



# ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT 2019

## Women Empowered for Leadership (WE4L)

Reporting period:  
1 January-31 December 2019

Project year: Fourth (of five) | FLOW activity ref.: 28322

<https://womeninleadership.hivos.org/>



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## Introduction

The Women Empowered for Leadership (WE4L) program implements and supports projects in Jordan, Lebanon, Malawi, Zambia & Zimbabwe to ensure that women have equal opportunities and the capacity to fully participate in political life and decision-making processes, whilst also creating more public recognition and support for women in leadership positions.

The program uses different approaches to ensure full stakeholder involvement, direct beneficiary engagement and participation of main actors in advocating for women public participation and equal rights.

### WE4L's objectives are:

1. More women participate fully and effectively in politics

2. and public administration at sub-national level.
2. Female leaders, linked with women's rights organizations have more influence on political and societal developments and on public opinion.
3. There is more recognition and support from the general public for women in leadership positions.
4. Civic organizations such as trade unions and political parties promote full and equal participation of women in leadership positions and demonstrate significant changes in their own policies and practices.

This report reflects on the context relating to the Theory of Change (TOC), whilst highlighting significant outcomes achieved, progress made, challenges encountered and lessons learned during the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019.

## Theory of Change

A few adjustments to the Theory of Change (TOC) were made in 2019, in support of the contextual developments happening in the different countries. As in previous years, the TOC's relevance and validity was reconfirmed in all 5 countries with some changes made in response to changing local realities:

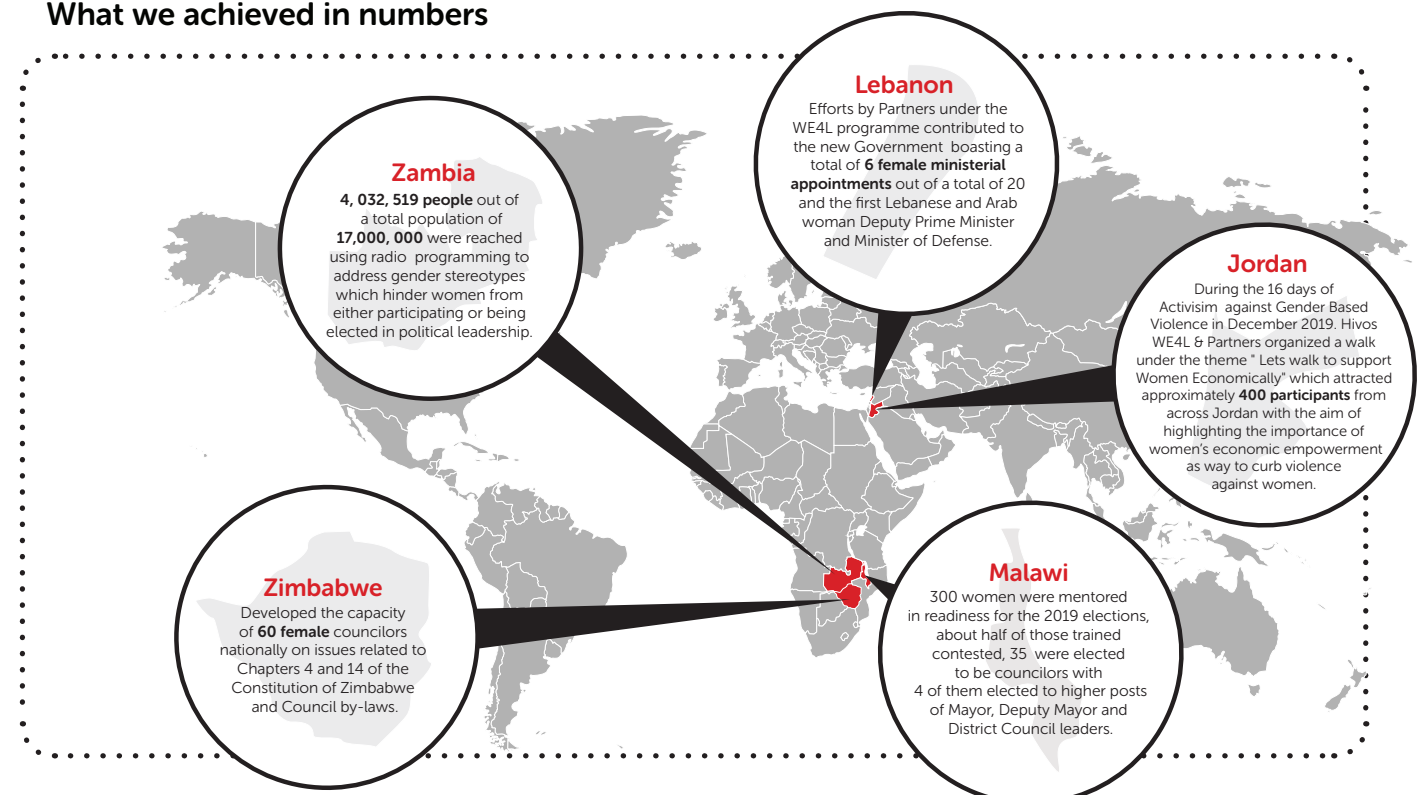
**Lebanon** adjusted the TOC with more investment channelled towards grassroots initiatives and highlighting the work of women active in the revolution. More investment in local leaders had a double impact as it not only contributed to perception changes within local communities but also increased the likelihood of voting for women leaders at the sub-national and national levels.

