July 2021 – Search for Common Ground (Search) is implementing the Partners for Justice project in partnership with ABAAD - Resource Center for Gender Equality. The project engaged 30 youth leaders from 16 civil society organizations (CSO) from diverse backgrounds, including Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian, in a participatory, youth-led gender and masculinity research and in a knowledge sharing workshop to jointly reflect on the findings and recommendations of the research.

After undergoing training on gender equality and equitable masculinities, the 30 youth leaders led a research that aimed to analyze gender norms and masculinities in Lebanon. The youth were engaged in the whole process, starting from the tools design, conducting the interviews, analyzing the data and participating in the writing of the report. Following the completion of the research, the youth leaders participated in a knowledge sharing workshop to share their research experiences and learned knowledge, discuss the research findings and come up with their final reflections on gender norms and gender equality in Lebanon in order to reinforce social cohesion.

Youth Leaders working in groups to discuss toxic masculinities during the Knowledge Sharing Workshop

"The research training was amazing and I would like to attend more similar trainings in the future. I was involved in all the research stages but not the analysis. During data collection, I was an interviewer once and a note taker twice. Both experiences were very good. Now, I feel very comfortable talking about gender openly."

– Male Youth Leader
During the knowledge sharing workshop, the youth leaders, either individually or as group discussion, were asked to share the results they recall from their own interviews for each research and interview question. Under the section of reflections and recommendations, the circular pathway model for violence against women and girls (VAWG) resonated well with multiple youth leaders. Some of them were able to use it to understand that VAWG is just a symptom and its eradication relies on intentional interventions that target the top of the pathway, including addressing fundamental gender stereotypes and misconceptions about sex and gender-related terminologies, in order to ultimately advocate for gender equality and eradicate sexual and gender based violence (SGBV).

The youth leaders expressed their gratitude and appreciation to the project team for offering them an open and safe space where they can freely discuss gender equality and masculinities. A -24 year-old woman participant from Bekaa expressed how this project had directly affected her on a personal level. After participating in its activities, she acquired the bravery to actively help her family get rid of the prevailing gender inequality norms through raising their awareness on the negative effects of normative socialization and advocating for herself and her sisters' rights in following the path they want in life despite all the gender-related challenges they may face. She is passionate to be an activist advocating for women's rights and gender equality in her community.

Before participating in the project, I was very timid and I didn’t have a lot of social relationships. The project has strengthened my communication skills and my self-confidence. I have become more socially engaged.

- Male Youth Leader

Search is the world’s largest dedicated peacebuilding organization, and supports programming in 32 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, South America, the Middle East, and the United States. Search’s mission is to transform the way the world deals with conflict from adversarial means to shared solutions. Search has worked in Lebanon since 1996 through a diverse array of programming, including social cohesion, peace education, and media production.

ABAAD is a non-governmental organization that aims to achieve gender equality as an essential condition to sustainable social and economic development in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region. ABAAD advocates for the development and implementation of policies and laws that enhance women’s effective participation. With the purpose of ending gender-based violence, ABAAD further adopts a holistic care approach providing protection and support services to Gender Based Violence (GBV) survivors.