harassment.
- Conducting a study on the motivations for women in rural areas to develop their own businesses (whether they are doing it out of necessity or opportunity).
- Updating the data on women participation in the labor force.
- Conducting a study around the reasons for the conscious exit of women from the workforce despite the policies that allow for flexibility. Identifying the profile of the women who are exiting and the implications that follow.
- Conducting a study that would examine whether cheap labor availability encourages discrimination against women and reinforces traditional gender roles
- Conducting a study on the contribution of migrant domestic workers to the Lebanese economy
- Understanding the efforts that are being put in action by employers to retain women in organizations and cater for their needs and identifying key success stories.
- Conducting a study on the perceptions of pregnant women in and their access to the job market.
- Perceptions of women who have children in the labor market and the opportunities they have for career advancement.
- Identifying the dimensions on which women are different, by gathering data from women in different Socio-economic status (low, middle, high) and from different regions (rural vs. urban)
- Conducting a study around the effectiveness of micro-finance and what are the KPIs to measure the success of micro-financing?

- Studying the applicability of disruptive technology in Lebanon and opportunities for women's empowerment in rural areas.
- Conducting a study around the financial contribution of Migrant Domestic Workers to the Economy.
- Conducting a study on the perceptions of Lebanese women to hire Syrians as domestic workers.
- Understanding the household dynamics and the impact of cheap labor on decisions related to women's engagement in the labor force, and across several SES.
- Conducting a study on the sectors for employment and entrepreneurship that are favorable for women
- Identifying the sectors that offer potential growth for women in rural areas?
- Conducting research on the risks of flexible employment for women in terms of benefits

III. Gender and Sexuality in Health and Well-being

- Conducting a study on the link between women's social economic status and their experiences of the patriarchal system (do women who have more access to resources experience patriarchy differently than the ones who do not).
- Studying the extent to which belonging to a certain socio-economic class affects your chances of being sexually harassed, and whether having access to resources can help women protect themselves.
- Conducting a study on the implications that having sex in uncommon places might have on women's health and well-being.
- Conducting a study on the impact of prejudice that is exerted towards women who experience their sexuality on their mental health.
- Exploring to what extent patriarchy is practiced by male and female healthcare providers, and exploring their attitudes towards it.
- Exploring perceptions of gender and sexuality among health care providers and the general population (male and female), including their perceptions of the different sexual identities, sexual pleasure, body, etc.
- Collecting data on changes that women experience in their reproductive organs, when they become sexually active.

- Assessing the training that is given to healthcare providers on the treatment of problems related to sexuality (obstetricians/gynecologists, family doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists, etc.)
- Understanding the ways through which gender and sexuality issues intersect with other social inequalities and patriarchy.
- Exploring the behavior of women in male dominated jobs or environments and vice versa
- Understanding the ways through which women who are perceived to be unmarried by society are stigmatized, and the impact of the stigma on mental health.
- Understanding the impact of the perceived social pressure to experience pleasure in sex on women's mental health.
- Conducting a study on the impact of racism and xenophobia on sexual practices.
- Exploring whether society is becoming more accepting of gender identities and issues.
- Exploring whether gender roles are shifting within the Lebanese society.
- Conducting a study on readiness of healthcare providers to understand and support people with different orientations.
- Conducting a study on the sexual life of university students for the purpose of understanding the extent to which students are experiencing their sexuality.

IV. Gender and Sexuality in Politics

- Conducting a study on whether women among one sect have the same voting behavior as men within the same sect.
- Conducting a study on the perceptions of a woman political candidate with homosexual orientation or women with gender-nonaligned behavior/appearance by the general public.
- Understanding the voting behavior of women, including the motivations behind women's votes and the factors that impact their voting. Here it is important to conduct a meta-analysis on the voting position of women on political issues. Tracking the number of women who ran in elections by placing gender as a registration category is important.
- Conducting a comparative study on women and men's voting behavior.

- Studying the impact of women's vote on certain laws and on the election of political candidates.
- Understanding the activism behavior among women, and the factors that motivate women to/ prevent them from mobilizing around their political rights and issues.
- Conducting a study on whether women NGOs were capable of transcending political confessionalism.
- Understanding the factors that are preventing women from reaching political positions and getting their basic political rights (whether women are hindered by political confessionalism, and if this is the case, what are the factors within political confessionalism that are hindering women – are there other factors involved, such as political sectarianism, heterogeneity, etc.). Related to this attempting to map the heterogeneous landscape that creates strong barriers excluding women from political participation. What is the degree of causality related to the intersection and interaction of patriarchy, feudal system and sectarianism working to keep women out of the political arena? More simply:
 - Understanding whether the Lebanese society is a pluralist or heterogeneous society.
 - Understanding the degree of causality between the sectarian, feudal, patriarchal political system and the discrimination/ marginalization of women and marginalized groups such as LGBT.
 - Conducting an analysis of the concepts of feudalism, familialism, and clientelism within sects in Lebanon, and understanding whether and how these factors hinder women's access to political positions.
- Understanding the position of religious leaders with regards to women's engagement in politics.
- Understanding whether polarization and sectarianism impact the behavior of politicians and voters, and which of those two factors have a greater impact.
- Conducting a study on the young generation's perceptions of women who are currently in politics, and the impact that those perceptions have on the political engagement of young women.
- Gathering data on the number of women that are/were engaged in politics – including the number of women who ran for elections, in addition to the ones who reached political positions.
- Conducting a study on women's role in the civil and social activist movement.
- Conducting a study on the change in women's position on certain political issues over the years.

