

2021 Regional Index on Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Lebanon National Report

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Acronyms

CAS	Central Administration of Statistics
CEDAW Women	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRDP	Centre for Educational Research and Development
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
ISF	Internal Security Forces
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoFA	Ministry Foreign Affairs
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NCLW	National Commission for Lebanese Women
RCSO	Regional Civil Society Observatory on VAWG
UfM	Union for Mediterranean
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to analyse the outcomes of the 2021 Regional Index on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) for Lebanon. The report presents the position of the State on the international women's rights covenants, and its commitment to implement them through the alignment of the Constitution and national laws to these covenants. Furthermore, the report presents the measures and the services on the ground that ensure the appropriate enforcement of these laws. It also provides recommendations to improve the protection of women from VAWG.

Lebanon recorded a significantly high score of 70 out of 100 points in the 2021 Regional Index on VAWG. Lebanon seeks to combat VAWG by conducting a series of general, legal, and service-related reforms at all levels.

Lebanon ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, there are still reservations to articles: 9, 16, and 29. Also, the Constitution does not prohibit discrimination based on sex explicitly.

Despite the absence of a comprehensive law on VAWG, Lebanon has other laws for tackling different forms of VAWG such as the law no. 293/2014 on the protection of women and other family members from domestic violence, and the law 205 on criminalising sexual harassment and rehabilitation of victims. However, the approaches of criminalisation of perpetrators, protection, and prevention are scattered in different laws.

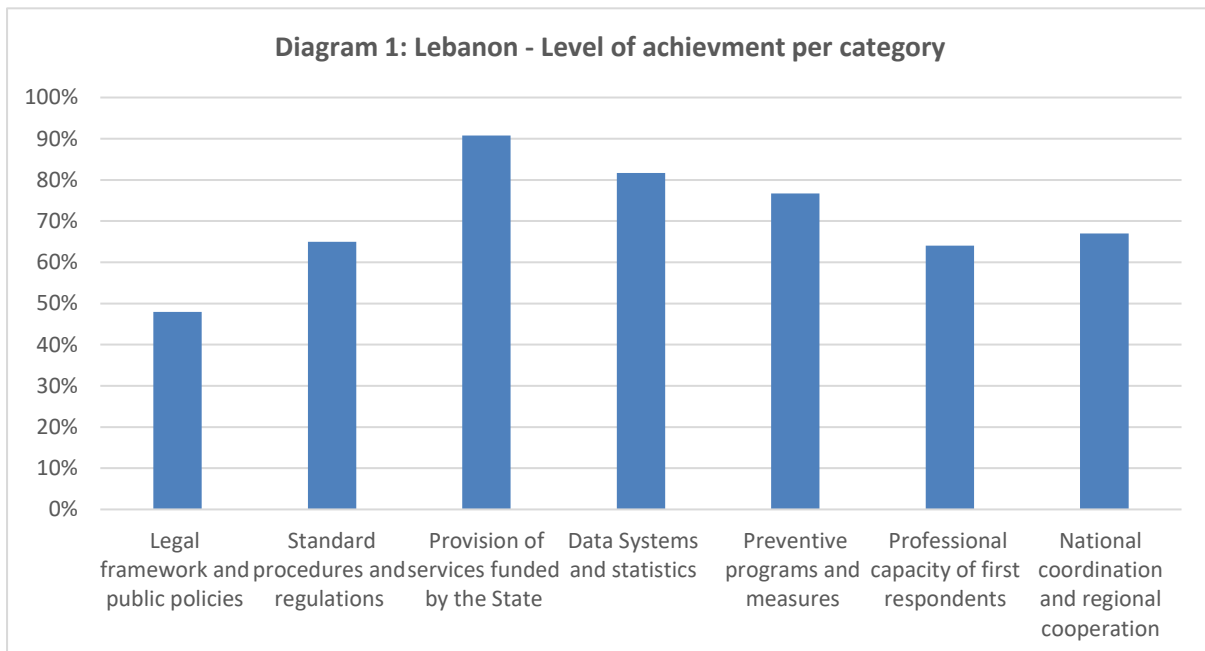
Women's protection is within the powers of many national bodies and institutions, most prominently the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW). NCLW leads the coordination for different sectors on VAWG and the national awareness raising campaigns on combating VAWG. NCLW also hosts the Lebanon National Gender Observatory which aims at promoting gender equality.

The National Strategy for Gender Equality (2017-2030) was adopted as an action plan to combat all forms of VAWG, in all fields, and in cooperation with several ministries including the Ministries of Justice, Foreign Affairs, and Social Affairs, as well as a number of concerned Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

Lebanon government cooperates with CSOs for providing shelters for women victims of VAWG. The government refer victims to CSOs shelters and follow on the services provided. There are also cooperation mechanisms established between police, shelters, hospitals, courts/judiciaries, ministries, and civil society.

Score analysis

This section provides analysis for the scores under each category. The scores achieved for each indicator in relation to the weights assigned are shown in the diagrams. The section also highlights the main gaps and provides recommendations to tackle these gaps and improve the prevention and protection of women from VAWG as well as penalising adequately the perpetrators. The Index methodology is available on the website of the Regional Civil Society Observatory on VAWG (RCSO) at [Methodology of 2021 Regional Index on VAWG](#).