In **Jordan and Zambia**, the program continued to increase its work with Trade Unions and Political Parties in order to achieve the WE4L outcomes. This relationship was greatly improved in 2019 thanks to the growing track record the program has set over the years. The increased participation of these bodies contributed to the implementation of a more holistic approach, however this did not still come without challenges which affected the impact of change in these areas.

**Malawi** has had great success working with traditional leaders in increasing women's leadership at grassroots level.

**Zimbabwe** also recognized the need to work with religious and traditional leaders as an inclusive approach to increasing women's participation in from grassroots leadership roles.

## Impact by Country: What we achieved in numbers



## Most Significant Outcomes: .....

**Malawi's Women's Manifesto:** Of several notable changes in Malawi, the most significant change observed is a strengthened women's agency. Women leaders in the public and private arena united through the Women's Manifesto Movement<sup>1</sup>, which provided a platform for women to voice and take action against emerging issues including political violence. For the first time, women politicians united across party lines in advancing the women's agenda, and taking political party leaders to task in promoting women's leadership. The movement was successful in lobbying the political leaderships of Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and Malawi Congress Party (MCP) to nominate female candidates for the position of Speaker of Parliament, which led to the election of Hon Catherine Gotani-Hara, the first female Speaker of Parliament in Malawi. There was commitment from three political parties in Malawi, DPP, MCP, and the United Transformation Party (UTM), to implement the Women's Manifesto.

**Malawi's** 2019 tripartite elections saw female candidates increase their share of parliamentary seats from 16% to 23%. There was an increase of female candidates at Local Government from 11% in 2014, to 13% in 2019. Female Councillors in WE4L target areas constituted 31% of total number of female councillors elected (35 out of 110 wards



Women politicians at the launch of the Women's Manifesto

nationwide) including two WE4L target districts with originally no female councillors. This success can be attributed to the efforts of Hivos Partners who conducted a number of initiatives such as transformative community awareness meetings, engagement with political parties' district leaders, capacity building of aspiring female councillors and exchange visits for female aspirants.

**In Jordan,** in 2019, a Fast Leadership Program targeting women leaders and potential leaders was launched as a joint effort between the Jordanian National Commission for Women, Hivos and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Post participation evaluations showed a significant improvement in leadership skills and increased knowledge of effective leadership tools of 25 women elected and nominated at the sub-national level. Follow ups with the participants in 2020 indicated that in the months following training new alliances were formed and the women have designed action plans which included a Stop Child Marriage initiative they are currently developing.

**Lebanon** has seen a significant increase in women's participation in formal and informal politics. The current government now has 6 women appointed as Ministers out of a total of 20 Ministers (30%), compared to the previous 18.3%. Women actively participated in the October 2019 uprising against the system. They have been at the forefront of the protests with demands as set forth by many feminist collectives and organizations. Demands include the downfall of the sectarian and patriarchal regime, to calling for unified personal status laws, and reform of the nationality law to allow women to pass on their nationalities to their children. This can be attributed to the lobby and advocacy efforts under WE4L, that worked to increase women's participation in leadership and decision making positions. Projects implemented by WE4L partners included the online Lebanese Women's Achievement Timeline and exhibition which contributed to increased general public's receptiveness of women leaders and the enactment of law for any Government/Entity operating in Lebanon to include women for leadership positions. WE4L produced research data on women's participation including the Perceptions Study Survey titled "Lebanese Women in Leadership Positions: A Survey on National Perceptions" and the Participatory Gender Audit with Political Parties.

## In Their Words: Significant Stories .....

The use of stories enables us to narrate the changes that occur in society due to our interventions and captures WE4L's success into easily consumable and visual forms. The

use of stories enables WE4L to narrate how changes occur in the lives of the women the program works with, capture holistic program successes and initiate lobby and advocacy discussions.

### ■ Empowerment through understanding 'self'

Shrouq is a new graduate who teaches at a school in Amman, Jordan. She attended the Popular Education sessions lead by Ahel under WE4L in Jordan.

