I can consider that my participation in this project is a turning point by itself. The project provided me with the space that I was looking for to actually make a change in my community. Search and the youth team became my second family, they helped me grow, develop and become a stronger woman.

Suzan’s participation in the “Partners for Justice” project increased her chances to participate in community interventions, as she became well-capacitated with the skills and knowledge needed for her to deliver awareness-raising sessions about gender, masculinities, violence against women and girls (VAWG), and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). In fact, the civil society organization (CSO) that she works for has now listed her as one of the best candidates to lead any youth related project.

The intensive training program that I attended under this project, enhanced my ability to conduct more awareness-raising sessions about gender, masculinities and SRHR to different groups within the CSO and the community. Previously, I was only assigned to lead occasional sessions to raise community awareness on such topics; however, today I am leading three sessions per week.

Suzan has successfully contributed to the implementation of the gender and SRHR cascade training. In fact she is now approached by community members and her colleagues in the CSO for information related to sexual health and gender, especially by girls and women. Thus, Suzan has proved herself and gained high visibility as a well-knowledgeable and trusted person on any topics related to gender and sexual health in her workplace as well as in the community.

Some of the youth’s mothers, who were trained on gender & SRHR, approach me frequently to provide their daughters with information related to sexual health and gender.
The personal development that Suzan acquired, in terms of skills, confidence, and critical thinking, also reshaped her parenting approach. She explained that this project inspired her to discuss social and gender roles with her children and encourage them to speak up and ask questions related to gender and sexual health.

"My participation in the project helped me rethink the way I want to raise my children. I am now confident and capable of discussing sexual health related topics with my daughter without feeling ashamed."

Furthermore, Suzan demonstrated the ability to become an independent woman in a patriarchal society. She was able to change her parents’ perspectives and views towards gender roles, especially the role of divorced women, like her. Since then, she has found freedom and independency from the community's cultural norms. She even shifted the stigma accompanying any divorced women into a powerful statement of independence and courage. Suzan is now a strong, successful, and independent woman capable of unleashing all her skills to make a positive change in her community.

"I have been working as a teacher since 2014; however, this project inspired me to register for a higher degree in Social Sciences in the Lebanese University."

After her participation in the project, Suzan has decided to engage in a new studying journey. Her involvement in the capacity building and development activities and the community intervention activities inspired her to pursue higher education in Social Sciences. She explained that despite her work as a teacher, she wanted to delve deeper into social studies and learn more about gender and social work in university. According to her, this will further give her the chance to be more capable of making a difference in her community.

"After my divorce, I was very depressed and experienced very hard times. The project was a triggering agent that gave me the strength to learn from my experience and gain the skills and confidence to move on. I felt that I should use my experience to encourage and advocate for the rights of other vulnerable women in my community and help them raise their voices and protect themselves from violence and inequality."

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.