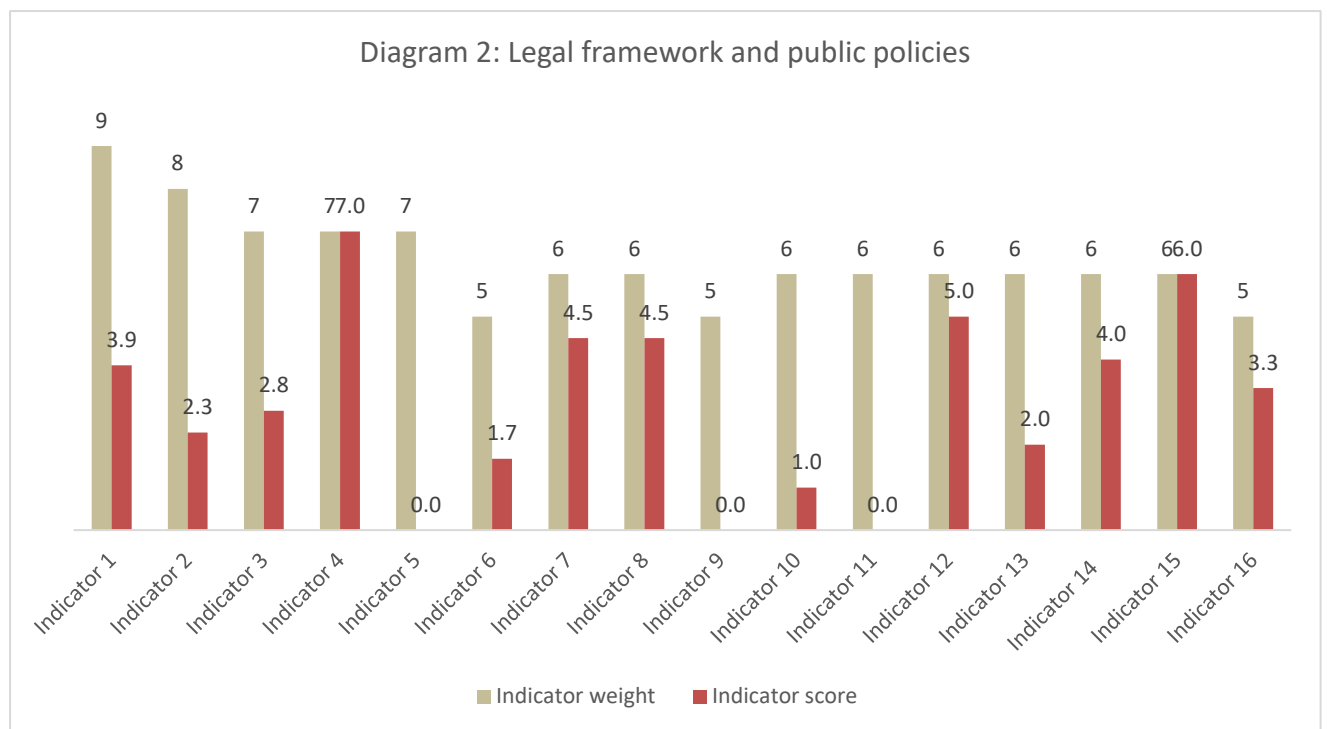
Lebanon – Final Index Score 70 points

Legal Framework and Public Policies

The legal framework and public policies category got 48% as level of achievement.

The category examines the legal framework and public policies on women’s rights, and its conformity with international standards, in particular CEDAW. It addresses laws specifically designed to combat VAWG, where such laws exist. It also concerns public policies and national strategies to combat VAWG. The category includes 16 indicators and 88 sub-indicators.

The diagram below shows the weight and the score achieved for the indicators under this category.



Indicator 1: Ratification of all articles CEDAW

Indicator 2: Alignment of the Constitution with all international legal obligations pertaining to women's rights

Indicator 3: Compliance of laws with all international legal obligations pertaining women's rights

Indicator 4: Existence of specific law/s that address specific form or type of VAWG

Indicator 5: Existence of comprehensive law criminalising all forms of VAWG

Indicator 6: The definition of VAWG in legislation is in line with the UN resolutions on women rights

Indicator 7: Existence of parliamentary oversight role on the implementation of laws pertaining to VAWG

Indicator 8: The laws provide support to all victims of VAWG including legal aid

Indicator 9: The laws ensure the right of women to sexual and reproductive health and freedom on their own bodies

Indicator 10: The existing laws, including family laws, whether civil, customary or religious, protect women and girls from partners, male relatives, and current and ex-spouses who cause VAWG

Indicator 11: Existence of legal framework that offers women legal protection from marital rape

Indicator 12: Existence of legal framework offers women legal protection from harassment in the public space and work place

Indicator 13: Existing laws, in the absence of comprehensive law on VAWG, criminalise honour crimes and prohibit harmful practices such as FGM, early marriage

Indicator 14: The laws ensure the punishment of rapist regardless of the acceptance to marry his victim

Indicator 15: There is a national strategy for preventing and combating VAWG with adequate resources, budget, and monitoring and evaluation plan

Indicator 16: The national health policies address VAWG.

Lebanon ratified CEDAW. However, there are still reservations to several articles. These include: article 9 regarding equal rights between women and men with respect to the nationality of their children, article 16 on gender equality in all matters relating to marriage and family relations, and article 29 on submitting any dispute between States Parties to CEDAW to arbitration.

The Constitution includes an entire chapter on the rights and obligations of the Lebanese people, as well as the Lebanese State's commitment to protecting a number of basic citizen rights and public freedoms, regardless of gender, in articles 7 to 15. However, the Constitution does not state explicitly on prohibiting discrimination based on sex. For these reasons, indicator 2 scored 2.3 out of 8 points.

Concerning national laws, indicator 3 scored only 2.8 out of 7 points due to existence of discriminatory legal provisions that will be mentioned under gaps section. On the other hand, one of the positive aspects is that article 522, which decriminalises the rapist if he agrees to marry the victim, was cancelled in 2017 .

The labour law does not criminalize harassment in the workplace. A new law criminalizing sexual harassment was enacted in December 2020. The law includes maximum penalties for harassment in the work place, public institutions or educational facilities.

The Lebanese personal status laws are not unified. The civil code guarantees equality in inheritance among all Christian citizens. As for Muslims, inheritance is considered a personal status issue ruled by the Islamic Sharia, subject to the interpretation of each sect. In divorce, the reasons to grant a divorce differ from one confession to another. The same applies to custody, as each sect has its own provisions, which means that the outcomes of the same case may differ from one sect to another.

The Lebanese Parliament includes a Human Rights Committee that follows up on women's rights, the combating VAWG and proposes bills. The committee also reviews reports on the implementation of laws to protect women from violence.

The National Strategy for Gender Equality (2017-2030) was launched by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) to combat all forms of VAWG, in all fields, and in cooperation with several ministries including the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry Foreign Affairs (MoFA), and Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA). After MoWA was terminated, its competencies were relegated to the NCLW, which reviewed and edited the implementation indicators of the National Strategy to Combat VAWG. Human resources and a budget are attached to the strategy. Based on this, the indicator 15 got full score (6 out of 6).

Gaps

- Existence of reservations to articles 9, 16, 29 of CEDAW.
- The government did not ratify the optional protocol to CEDAW.
- Absence of a clear and explicit text in the Lebanese Constitution on protecting women from violence or women's rights.
- The Constitution does not prohibit discrimination based on sex explicitly.
- Absence of comprehensive law on combating VAWG.
- Abortion is still a criminal offence under the penal code.
- Existence of certain legal exceptions wherein judges can allow child marriage.

