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Press Release

The United Nations in Lebanon Launches Fund to Support Women’s Rights Organizations to Enhance Women’s Participation in the Beirut Port Explosion Response and Recovery Process

[Beirut, June 11, 2021] – The [Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund \(WPHF\)](#) together with the United Nations in Lebanon announced the launch of six grassroots projects to enhance women’s participation in the Beirut Port Explosion’s response and recovery process – alongside the official launch of the WPHF in Lebanon.

WPHF is a flexible and rapid financing tool supporting quality interventions to enhance the capacity of local women around the world to prevent conflict, respond to crises and emergencies, and seize key peacebuilding opportunities. Supported by the Government of Germany, the WPHF in Lebanon will provide funding to six local women’s rights organizations¹.

The Beirut Port explosion, on 4 August 2020, created significant immediate humanitarian needs and severe long-term consequences. [A rapid gender assessment of the Beirut Port Explosion](#) highlighted the large number of female headed households living in the explosion affected areas, and the large number of elderly women. It found that female headed households, elderly, refugees, disabled, LBQT women and migrant workers are particularly vulnerable to poverty and food insecurity as they have less resources to repurchase or replace damaged or destroyed belongings (including documentation), reconstruct damaged shelters (often rented), and buy food and essential items. The assessment recommended, among other things, increasing the meaningful participation of women and marginalized groups in the decision-making for the design, implementation, management and evaluation of national and international response and recovery efforts.

With the aim of strengthening small grassroots women’s organizations in Lebanon, the selection of the six women’s rights organizations focused on national and local women-led, women’s rights, feminist, or civil society organizations (CSOs) with a proven track record working with women and girls in their diversity, especially targeting small grassroots and local community organizations.

“Congratulations to the six women-led organizations that will carry out a challenging, yet a much-needed and powerful mission to bring about transformative change in Lebanon,” said Najat Rochdi, United Nations Deputy Special Coordinator, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon. “Women of Lebanon were at the forefront of the humanitarian and relief efforts in the aftermath of the tragic Beirut port explosions as well as other peace-making initiatives. Their leading role must be recognized and

¹ Details on the six organizations can be found below



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strengthened if we are to achieve a just and equitable recovery that leaves no one behind,” she added. “The WPH Fund in Lebanon is a sheer evidence of our continued commitment, along with our long-standing partners, to step up support for women’s leadership at all levels, particularly in places where decisions are required”.

Through the work of the selected organizations, the Fund will support women’s participation in the recovery process through a variety of approaches, including the improvement of public disaster management, creation of women’s committees and platforms for dialogue and discussions, as well as advocacy through social media, art and academia. The project activities are expected to begin in June 2021 and end by August 2022.

“Lebanese women have been playing remarkable roles in responding to the country’s many crises. They have been central to Lebanon’s protest movements, vital to the relief efforts that followed the Beirut blast, and have been leading numerous civil society groups. However, they still find themselves sidelined from many decision-making processes”, said His Excellency Andreas Kindl, Ambassador of Germany to Lebanon. “By joining forces with the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund in Lebanon and the impressive finalist organizations, Germany hopes to support female activists and provide them with the tools needed to thrive.”

About the selected NGOs:

Seeds for Legal initiatives (SEEDS) is a Lebanese NGO that works with marginalized groups to raise awareness on Legal rights and advocate for legal reform. Their proposed project, “**The Movement for Women’s Lives Matter**” will launch a study on the extent to which recovery programs that received funding following the Beirut Explosion succeeded in promoting the participation of women in decision making processes. The results of the study and the forthcoming recommendations will ultimately serve to influence future recovery funds and ensure they are inclusive of women and girls, by raising awareness on the need for a gender inclusive approach in recovery efforts, defining the gaps in current practices and advocating for necessary policy change measures at the donor and CSO levels.

Haven for Artists (HFA) is a queer feminist arts NGO that works at the intersection of art and activism, campaigning and advocating for women’s and queer rights through arts, culture and creative spaces such as festivals, exhibitions and events. Their proposed project, “**Raising voices of the marginalized majority**” will offer participatory, political and cultural platforms to engage and amplify the voices of women and marginalized communities and enhance their political participation by creating spaces for cross-community dialogue, networking and long-term collaborations between women/ activists across three major cities in Lebanon.

Fe-Male is a feminist grassroots collective that works to reinforce the presence of young women and girls in leadership positions and achieve gender equality by amplifying the voices and presence of women and girls in the media space. Their project, “**Beirut Blast: The Untold Stories of Women and Girls and their Role in Recovery,**” aims to use traditional and social media spaces to amplify the voices



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of women and girls in Lebanon, document their contributions to peace building and recovery efforts in order to mobilize and advocate towards women's inclusion in decision-making processes and national recovery plans. High quality documentation and content production related to women's stories will be undertaken, alongside a media audit and capacity building workshop.

Auberge Beity is a Beirut-based NGO that focuses on sustainable social and economic development through capacity building and empowerment of local communities, especially of children, youth and women. Their project, **“Women’s participation in disasters management accountability,”** aims to enhance women’s participation in governance processes and peacebuilding among local communities and public service providers in two affected areas of the Beirut blast. The project has identified 3 groups of women to engage with, who were most affected or involved in the Beirut Blast including elderly women who live alone; women running their own businesses and/or heads of households; and women frontline activists who took on initiatives to save people’s lives and provide a helping hand and/ or conduct fundraising. It will empower women in local NGOs to meet community challenges and improve disaster management.

Madaniyat is a Lebanese NGO that works to create a fairer, more inclusive and democratic society in Lebanon, where politics is more accessible to women and youth. In partnership with Ondes, their project, **“REVIVE | WOMEN (Women organized mobilization, empowerment and networking)”** aims to address the current marginalization of women from participation in humanitarian action as well as in local decision making and planning of initiatives. Through the establishment of women’s committees, the project will empower and enable increased women’s representation and participation in formal and informal local planning, decision-making, and peacebuilding efforts undertaken by municipalities and other stakeholders.

Dar Al Amal is a Lebanese NGO that works to safeguard women and children’s rights, particularly those vulnerable and at risk of violence and exploitation. Their project, **“Creating dialogue between vulnerable communities and service providers to promote gender sensitive interventions in areas affected by the Beirut Blast”** aims to create and empower a women-led group to influence better access to services and create safe spaces for vulnerable women in Burj Hammoud and Sin El fil. A group of 50 women will participate in awareness raising sessions with the aim of selecting a core group of 10. The core group will be equipped with skills to map, assess the needs of their communities and establish a dialogue mechanism with service providers from the area.

About the WPHF:

The [Women’s Peace & Humanitarian Fund \(WPHF\)](#) is the only global financing mechanism dedicated exclusively to supporting women’s participation in peacebuilding and humanitarian action. WPHF is a flexible and rapid financing tool supporting quality interventions to enhance the capacity of local women to prevent conflict, respond to crises and emergencies, and seize key peacebuilding opportunities. WPHF



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is an innovative partnership between Member States, the UN, and civil society, with all stakeholders represented on its global Funding Board. UN Women provides secretariat support to WPHF and ensures coordination to implement the decisions of the Funding Board. WPHF donors currently include Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Estonia, European Union (Spotlight Initiative), Germany, Ireland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. WPHF is actively supporting over 345 local women’s organizations across 22 of its 25 eligible countries and has mobilized a total of \$58 Million USD for grassroots women’s rights and women-led organizations working in settings of conflict and humanitarian emergency.