In 2019, Ahel, in partnership with Hivos, has implemented its Popular Education program that targets female educators as part of its Stand Up with the Teachers campaign with

<sup>1</sup> <https://womenleadership.hivos.org/malawi-launches-womens-manifesto/>



the aim of improving preconditions for women's rights and gender equality as well as giving them tools and capacity for equal participation. Shrouq participated in workshops with sessions to discuss 'yourself and the others', 'belonging', 'team spirit', 'self-confidence and trust in others', among others.

"After attending the Popular Education sessions, I learnt how to say no, even though this is difficult. I now know how to identify social injustices and stand up for myself and others," she said.

In her opinion, future trainings should address issues such as job interviews as this will empower women on the practical level and raise their chances of finding jobs and attaining financial stability.

### ■ Hummingbirds camp from Global DreamWeb helps create a new generation of female leaders in Lebanon



Society conditions women to shy away from speaking out, ultimately hindering them from seeking leadership positions. The "Hummingbirds" leadership program by WE4L partner Global DreamWeb foundation hosts three-day camps to develop the leadership skills and strengthen the resilience of young Lebanese and Syrian women through practical creative exercises that advocate for empowerment, teamwork, and community-building.

Camp trainers Imane, El Hayek and Shahed Kseibi aim to create a new generation of leaders, connecting women from different backgrounds and engaging them within a community that aims to improve society-at-large.

Through these camps, Global DreamWeb teaches young women to be more assertive and occupy more space.

"The first time I went to the camp, I was very shy and quiet," said Loulou, one of the participants at the Hummingbirds' first camp in 2015. At the latest camp, which took place in the last week of July 2019, Loulou would return as a team leader to a younger generation of female leaders.

"Hummingbirds looks to facilitate for women to find power from within," said Yvonne Daher, one of the founders of Global DreamWeb in Lebanon. "We're hoping to teach young girls how to take back their authority, and that they in turn teach their siblings and friends outside of this program how to find their own space within a confined space. That can happen through knowing their own strength, having excellent communication skills and knowing how to pursue their own dreams."

### ■ From mentor to Mayor

Juliana Kabogodo Gondwe, broke new ground for women in the 2019 Malawi tripartite elections by being elected as the first female mayor for the Capital Lilongwe. Juliana, a second term councilor, previously occupied the Deputy Mayor's position. On 25th April 2018 the then Deputy Mayor, Juliana, and four other female leaders agreed to act as mentors for female aspiring councilors in Lilongwe following engagement with WE4L partner Governance, Gender, Justice and Development Centre (GGJDC) under WE4L. Juliana mentored a total of 33 female candidates who contested in the May 2019 elections. Two of her mentees won Council seats. Juliana, also participated in WE4L trainings on lobby and advocacy resulting in her successful lobby for the construction of a health center in her ward



Her Worship Juliana Kaduya, Mayor for Lilongwe, Malawi.

"I plan to continue my journey as a mentor to women who want the opportunity to be leaders in their communities. I feel as a woman I have the opportunity to use my leadership to advance women's needs especially in health services," Juliana shared.

As Mayor of Lilongwe, Julian aims to change the face of the City by setting a good example of women's leadership by increasing access to health services in peri-urban areas. She has since managed to lobby for the construction of a health center in her ward which is yet to be opened. Her dreams also involve progressing to Parliament.

## ■ Leadership beyond the classroom

Tariro Tawodzera, a University of Zimbabwe Student in Harare contested as the only woman and won the 2019/2020 Secretary for Social Welfare and Gender under the Student Representative Council. Tariro, is a product of the Tag a Life (TALI) Leadership Economic Mentorship Hubs (LEMHS).

In an interview with Tariro she said while she would have considered running for this position, she credits all her confidence and self-esteem for the win to the TALI LEMHS training program.

The LEMHS Program, is a one-year Leadership Program which aims to develop young women leaders who are ready to claim their own rights, lead in their families, communities and the nation.

Tariro Tawodzera is a Psychology student at the University of Zimbabwe and was the only woman contestant for the position of Secretary for Social Welfare and Gender and succeeded against all her male counterparts. She also added that, "TALI helped me to be who I am today, I am hoping for greater heights without any limitations".



Tariro Tawodzera, a University of Zimbabwe Student in Harare

## ■ More Women in Political Leadership: "All Geared Up for Zambia 2021"

Francisca Mwenya an aspiring female councillor in Kafue was unable to contest in the 2016 Zambian Elections because she did not have a Grade 12 Education Certificate.