Recommendations

- Lift reservations to all articles of CEDAW, and ratify the optional protocol.
- Prohibit explicitly discrimination based on sex in the Constitution.
- Enact a comprehensive law to combat violence against women that includes and criminalise all forms of VAWG.
- Criminalise marital rape explicitly.
- Enact a unified one civil personal status law for all Lebanese that ensures gender equality on equal bases for all confessions.
- Remove the judges' discretionary power that authorises child marriages.

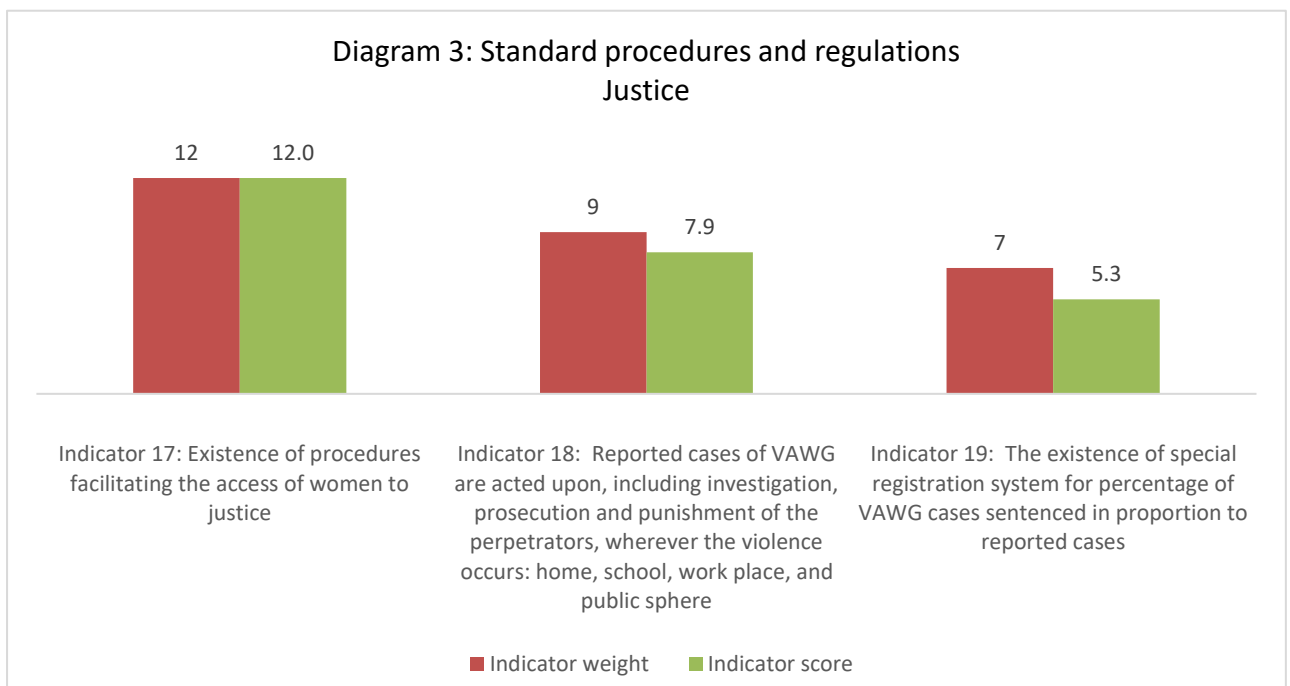
Standard Procedures and Guidelines

Standard procedures and guidelines category recorded 65% as level of achievement. The category deals with police and judicial procedures put in place, whether in terms of the

opportunities for victims to report offences or the obligation to inform the authorities of such offences by persons who are aware of them; as well as the existence of a guide for

professionals, in order to unify and simplify procedures. This category consists of 13 indicators and 54 sub-indicators.

The diagrams below show the weight and the score achieved for the indicators under this category.