- Conducting a comparative study on the experiences of men and women who undertook the same positions in politics.
- Understanding the youth's perception of women's role in political participation – including senior high school students and junior university students.
- Understanding the factors that prevented university students from engaging in the recent protests and from being involved in the garbage issue.
- Conducting a comparative study on the political engagement of students in different majors within the same university – or in the same major among different universities.
- Conducting a study on the regional differences between youths' engagement in politics.
- Understanding the factors that drives the Lebanese society to quit fighting for its rights.
- Understanding the impact that the political engagement on social media might have on the engagement in protests, among the young generation.

V. Gender and Sexuality in Legal and Civil Rights

A. Abortion

- Understanding the situation of abortion in Lebanon – in both rural and urban areas.
- Understanding the consequences that abortion has on women from different backgrounds (Migrant women, women from the working class and refugees, women in low socio-economic status, etc.).
- Understanding the official and unofficial discourses around abortion, the difference between the two, and the impact this difference has on the perception of women's body and bodily rights.
- Clarifying the legal situation around abortion in Lebanon by gathering the stories of women who went through the experience of abortion themselves, and understanding the impact that the law has on these women – in the aim of pushing for laws that would protect them.
- Understanding the reasons that keep the discussion around abortion in Lebanon, a closed discussion.

B. Sex Workers

- Conducting a study on the situation of women sex workers in Lebanon. The study would focus on three categories: (1) Women from Eastern Europe who come to Lebanon under an artist visa, (2) Queer sex workers – men and women – and (3) Lebanese women and women from other nationalities (such as Syrians, Iraqis, etc. It would also involve:
 - Gathering individual stories of these women, and learning more about their experiences and of their own perceptions of sex work.

- Collecting data on the human trafficking law in Lebanon and the ways in which it is being applied.
- Gathering data on the problems faced by sex workers, including the access they have to the law in case they were assaulted, their levels of awareness of the law, their health issues and access to healthcare system, etc.

C. Assistive Reproduction means

- Understanding the ways through which restricting assisted means of reproduction to married couples imposes one model of the organization of a relationship between couples, and the impact this has on the choices of the women who want to have a family outside of this model.
 - This study can be conducted using a multi-disciplinary approach, by studying the cases of unmarried or homosexual women who would like to build a family, lawyers, women that used assistive reproductive means abroad and came back to live in Lebanon.

D. Sexual harassment and gender discrimination

- Conducting a study on sexual harassment in the workplace, in government institutions and if possible, in public. This would also include:
 - Measuring the experiences of both victims and perpetrators.
 - Understanding people's definitions of sexual harassment acts, within the Lebanese context.
- Conducting a study on the discrimination based on gender and sexuality that is taking place in the workplace, educational institutions and other institutions. This information would help lobby policymakers and influence institutions to take measures against discrimination, despite the fact that no related laws are available and in place. This also includes:
 - Conducting a study on the ways through which people who are subject to discrimination are protected.
 - Understanding the demographic variables that affect acts of discrimination.
- Conducting a study on the oppression and discrimination that is available in the Arabic Language against women and sexual minorities.
- Conducting a study on the economic costs of gender inequality.

E. Sexuality

- Understanding the perceptions of sex in the Arab world – both homosexual and heterosexual sex.
- Understanding the language that is used for expressing sexuality and sexual identities in the Arab world.

- Understanding the concept of sexuality that was adopted in the Arab world before the modern development of sexuality.
- Understanding the perceptions of homosexuality in the different Arab countries.
- Gathering data on whether sex education is provided in the Lebanese public schools – focus on rural areas.
- Conducting research on Transgender rights, their legal issues, and the support systems that are available for them in Lebanon.
- Conducting research around the situation of Queer women in Lebanon.
- Understanding the construction and regulation of sexuality and gender throughout the Ottoman period and up until the French mandate.
- Collecting data on pre-marital sex and cohabitation in Lebanon.

F. Legal system and Personal status law

- Understanding the Legal genealogy of the construction of gender throughout the Ottoman period and up to the French mandate.
- Conducting research on the application of the family violence law, and its impact on the number and frequency of committed violence and marital rape.
- Conducting a study on the opinion of women and men in rural and urban areas – and across different religions – in relation to having a civil law for personal status, and on their perception of civil marriage – a study that would be a step forward towards legal and social reform.
- Gathering historical views on the personal status laws during the Ottoman period and until the French mandate.
- Understanding the reasons that push religious leaders to oppose civil marriage.

G. Adolescent girls' marriage

- Conducting a study on the prevalence and frequency of adolescent girls' marriage in Lebanon – and studying the differences across regions.
- Understanding the impact that adolescents' marriage has on Lebanese women and girls.
- Gathering data on adolescent girls' marriage in the Lebanese regions that are affected by the refugee crisis.

- Understanding the impact of Islamic extremism on child marriage.

H. Other areas

- Understanding the language that is used around women, gays and non-married individuals within the Lebanese society.
- Conducting a study on the relationship of Lebanese citizens (namely women and LGBT) with the security forces – namely the vice squad – through collecting data on the experiences of the ones women and LGBT members who got involved with these forces.
- Conducting a study on the portrayal of women and the LGBT community in the media and understanding the role that the media is playing with regards to women and LGBT issues.