"I had not completed Secondary School and was discouraged. I had decided I would not contest again until I attended one of the Zambia National Women's Lobby's (ZNWL) WE4L mentorship sessions. I learned about personal development and what it takes to become a councillor. What I took home with me that day was that, one has to be willing to do what it takes to become a leader even if it means going back to school to acquire my grade 12 certificate. Education has no age. I lacked motivation to go back to school and the project gave me hope and motivation", Francisca shared.

In Mid-2019, Francisca enrolled at Naboye Secondary School to write her General Certificate Examination (GCE). She has since passed her exams and is determined to register and win in the 2021 General Elections.



Francisca Mwenya giving a presentation during the Mentorship session in Kafue

## Significant Actions

WE4L's implementing countries have various similarities that bring them together. The program annually identifies activities that bring women under the program together to share their stories, identify points of collaboration and learn from each other's work towards gender equality and inclusion. These activities also set up action plans to grow and sustain networks.

### Re-establishing intercountry networks

The October 2019 Linking and Learning annual conference was held for the third consecutive time in Amman **Jordan** under the theme 'Women Empowered for Leadership towards achieving gender equality'. It brought together partners, experts and activists working within the framework of the WE4L Program to share their experiences from the field, successes, best practices as well as lessons learned. The conference also provided a platform for networking and further collaboration.

For the first time youths from the five countries were selected to create a Youth Caucus and invited to participate in the conference. As a grouping at the end, were given an opportunity to share their observations and recommendations. Building up on this, a Youth Linking & Learning Conference for SA & ME has been scheduled to take place in the 2nd or 3rd quarter of 2020.

In December 2019 Hivos held a Regional Summit for 60 female Local Government Councilors from Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Held in Lusaka Zambia under the theme: "Creating Regional Learning Networks Towards Achieving Gender Equality in Local Government" the summit was a Cross Regional Linking and Learning event providing a platform for delegates to collaborate, learn and re-strategize to enhance the capacity and participation of women in political office.



The summit was officiated by the Zambian Minister of Gender and also included participants from Hivos partners Zambia National Women's Lobby, Non-governmental Gender Organisations' Coordinating Council (NGOCC) and Gender Links as well as government representatives from the Ministry of Gender.

At the end of the Summit the participants came up with a concrete steps and action plans to be implemented in 2020 which includes developing individual campaign strategies; developing individual communication and media engagement strategies; observing elections locally and regionally.

Hivos' efforts allowed the successes of previous Linking and learning platforms to be realized at a more targeted scale by grouping like-minded individuals who share context similarities in an effort to grow regional networks and foster solidarity.

## Progress

### Outcome 1: Significant Increase in women Elected Officials and new appointees at sub national political and administrative level participating fully & effectively

**Lebanon and Malawi** witnessed an increase in women participation in politics. Lebanon now boasts a total of 6 female ministers out of 20. These women, never having held political positions before, were selected by the main Political Parties. Lebanon's new government also saw the appointment of its first Lebanese and Arab Female Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense. Malawi saw an increase in the number of female councillors elected in 2019 Tri-Partite elections, with an overall of 67 female councillors being elected, compared to 52 in 2014. This success in Malawi included the first female Mayor for Lilongwe and Deputy Mayor for Kasungu. These appointments were a record for both Lebanon and Malawi and attributed to the efforts of WE4L and its partners as they continue to collaborate with like-minded organizations to raise awareness and advocate for female leadership as the standard and new norm.

As **Zambia** prepares for the 2021 elections intensive work has aimed at changing policy and influencing social perceptions of women in leadership. In May 2019, for the first time, the Zambia Police Service appointed four women to key decision making positions namely Medical Director, Deputy Director for Human Resource, National Coordinator for the Victim Support Unit and National Coordinator of the African Union and United Nations Desk. The development of Zambia Police Service Gender Policy which included a gender parity ratio of 50% representation by men and women influenced this. The change can be attributed to WE4L trainings between late 2018 and mid 2019 by Non-Governmental Gender Organizations' Coordinating Council (NGOCC) on Gender awareness and mainstreaming for 79 key Police officials. The promotion of the four female police officers to senior leadership positions will enhance women's participation in decision making processes in a male dominated public service.

In **Zimbabwe**, Selina Maridza, the only female Councilor in the Masvingo Urban Council was on the 17th of August 2019 conferred with the Alderman title. Selina has diligently served the Masvingo City Council for more than 10 years and also effectively delivered services to her constituency. Local government structures in Masvingo are a men's haven as very few women have managed to ascend to top positions. The 2018 harmonized elections saw 4 women candidates battle it out with the men for the urban Council positions but they failed to make it due to lack of support from party

leadership. Selina Maridza continues to defy odds, working alongside 9 male Councilors and she manages to stand her ground, pushing for transparent governance and formidably representing women and girls. In her acceptance speech, she appreciated how Hivos partner Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ) continues to mold her career through leadership mentorship and acknowledged that as a woman in leadership, she will continue to be a torch bearer, supporting fellow women to participate meaningfully in governance issues.