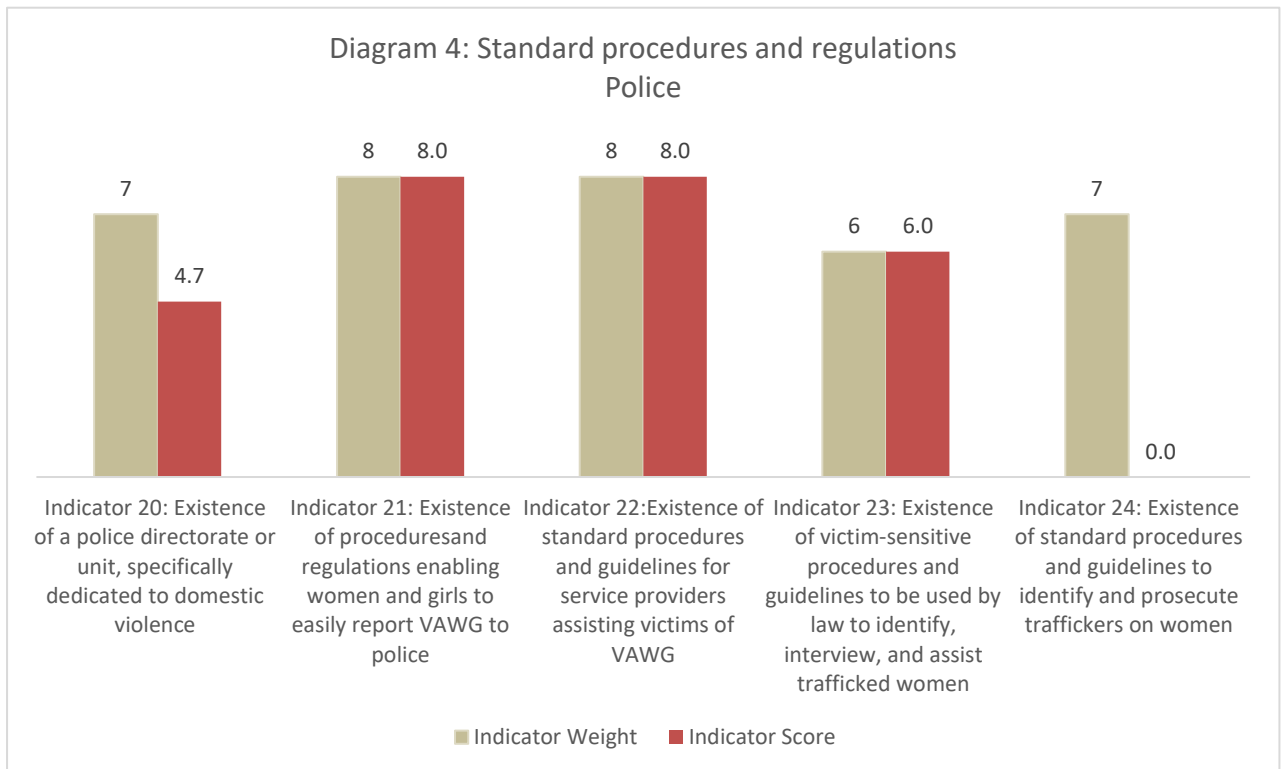


Diagram 5: Standard procedures and regulations
Health

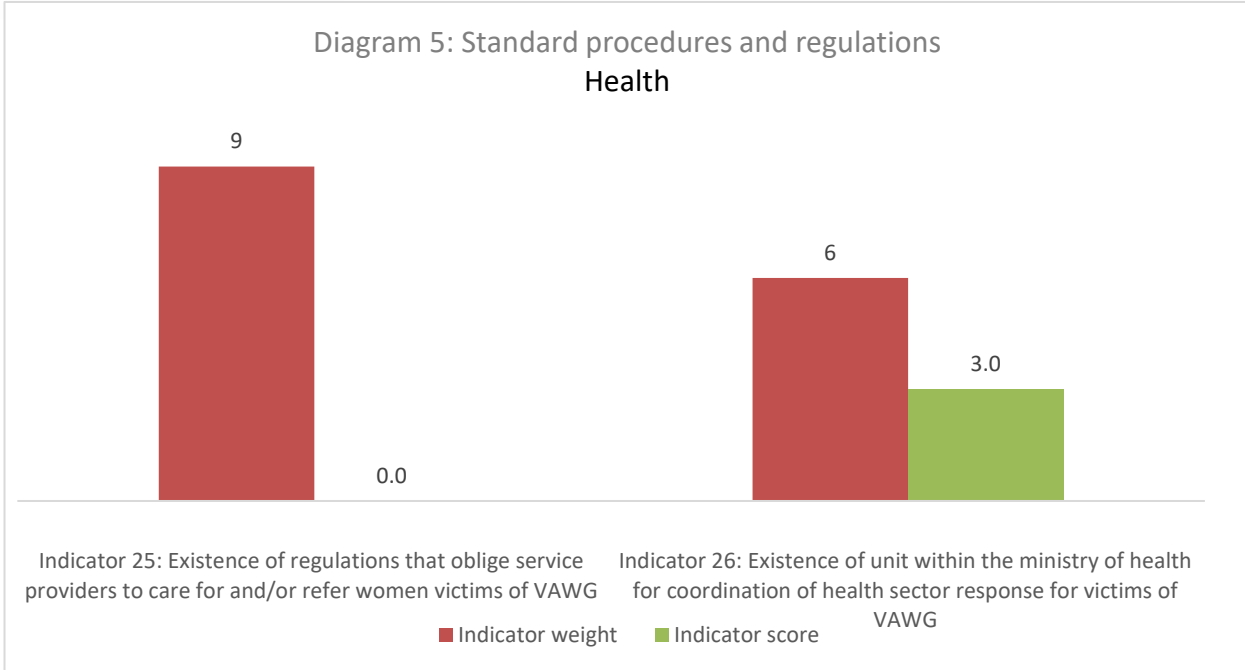
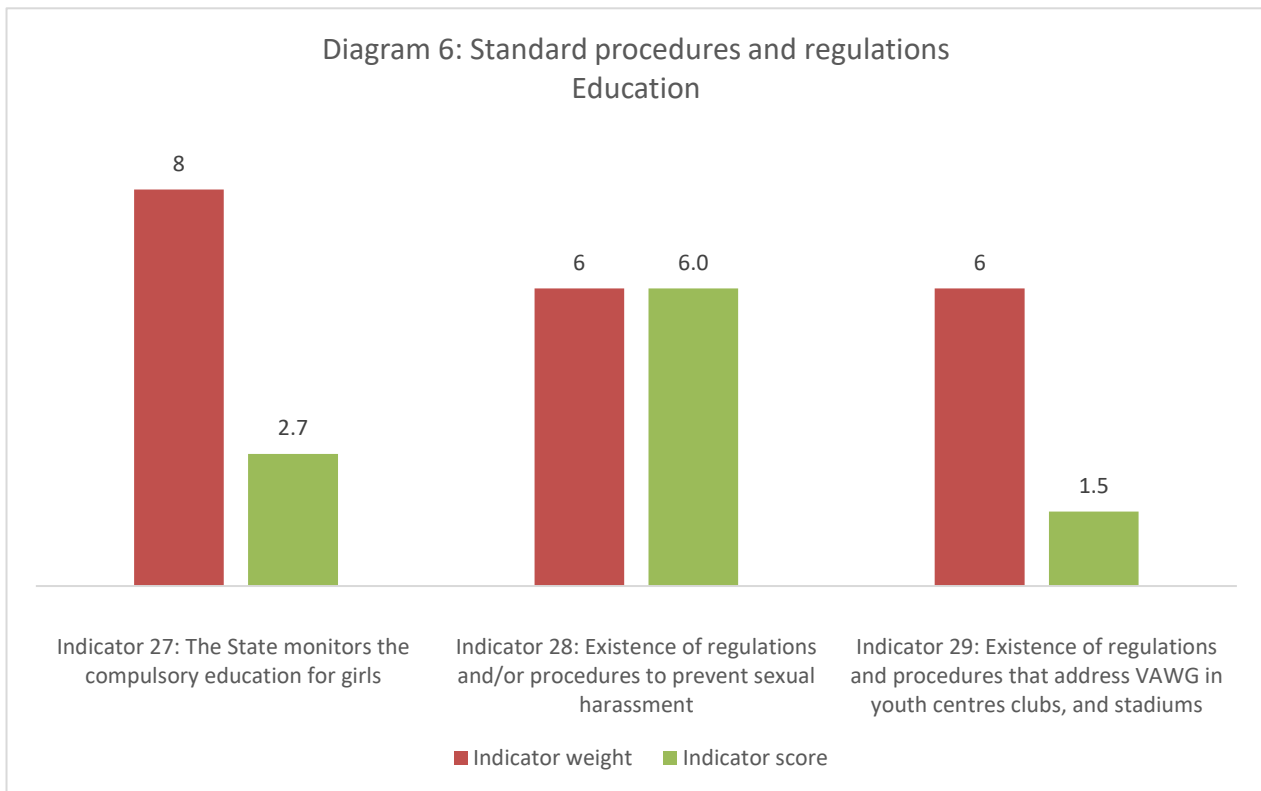


Diagram 6: Standard procedures and regulations
Education



The justice sector achieved high scores. A special room at the Beirut Justice Palace was recently created for minors, victims of sexual harassment, to give their statement to the

competent judge alone, without a member of the judicial police present, according to the international standards on respecting the privacy and feelings of the victim.

