Since 2019, Search for Common Ground (Search) is implementing the Partners for Justice project which aims at reducing violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Lebanon by transforming attitudes of women, girls, men, and boys towards patriarchal norms that define masculinities, and addressing the root causes of VAWG in public and private spheres. In close coordination and collaboration with grass-root civil society organizations (CSOs), this is being accomplished through 1) empowering men and boys to positively engage with women and become allies and champions of gender equality and prevention of VAWG, and 2) promoting a shift in communities’ attitudes in target areas around the permissibility of, and assumptions related to VAWG.

Representatives from CSOs, youth leaders and media stakeholders built their skills and capacities on mainstreaming gender sensitivity and positive and equitable masculinities in their work through a series of organizational and programmatic training workshops. They then leveraged those across a number of activities including a youth-led research, a stakeholders’ mapping, a national awareness raising media campaign, and grass-rooted initiatives on gender, masculinities and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

In the project’s third iteration, implemented from October 2022 to December 2023, local CSO partners and their representatives of youth leaders will leverage the acquired knowledge and skills by conducting a mapping and engaging key stakeholders, especially male members, in the development and implementation of community-based action plans to ensure the creation of real males allies across Lebanon who support women and girls in the prevention and response to VAWG. This will enshrine and operationalize the identified gender and masculinities’ priorities within communities which will foster the project’s sustainability. Furthermore, and building on the results of the above-mentioned activities and following different consultations with CSOs and key mapped stakeholders, Search will develop policy briefs to draw engagement from higher levels of governance in Lebanon such as ministries and institutions in the men engagement and masculinities’ work that is being done.

Those activities and their synergies will ensure an in-depth horizontal and vertical engagement of all relevant stakeholders in the prevention and countering of VAWG in Lebanon, creating bottom up and top up collective movements for change.
The theory of change of the project

If men and boys are provided with safe spaces where they can deconstruct and change their own perceptions and attitudes around the socially built norms of masculinities that push men and boys to play the role of “protector” and “controller” of women and girls in the public and private space, and they understand and embrace the role men and boys can play to contribute to shifting communities’ perceptions and attitudes toward the permissibility of VAWG, then they will become women’s and girls’ allies, model positive and equitable behaviors, ultimately contributing to changing negative social norms around violence against women and girls in Lebanon.

This had been achieved through the implementation of the following key activities:

- Research and baseline assessment of leaders of youth-led and youth-focused organizations and community members on research and media skills and on exploring and analyzing narratives of masculinities;

- Training of selected leaders of youth-led and youth-focused organizations on the Common Ground Approach;

- Training of selected leaders of youth-led organizations on Gender Equality & Equitable Masculinities followed by mentoring & coaching sessions;

- Training on safe identification and referral of cases of violence that youth leaders may encounter on the ground;

- Participatory youth-led gender & masculinities research followed by a research sharing knowledge workshop where the youth leaders will share and jointly reflect on the findings and recommendations of the research;

- Cascade of youth-led training on gender and masculinities in targeted communities;

- Youth-led initiatives that aim at raising awareness of community members on VAWG and equitable masculinities, including the equitable and positive role that men and boys can play and adopt in topics related to sexual and reproductive health and rights;

- Media for social change workshop where youth leaders and media stakeholders will be equipped with gender sensitivity and non-adversarial awareness raising skills to create and develop a national campaign that promotes equitable partnerships and masculinities and the reduction of VAWG;

**Partners for Justice**

[https://www.sfcg.org/partners-for-justice/](https://www.sfcg.org/partners-for-justice/)

**Partners for Justice - National Campaign**

[https://www.sfcg.org/partners-for-justice-nc/](https://www.sfcg.org/partners-for-justice-nc/)

Context

Despite the various efforts made in Lebanon to achieve gender equality and end violence against women and girls (VAWG), the picture remains bleak. In 2022, Lebanon ranked 19th out of 156 countries in the world on the global gender gap index, and 2nd among 19 MENA countries. Patriarchal social structures and practices, as well as communities’ lack of awareness on women’s rights, limit women’s access to economic resources and leadership positions in the political and social spheres, while simultaneously codifying discrimination in public policy. Furthermore, traditional social images of male superiority and power imbalances still foster attitudes and behaviors that sustain gender inequality, violence, and discrimination.
Youth-led & youth-focused organizations & relevant stakeholders are able to champion gender, masculinities & SRHR programming in a collaborative & inclusive manner.

**EXPECTED CHANGE WE ARE LOOKING FOR:**

1. The public audience targeted in the media campaign shift perceptions toward gender identities and roles, masculinities and VAWG.

2. Higher level institutions and academics are engaged with local stakeholders including municipalities, CSOs, and youth on issues related to VAWG, men engagement and masculinities.

**CHANGE DONE SO FAR:**

- Youth-led & youth-focused organizations & relevant stakeholders are able to champion gender, masculinities & SRHR programming in a collaborative & inclusive manner.
- Targeted communities and actors are engaged in joint dialogues and reflections on gender norms, masculinities and SRHR in order to reinforce social cohesion.
- Media stakeholders & youth-led & youth-focused organizations are better able to address negative and unjust social dynamics that justify violence against women and girls.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOLLOWING KEY ACTIVITIES:**

- National awareness raising media campaign which will include theater plays and films' public screening that will trigger and unite discussions in communities around themes such as gender identities and roles, VAWG, male allies and role models (equitable masculinities), etc. Multiple screenings will raise awareness in communities and convene community members, policy makers, political party representatives, and authorities;

- CSO-led stakeholders mapping that will foster CSOs and youth engagement and provide skills for youth employment. The identified community stakeholders will be part of the project's broader community mobilization through the CSOs' implementation of grants which will include the implementation of dialogues, action plans, cafe chats for men and collaborative initiatives; and

- Roundtables and policy briefs emphasizing crucial bottom-up and top-down engagement of men and boys as allies in combating VAWG and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The policy briefs resulting from the above-mentioned discussions will be circulated among donors, civil society actors and authorities to draw engagement from higher levels of governance in Lebanon such as ministries and institutions and share lessons learned and best practices about working on men engagement and masculinities in protection programming.