## Outcome 2: Women's CSOs are established and aspiring women leaders collaborate and impact political and societal development and opinions

**Lebanon and Jordan** having channeled more investment to grassroots' initiatives facilitated for an increased push towards equality and development at grassroots' level. In Jordan nine community-based initiatives were successfully implemented after the Arab Network for Civic Education (ANHRE) supported women from Community Based Organizations (CBOs) established and working in 9 Governorates. There has been an increase in the number of Lebanese women reclaiming their public spaces by lobbying and advocating to eliminate all forms of gender injustices. Through the WE4L program, more women, in both countries, were engaged in trainings and workshops that helped them to understand and claim their basic rights. More platforms were created that helped increase both online and offline presence, and more coverage has been given to women leaders to further participate and lead. For example, in **Lebanon** through a partnership with Maharat, more women leaders in various fields were able to collaborate with one another through an event on 'Access to information and its relevant gender implications' with 20 participants including journalists, gender focal points, legal experts, researchers, civil society members and members of the National Commission for Lebanese Women. Additionally, we have started supporting Know Your Place a community of young women leaders who seek to grow by inspiring, supporting and learning from each other in their various areas of expertise creating opportunities to highlight the women leaders within their network.

On 16 August 2019 **Malawian** WE4L partner GGJDC together with Kasungu district Gender Office facilitated establishment

of two District women's forums for Municipal council and district council. Two women one from each of the forums were appointed to represent women at the Municipal assembly and district full council respectively for a period of 5 years. The forums create platforms for women leaders to collaborate on advancing women's rights and issues.

**A Zambian** inter party committee fundraising group was formed to support women candidates for the 2021 General Elections. The purpose of this inter party committee is to undertake fund raising ventures for female aspiring candidates to tap into. This was as result of WE4L's partner The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) lobby and advocacy meeting conducted with 59 senior political party officials on the November 12th 2019 in Lusaka.

**Hivos** partners in **Zimbabwe** developed the capacity of 60 female councilors from Kariba, Gwanda, Masvingo, Chipinge, and Harare on issues related to Chapters 4 and 14 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe and Council by-laws. This enhanced the execution of their duties as elected officials. The President of the female Councilors' Executive Ms. Mukungunugwa affirmed this by saying, *"We are now citizen journalists and we hope to use the skills gained for the benefit of everyone in our respective communities. We have also gained legal skills on human rights as well as by-laws. We now know how to discharge our duties without infringing the rights of citizens as well as adhering to the by-laws of our councils"*

## Outcome 3: The general public increasingly recognizes and supports women in leadership positions

WE4L partner 7ibr, in **Jordan**, organized an Article Writing Workshop to enable women to write articles based on research on various topics. The outcome was that women participants started producing reliable and convincing content. In parallel, another partner, Drabzeen, advocated for women's public participation and created change in the perception of females in leadership positions in Jordan using Café Talks as a tool. A platform that gathers youth and decision-makers from communities across the country, the Café Talks offer them discussion and dialogue opportunities on the needs of women in their communities.

**In Lebanon**, through WE4L's partnership with Maharat, an increase in women's coverage on social media observed. Through partnerships with Lebanon Support, and Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) as well as the perceptions study survey conducted there was increased availability of knowledge material on gender equality and women's political participation on social media platforms. As more accessible gender materials were availed online, increased awareness and support for the change in policies related to gender equality was also observed.

Under the WE4L Program, 300 women in **Malawi** were mentored in readiness for the 2019 elections, over half of those trained managed to contest independently or on political party tickets. A total of 35 aspirants supported under WE4L were elected to be councillors with 4 of them elected to posts of Mayor, Deputy Mayor and District Council leaders. This increasing desire by women to participate in politics was enhanced by the WE4L's awareness and sensitization meetings which encouraged communities and political parties to locate and inspire women who wished to contest in the 2019 tripartite elections. Community members were sensitized on the need to support female aspirants through radio including WE4L partner Capital FM and creative arts such as music, drama and dance headed by WE4L partner Light of Youth Creative Organisation (LYCO).

A female reporter in **Zimbabwe**, Robin Muchetu, who works for Sunday News, a weekly newspaper under the Zimbabwe state owned newspaper group, Zimpapers, showed a change in her sourcing patterns by including the voices of women parliamentarians in their Parliamentary Portfolio Committees after receiving training from Gender and Media Connect (GMC) on 'Getting the Gender Balance' and how to increase media coverage of women members of parliament.