Quick access to justice was also facilitated for victims of domestic violence in particular by a decision issued by the cassation prosecution in April 2020 ordering the judicial police to open immediate reports in all cases of domestic violence, including crimes without witnesses. For these developments, indicator 17 got full score (12 out of 12).

During the pandemic, a hotline (1745) was announced for women victims of domestic violence. It is directly linked to the Internal Security Forces (ISF) and was established in cooperation with the NCLW.

When filing a complaint, the judicial police inform the woman of her full rights in the presence of the competent judge. The judicial police have the right to pursue the perpetrator without the need for an authorisation. Specialised medical centres are also contacted to provide the victim with free psycho-social support, upon her request.

Prior to the investigation, the victim is informed of all her rights and obligations. The investigation is then launched upon authorisation from the competent court, according to the circumstances of each case.

As for human trafficking crimes, the government cooperates with CSOs for immediate intervention to provide victims with services and protection through “safe house” procedures, where they are placed in “safe houses” based on the decision of the competent court. They also provide the opportunity for facilitated return to the country of origin and allow an attorney to follow-up on their case with the competent court.

There are guidelines that oblige health service providers to care for and refer victims of VAWG to competent parties. Free health services are also provided for victims of physical violence, including forensic medicine and psychological treatment.

Regarding education, amid the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, electronic devices were distributed to public schools to allow students to continue their education without discrimination. Moreover, training courses on VAWG and gender-based violence were provided to teachers.

Training handbooks on mainstreaming gender in education were published. Fair and balanced gender representation based on school subject was added to resource evaluation networks adopted by the Centre for Educational Research and Development (CRDP) for approval on textbooks in Lebanese private schools.

Gaps

- Lack of specialised judges on VAWG.
- Absence of a registry in courts on VAWG cases.
- Lack of a unit within Ministry of Public Health to coordinate the health sector's response to victims of VAWG.
- Health services provided to victims don't preserve evidence that could be used in the prosecution of the perpetrator.
- Lack of monitoring mechanism to ensure free, compulsory education for girls.
- Lack of procedures for addressing VAWG in youth centres and clubs.

Recommendations

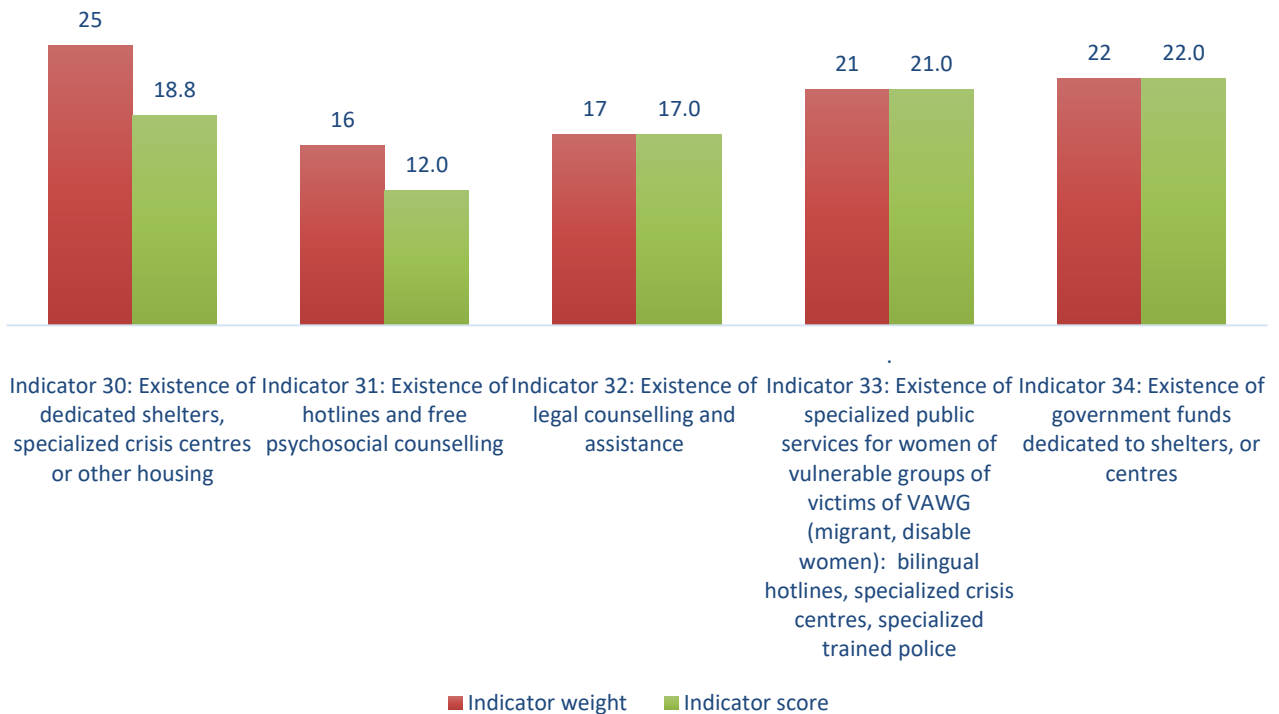
- Introduce specialisation programs on VAWG for judges.
- Promote coordination between courts and security agencies to follow-up on VAWG and harassment cases until a verdict is issued.
- Create a specialised unit within Ministry of Public Health to follow-up and coordinate the health sector's response to victims of VAWG.
- Develop a monitoring mechanism to ensure the actual implementation of free, compulsory education for girls without exception.
- Adopt procedures for addressing VAWG in youth centres and clubs.

Provision of Services Funded by the State

The category of provision of services funded by the State achieved high score (91%). The category addresses the victims, their physical and psychological care as well as the provision of shelters, legal aid and hotlines. The category includes 6 indicators and 26 sub-indicators.

The diagram below shows the weight and the score achieved for the indicators under this category.

Diagram 7: Provision of services funded by the State



The Lebanese State is working hard to advance the level of its funded services to combat VAWG at all levels. It is working on providing shelters for victims, funding them, and ensuring a quick response through hotlines.

There are shelters for women victims, where services are provided according to international standards and victims are not robbed of their freedom. The government cooperates with 7 women CSOs who provide shelters for women victims of VAWG.

All victims may benefit from the shelter's services. They do not need prior approval as long as the victim fits the description put in place by the shelter. Women are free to come and go as they please, and are permitted to bring their children along with them.

The ISF established a hotline that addresses domestic violence complaints. Ministry of Education and Higher Education provides a hotline to report all forms of violence inside private and public schools. Any student can use it to report any abuse, allowing the implementation of the mechanism to monitor harassment in Lebanese schools.

The government provides day-care services in return for a symbolic fee in around 24 associations across all regions as support for working women. If the day-care centres are under State mandate, they are financed through MoSA's Fund. However, if the centres are managed by a private organisation, then the greater part of the funding falls upon this association and the State's contribution through the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Gaps

- Absence of residential units with prepaid rent to accommodate victims.
- Absence of specialised programmes for the economic and social reintegration of victims in everyday life.
- Lack of funding to the Covid-19 pandemic and the severe economic crises. It has become very difficult for the government to secure continuous support and funding for all these centres.
- Lack of funding for national CSOs who provide services for victims

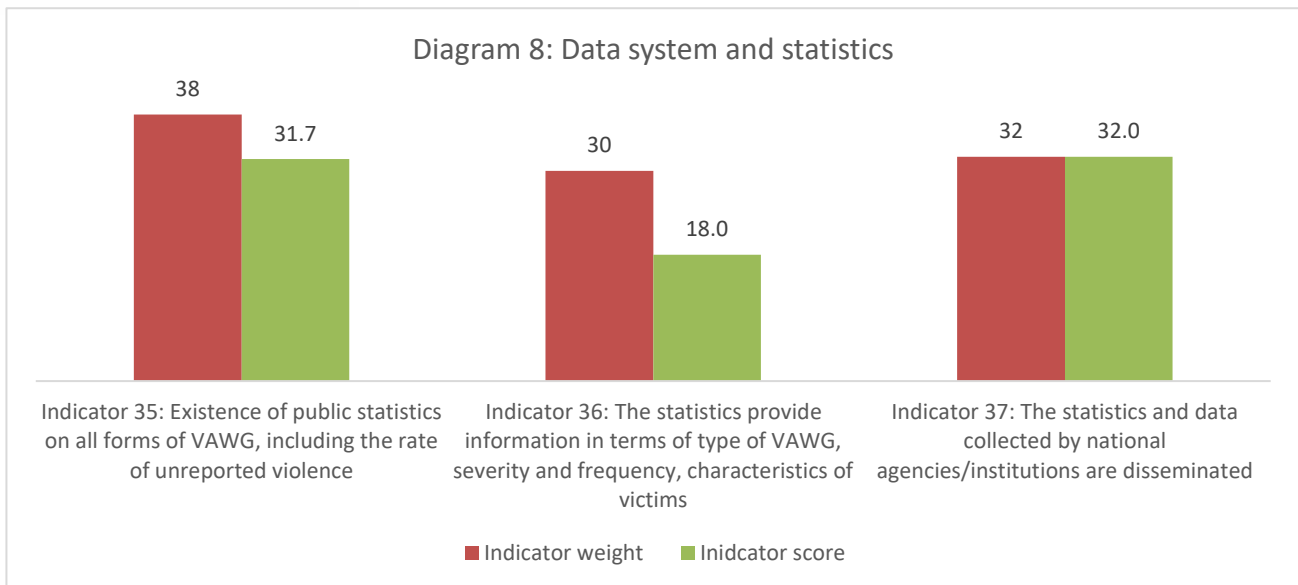
Recommendations

- Reintegrate victims into economic and social life.
- Create and develop a secondary funding plan for the centres due to the government's financial deficit.
- Building residential units with prepaid rent.
- Ensure funding for national CSOs who provide services for victims.

Data System and Statistics

Data system and statistics category got high level of achievement which stood at 82%. The category, is linked to the collection and dissemination of statistics on VAWG and their classification by type of violence and frequency, but also in relation to whether or not they have been the subject of complaints and whether or not these complaints have led to convictions and lawsuits. The category has 3 indicators and 14 sub-indicators.

The diagram below shows the weight and the score achieved for the indicators under this category.



The number of VAWG cases is collected by national CSOs and the ISF, who tracks the number of reported cases. However, there are no general statistics to cover the unreported cases of violence, even if this is crucial. Other institutions and ministries cooperate with the NCLW, such as the MoSD, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), and the Central Administration of Statistics (CAS).

General statistics cover all forms of VAWG, as there are general statistics to follow up on the rate in VAWG in Lebanon, including all Lebanese and rural areas. These statistics also include all women without any differentiation based on their marital status, the description of victims, and perpetrators.

There are also statistics on the complaints received through the hotline. These are updated periodically. As complaints have increased during the Covid-19 pandemic and security agencies were able to monitor and document an increase in complaint numbers received through the hotlines.

Gaps

- These statistics do not portray the complete picture of VAWG, as there are still unreported cases.
- Absence of any statistical process in Lebanese courts and the difficulty to follow up on cases once they reach the courts.