In September 2019, GMC trained journalists, on 'Getting the Gender Balance' and shared ways of increasing media coverage of women members of parliament in Harare, Zimbabwe. Robin Muchetu was one of the 16 participants. The workshop highlighted the need by Zimbabwe's media to pursue quality public interest journalism built around political governance, social and economic issues.

**Zambia**, in a period of 1 year, reached over 4,032,519 people (from listener statistics) out of a total population of 17,000,000, using radio as a medium, Muchinga Radio, Chongwe radio, Chipata and Kabwe Radio stations, aired programming to address gender stereotypes which hinder women from either participating or being elected into political leadership<sup>2</sup>. These programs have led to a change of perceptions and attitudes which deter both men and women from voting women into electoral leadership as observed by comparing radio contributions over the year. WE4L and its partners are sure it this will translate into an increase in the number of women elected into political leadership in the upcoming 2021 general elections, promoting more women in leadership especially at subnational level where key decisions are made.

#### **Outcome 4: Civic organizations demonstrate a significant change in their policies and practices on full and equal participation of women in leadership positions**

With the aim of supporting a larger number of Jordanian women to hold decision-making positions in trade unions and professional associations, the **Jordanian** National Commission for Women launched the 'Mechanisms and recommendations proposed to support trade unions and professional associations' study to increase effective women participation in decision-making positions. With focus on women leaders at the education sector, Ahel targeted female educators that are part of "Stand Up with the Teachers campaign" with the aim of improving preconditions for women's rights and gender equality as well as giving them tools and capacity for equal participation. The workshop was an eye-opener to a number of teachers who learned that situations or procedures that they considered normal and legal turned out to be illegal, and that they could, and should, report them. The gathering was the perfect occasion for women teachers to share stories of situations during which their rights were infringed, and benefit from the guidance of the session's facilitator to the best practice to claim them, or avoid such situations in the future.

**Lebanon** under WE4L continued to produce knowledge and tools around women's civic and political participation that were directly used with target groups and institutions. For example, through WE4L's partnership with the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections a manual for gender sensitive civic education was developed and circulated among schools in Lebanon, in addition to running sessions with students and teachers. 67 students (42 Females, 25 Males) showed positive change in their perceptions through recorded verbal articulations/terminologies towards supporting women's rights, in particular, social and political

rights. Additionally, through partnership with the National Commission for Lebanese Women, WE4L is making headway with institutionalising locally produced gender knowledge tools as well as lobby and advocacy with political parties and trade unions to improve gender policies and practices. LADE and an internal consultant also did lobby and advocacy work with 4 political parties (Kataeb Party, Marada Movement, Li Hakki political movement, and Future Movement Party).

In December 2019, Gender Links, in partnership with the Women in Local Government Forum (WLGf) executive committees of urban and rural local authorities formed a national executive committee to coordinate the activities of women in **Zimbabwe's** local government. Prior to this urban and rural local authorities had separate WLGf bodies, this fragmented their efforts in lobby and advocacy for issues affecting women in local government. The outcome is important because having one executive body at the national level will ensure that women in local government speak with one voice. This enhances coordinated efforts for gender equality at the local level.

Additionally, in an effort to ensure increased number of women in leadership positions, **Zimbabwean** partner the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe took to sharing Calls for Board Members positions in different sectors with possible women candidates increasing the availability of information and opportunities for women. This advocacy initiative also influenced a change in the practice of appointments, as government and duty bearers have since started to call for gender balance in Board appointments.

<sup>2</sup> Zambia National Womens Lobby 2019 Activity Report



## Outcome 5: Improved preconditions for women's rights and gender equality

**In Lebanon**, all matters related to personal status laws are governed by religious-sect's codes. Women are treated according to their religious spectrum which further discriminates against them. However, through a partnership with KAFA (Enough Violence) a civil personal status law was drafted to protect women's rights and ensure gender equality. This is a unification of the multiple civil status laws drafted. The civil personal status law covered all aspects of the law, and to garner public support it has been circulated and presented amongst different communities across Lebanon after the October 17th Revolution.

**In Zimbabwe**, the use of the edutainment during 16 Days of Activism Against Women and Child Abuse facilitated for dialogue and debate on Gender Based Violence (GBV) related issues which is a key challenge facing women in leadership. Using the Eve Ensler's the Vagina Monologues, audiences were pushed into uncomfortable but necessary conversations which forced them to look into issues of

sexuality, consensual and non-consensual sex, womanhood, rape and other difficulties emanating from male female power dynamics. The production was showcased in Bulawayo, Gwanda, Gweru, Masvingo and Harare. WE4L also produced a Public Service announcement which used Zimbabwe based celebrity voices to speak against GBV. The two artistic representations of women's struggles translated to online and offline discussions of what society terms taboo or private topics and allowing man to understand the origins of the calls from the women's movement.