Recommendations

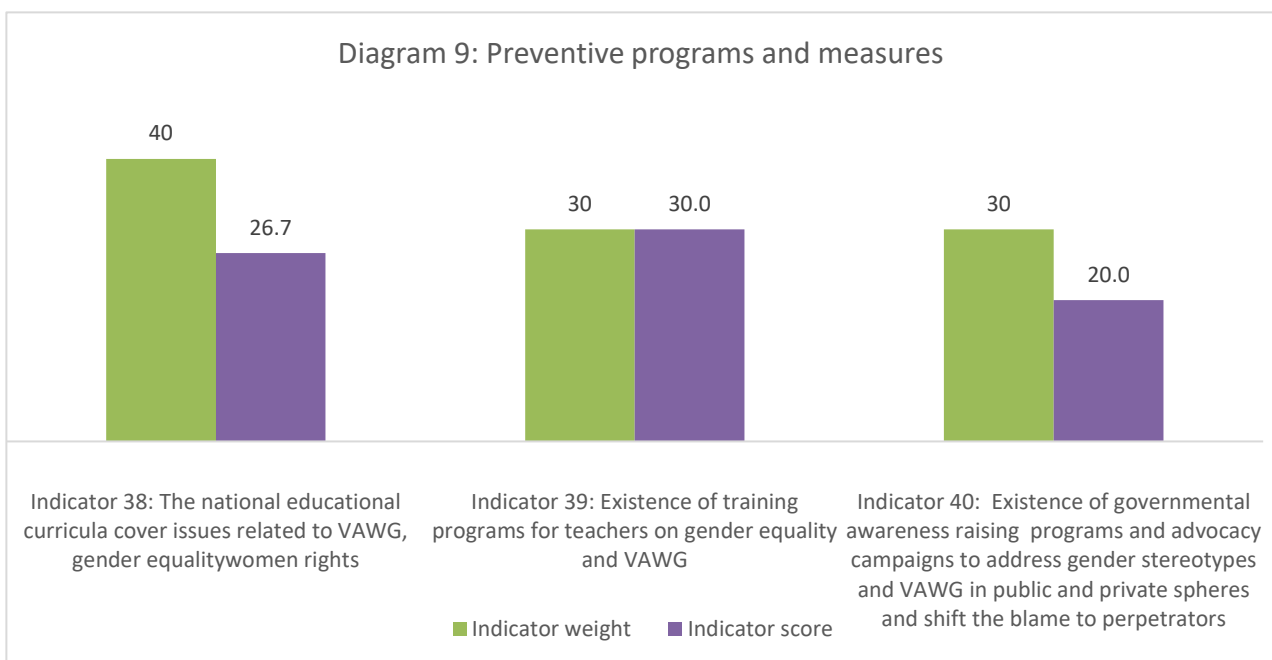
- Include the Central Administration of Statistics in the process of generating statistics and studies for its logistical and scientific capacities.

- Increase coordination between judicial bodies and those concerned with studies and statistics to reach the desired results.
- Include the indicators of the Regional Index on VAWG in the national surveys.

Preventive Programs and Measures

The preventive programs and measures category got 77% as level of achievement. The category has 3 indicators and 11 sub-indicators. The category looks at preventive programs and measures, including whether specific training programs for teachers have been set up and whether curricula and handbooks for primary, secondary and university education have integrated issues related to VAWG. This category also looks at national awareness raising, and advocacy campaigns initiated by the governments to address VAWG.

The diagram below shows the weight and the score achieved for the indicators under this category.



Social awareness about combating VAWG in real life was solidified by changing and developing the national educational curricula and integrating subjects on gender equality and women's rights. The gender approach was also adopted in education policy-planning and its concepts integrated in curricula, textbooks, and teacher training plans.

As for teacher training programmes on gender equality and VAWG, there was an increase in the percentage of educational staff trained on communicating the concepts of gender

equality and combating VAWG. The teachers' training curriculum covers all types of VAWG and women's rights, which is in accordance with international conventions.

Moreover, the NCLW carries out awareness-raising activities to combat stereotypes and VAWG in the public and private spheres.

Gaps

- Absence of the concept of blaming the perpetrator in awareness-raising activities.
- Existence of stereotypes in portraying men and women in educational curricula.

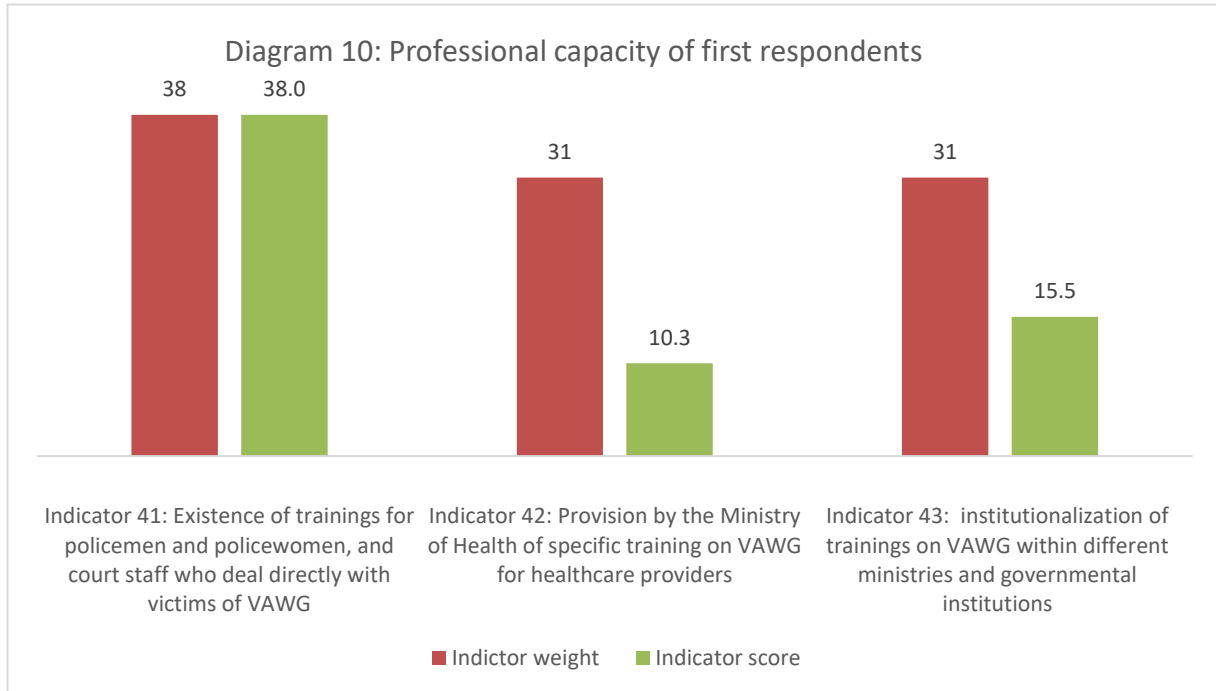
Recommendation

- Expand training courses for educational sector employees and for male and female teachers across Lebanon.
- Develop courses targeting male/female university students on changing stereotypes of women in culture and the media, as stipulated in the National Women's Strategy and its detailed action plans.

Professional Capacity of First Respondents

The category of professional capacity of first respondents achieved 64% of the full score. The category has 3 indicators and 12 sub-indicators. It covers institutional trainings for policemen and policewomen and court staff who deal directly with victims of VAWG as well as the institutionalisation of these trainings.

The diagram below shows the weight and the score achieved for the indicators under this category.