A significant gap exists for women between constitutional rights and acceptable social norms, with traditional expectations and cultural restraints continuing to limit women's advancement in the Middle-East. Hivos in **Jordan** and **Lebanon** is in the process of implementing the 'Gender Barometer' project as a pilot in order to identify the gaps and challenges faced by women leaders and in turn help improve the preconditions for women's rights and gender equality.

## Changing contexts

WE4L's operating context experienced some changes in 2019, some which required program adaptation.

### Policy Changes

In this period, **Jordan** endorsed a new mechanism for foreign funding. The goal of this mechanism is to increase the coordination between civil society organizations, international funders and the appropriate government

institutions; and at the same time control and ease the means needed to get the necessary approval for foreign funding and to unify the references points for it.

### Political and Economic Crisis

Since the 17 October nationwide strikes, the **Lebanese** economy continues to plunge as its national currency deteriorates increasingly. The economy has also been affected by the money liquidity crunch. This crisis has led to delays in deliverables and delays in financial reporting as some of our partners' work was put on hold for 3-4 months before going back to some form of normalcy. The economic crisis has also meant some programs and deliverables are now no longer valued by general society with more work being shifted and prioritized to the grassroots level and investment in women on the ground. However, looking on the positive side, the change in context made the work more relevant as there was more coverage of aspiring Lebanese women. Through partnership with Maharat, their coverage of women leaders shifted to cover women participating in the revolution.

focused on movement building and linkages to human rights defenders where required, and mobilizing and networking to ensure a coordinated response to the systematic state. In February 2020 a court ruling was made which annulled the 2019 Presidential elections and fresh elections have been set for July 2020.

**Zimbabwe** continues to face residual electoral contestations. Elections held in previously female led constituencies are being won by males as parties are deliberately not nominating women candidates to contest in these constituencies. This could affect the gains on women's rights with regards to constitution provisions on equality, non-discrimination and gender balance. The operating space for civil society continues to shrink as it has been riddled with fear as a result of a number of arrests and detentions of human rights defenders who were thought to be 'regime change agents.' Furthermore, the current administration has proposed The Constitution Amendment Bill No.2 of 2019 which is considered to be one of the biggest threats to civil and political rights in Zimbabwe. If the Bill is passed by Parliament, it will make several amendments to the Constitution which will give the President even more powers by expanding the role of the President's office and affect progress towards achieving gender equality. The proposed bill seeks to extend

From June 2019 to present day there have been massive nation-wide protests following the results of the 2019 May tripartite elections in **Malawi**. The protests have in some cases turned violent leading to destruction of property, injuries and harassment of protesters. Police instigated violence in Msundwe an opposition stronghold a few kilometres from Lilongwe: where Police allegedly raided homes, used teargas and raped 17 women and 4 minors.<sup>3</sup> As a result, action

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jan/14/malawi-police-face-legal-action-over-failure-to-investigate-alleged-rapes>

the women's Parliamentary proportional representation quota system by 10 more years instead of going for 50/50 representation as the constitution states.

Furthermore, **Zimbabwe** is facing the worst famine it has seen in years; severe drought has crippled productivity almost half of its population is food insecure with women as primary caregivers bearing the biggest brunt. Inflation, fuel and commodity shortages, water and electricity cuts in the country, continue to pose challenges not only for stakeholders to implement but for the full participation of the women we work with especially at grassroots level.

## Challenges

**In Zimbabwe**, there was no consensus on the 'quota system' debate from the women's movement as some members were calling for respect of constitution and calling on Government to enforce sections 17 & 56 of the Zimbabwe Constitution on equal representation. At the start of the WE4L program the women's movement had a consensus on the quota and were pushing for this to be adopted at political party level. After failure of same to yield results in 2018 elections, some members of the movement were now calling for a change

In **Zambia** the State continues to restrict the rights to freedom of expression and association in violation of international human rights standards and are intolerant of criticism. They have moved to stifle the freedom of the press, targeting journalists and perceived opponents of the state, including human rights defenders and activists who express

different views. It is important to note that Zambia will soon go to elections a year from now. Whilst Civil Society is calling for Electoral Reforms ahead of the 2021 elections, Women's Rights Organizations are mobilizing to increase the number of women participation.

in strategy while others wanted to continue with the same strategy and extend it to include local government.

Due to the nationwide strikes in **Lebanon** Sayaran our online publication for MENA highlighting women's and non- gender mainstream identity voices was delayed in its launch. It later launched in Q1 2020 and the interactions around this issue on violence against women has garnered even more traffic and interactions than our first issue on elections.