Training is provided to first respondents from various institutions, including policemen and policewomen, male and female court staff, healthcare practitioners, and social service providers who deal with victims of VAWG directly. However, training institutionalisation was limited to the police. This led to achieving 15.5 out of 30 points to the indicator 43 which is related to the institutionalisation of trainings.

Members of General Security, judges, and justice officials on all Lebanese territories dealing with victims receive specialised training sessions. The training curriculum covers all types of VAWG and the appropriate way of addressing the victim; the same applies for health care providers.

A training programme on VAWG was also established within the ISF and for social service providers.

Gaps

- Absence of comprehensive training in the health sector that includes all types of VAWG and covers all areas of Lebanon.
- Absence of institutionalisation of training in courts and health sector.

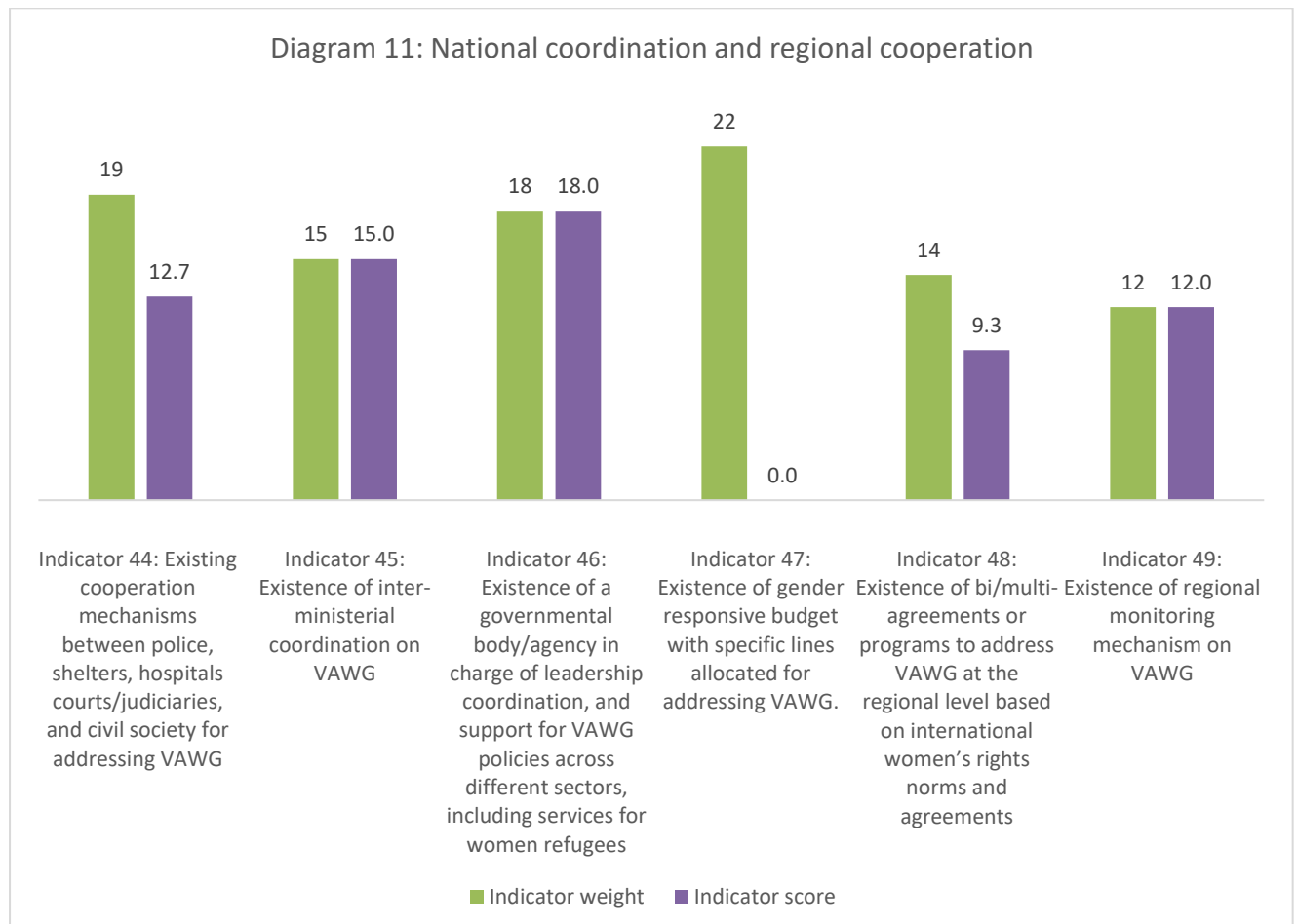
Recommendations

- Amend health sector training curricula and integrating all types of VAWG.
- Extend trainings in the health sector to all relevant workers in all Lebanese regions.
- Institutionalise training programmes for judges and staff in courts and health sector.

National Coordination and Regional Cooperation

The national coordination and regional cooperation secured 67% of the full score. The category includes 4 indicators for cooperation mechanisms between police, shelters, hospitals, courts/judiciaries, ministries and civil society on national level, and 2 indicators for regional or international cooperation mechanisms, which have respectively 10 and 6 sub-indicators.

The diagram below shows the weight and the score achieved for the indicators under this category.



The NCLW is the official body concerned with women's rights portfolio and cooperates with various ministries and government institutions as well as national and international organisations to develop policies related to VAWG. For these reasons, indicator 47 achieved full score. Moreover, an inter-ministerial coordination exists in the frame of the National Gender Observatory.

A clear mechanism was established to regulate the cooperation and coordination between the above-mentioned bodies to combat VAWG. CSOs were also recognised as an integral part of the cooperation and coordination mechanism to combat VAWG.

Lebanon has signed several regional conventions on VAWG, including the Rabat Declaration on the occasion of the first Mediterranean Social Forum (2005) on VAWG. However, there were no bilateral regional agreements between Lebanon and any of the neighbouring countries.

Moreover, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) formed a regional mechanism in line with international standards and agreements to monitor VAWG in the countries of the region. Lebanon is part of this organisation and plays an active role in combating VAWG.

Indicator 47 on gender responsive budget scored 0 due to absence of gender responsive budget with specific line dedicated for combating VAWG.

Gaps

- Absence of a gender-responsive budget with provisions dedicated to addressing VAWG.
- Limited cooperation in the region, including in the frame of Union for Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial Declarations on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society.

Recommendations

- Include an item in the general budget dedicated to combating VAWG.
- Enhance the regional cooperation in the frame of UfM Ministerial declaration.