## Lessons Learned

**Engaging women and men in decision making positions to strengthen women's participation:** WE4L partners in Jordan have worked to create a common interest for stakeholders. They demonstrated how women participation is not only the right thing to do from a human rights framework perspective but also is a shrewd thing to do for a society's development. A number of WE4L's partners, including JNCW and ANHRE, engaged men in this transformative leadership process in discussions around policy papers and planning for advocacy initiatives to enhance ownership and support. Intensifying engagement of both men and women in decision making process could be crucial to enhance women participation in politics.

**Implementation of the quota system requires advocacy and hold government and political parties to account:** Successful implementation of the quota systems requires commitment from the government and political parties. In Malawi, the ground work for the next elections needs to start by advocating for the implementation of the quota. It

is crucial to keep the momentum of the 50:50 campaign going. There is need to be mindful of intraparty politics and determine how to engage better with parties because they can be either the biggest blockers or enablers of women empowerment.

**Intersectional approach to programming is crucial:** It is of value to use an intersectional approach when programming, by including all groups of women, this includes rural women as well as tapping into the youth population and encourage young women in all their diversity to participate. The media and creative sector should be engaged to amplify women's visibility. WE4L took the opportunity to create an intercountry youth caucus during the October 2019 Linking and Learning event in Jordan, a platform where youth were given a platform to participate meaningfully and contribute to ideas for future programming.

**Online Gender Based violence** is a key hindrance to the participation of women in leadership. Hivos under WE4L is currently undertaking research to shed more light on this.

## Conclusions

Despite the political and economic uncertainty which affected all countries, but mostly Malawi, Lebanon and Zimbabwe, programming and realization of expected results where minimally affected. WE4L continued to achieve solid results against each outcome area. Most importantly, women participation in politics continued to increase in Malawi and Lebanon. The success stories portray how WE4L program has made significant differences in the lives of the beneficiaries including women and institutions. These stories represent positive change and pathways. As the

program comes to an end, WE4L Project Staff and its partners are intensifying efforts to finish strong and achieve WE4L's long term goal: That women have equal opportunities and capacity to fully participate in political and societal decision-making processes. Whilst the operating context has shifted in unimaginable ways due to the impact of COVID-19 we are confident that through innovation we can build on the successes of previous years and achieve continued significant impact.

## Financial Summary .....

Total WE4L Program Outcomes	Indicators	Approved Revised Budget	Actuals Expenditures
1. Significant increase in women elected officials and new appointees at sub-national political and administrative level, participating fully and effectively	1a. Introduction of quota system for sub-national politics	€ 122.539	€ 117.184
	1b. Number of women in elected/ appointed political positions at sub-national/ local level	€ 255.663	€ 258.867
	1c. Existence of internal policies and practices in state institutions and councils at sub-national level that promote work-life balance	€ 72.051	€ 71.885
2. Women's CSOs and established and aspiring women leaders collaborate and impact political and societal development and opinions	2a. Number of women's CSOs with linkages to networks for political and social support of women leadership	€ 345.219	€ 332.158
	2b. Number of women leaders participating in autonomous virtual and/or real-world spaces	€ 126.697	€ 132.822
	2c. Number of women leaders with improved communication skills	€ 160.511	€ 148.213
	2d. Capacity assessment forecasts and scores of CSOs in setting up systems to promote women's equal participation	€ 189.124	€ 167.922
3. The general public increasingly recognizes and supports women in leadership positions	3a. Number of articles and broadcasts about the women leaders in the media	€ 141.637	€ 148.390
	3b. Proportion of target population that is positive towards women equal political participation	€ 419.685	€ 402.082
4. Civic organizations demonstrate a significant change in their policies and practices on full and equal participation of women in leadership positions	4a. Existence of internal organizational procedures to provide for equal participation of men and women in organizational leadership structures	€ 153.067	€ 146.266
	4b. Number of tools and manuals developed by CSOs on women participation	€ 244.603	€ 251.732
	4c. Percentage of women in board positions in selected social organizations and political parties	€ 100.901	€ 115.812
5. Improved preconditions for women's rights and gender equality	5a. Number of demonstrable contributions to women's rights and gender equality by public and private sector institutions	€ 338.929	€ 342.618
6. Program management and other program activities (evaluations, audits, FLOW policy dialogues)	6a. Proper program management administration and reporting	€ 856.083	€ 877.774
	6b. Evaluations and audits	€ 0	€ 0
	6c. Participation in annual FLOW policy dialogues	€ 4.291	€ 4.224
<b>Total WE4L</b>		<b>€ 3.531.000</b>	<b>€ 3.517.950</b>