CONCEPT NOTE AND AGENDA

WOMEN LEADING CHANGE

Gender-Responsive Leadership in Mediterranean Universities and Municipalities

BEIRUT ADVOCACY EVENT

FROM COMMITMENT TO INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

DATE	VENUE
Thursday, 24 September 2026	**Lebanese University, Presidency, Beirut, Museum Square** https://acesse.one/sja6m4e

Coordinating institution: Lebanese University
Supported by: Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)
Financed by: Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation (ACCD)
Project duration: April 2026 - December 2026

An Advocacy-to-Action Forum

The Beirut Advocacy Event is designed as an action-oriented forum that connects institutional leadership, public governance, evidence, civil society and professional networks around one shared objective: advancing gender-responsive leadership through concrete institutional reform and stronger cooperation between universities and municipalities.
The Beirut Advocacy Event directly advances WLC's institutional engagement, dissemination, cooperation and sustainability objectives. It links high-level advocacy with the transfer of concrete methodologies and tools; brings beneficiary universities and municipalities into dialogue with actors able to influence or support change; and strengthens a Mediterranean community committed to gender-responsive leadership and inclusive governance.
By protecting space for beneficiary and municipal voices, action-focused exchange and follow-up, the event also supports institutional ownership, peer learning and the project's ambition to extend impact beyond the current beneficiary group through dissemination and future scaling.

> **CORE ADVOCACY MESSAGE**
> Gender equality becomes sustainable when commitment is translated into evidence, institutional mechanisms, capable people and long-term cooperation.

WLC Mentor Pool, Beneficiary Universities and Reference Municipalities

The Women Leading Change project is coordinated by the Lebanese University (Lebanon) and supported by a Mentor Pool comprising six mentor universities:

- Lebanese University and Antonine University (Lebanon)
- Aix-Marseille University (France)
- University of Tunis El Manar and University of Sousse (Tunisia)
- Autonomous University of Madrid (Spain)
- The Mentor Pool is complemented by Sapienza Università di Roma (Italy), RESUFF (Francophone Network of Women Leaders in Higher Education and Research) and Tethys Network, which contribute complementary expertise, networking, dissemination and sustainability support.

The 13 beneficiary universities and their associated reference municipalities are:

- From Lebanon:
  Arab Open University; Beirut Municipality; Holy Spirit University of Kaslik; Jounieh Municipality; Lebanese International University; Ghaza Municipality; Notre Dame University-Louaize; Zouk Mosbeh Municipality.
- From Morocco:
  Abdelmalek Essaadi University; Tétouan Municipality; Euromed University of Fes; Fez Municipality; Hassan II University of Casablanca; Casablanca Municipality; Mohamed V University of Rabat, Rabat Municipality; University Mohamed VI Polytechnic; Province of Rhamna; Mohammed Premier University-Oujda; Oujda Municipality; Cadi Ayyad University-Marrakech; Marrakech Municipality.
- From Syria:
  Manara University; Latakia Municipality; University of Damascus; Damascus Municipality.

Together, these institutions form a Euro-Mediterranean cooperation framework that supports the transfer and adaptation of gender-responsive leadership tools within higher education and local-governance ecosystems.

From Awareness to Structural Transformation

WLC promotes inclusive, equitable and gender-responsive leadership in Mediterranean higher education and local governance ecosystems through institutional reform and enhanced cooperation between universities and municipalities. Its approach capitalizes on more than three years of WE4LEAD experience and on operational resources that beneficiary institutions can appropriate, adapt and use.
The Beirut Advocacy Event gives this approach public and institutional visibility. It is intended to show that gender-responsive leadership can be advanced through practical, evidence-based and transferable measures, including:

- gender-disaggregated data, parity indicators and institutional diagnosis;
- gender equality plans, parity structures and listening or support mechanisms;
- training on implicit gender bias, gender-responsive recruitment and sexual harassment;
- mentoring approaches that support women's leadership pathways;
- communication and awareness-raising tools for governance bodies and wider institutional communities;
- monitoring, evaluation, peer learning and dissemination mechanisms that support sustainability and scaling.

Specific Objectives

1. **Secure leadership attention.** Mobilize university governance, municipal representatives, public authorities and other influential stakeholders around the need for gender-responsive institutional change.
2. **Demonstrate that implementation is possible.** Present WLC's methodology and the practical tools transferred from WE4LEAD, moving the discussion from general support to feasible institutional action.
3. **Connect evidence, policy and practice.** Bring together university, public-sector, civil-society, international and professional perspectives on the conditions required for sustained change.
4. **Strengthen university-municipality cooperation.** Create space for dialogue on how higher education institutions and local authorities can work together around inclusive governance and gender-responsive leadership.
5. **Amplify ownership and scaling.** Encourage beneficiary institutions to disseminate WLC methods within their networks and engage additional universities through the project's N+1 approach.
6. **Generate actionable follow-up.** Capture priorities, cooperation needs and policy-relevant messages that can inform project follow-up, dissemination and final reporting.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED
Participants are kindly requested to confirm their attendance by registering **before 20 September 2026**
through the following link: **tinyurl.com/WLC2409**

Agenda

TIME	SESSION	LEAD
09:00-09:30	Arrival and WLC Welcome	Event team
09:30-09:40	WLC in action	Prof. Selim Mekdessi - Lebanese University
09:40-09:50	The WLC Cooperation Model: Connecting Institutions, Expertise and Action	Mrs. Adélie Breil - Aix-Marseille University
09:50-10:00	Advancing Inclusive Leadership through Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation	Mrs. Petra Kežman - Union for the Mediterranean
10:00-10:10	Keynote Address: From Commitment to Systems Change	Mrs. Gielan El Messiri - UN Women Representative in Lebanon
10:10-10:20	Leading Institutional Change: The University's Role in Advancing Equality and Inclusion	Prof. Bassam Badran - President, Lebanese University
10:20-11:00	**Round Table 1** Institutional Governance, Rights and Accountability: From Policy Commitment to Lasting Change *Moderator: Dr. Huguette Abou Mrad*	Mrs. Lamia Moubayed Bissat - Institute of Finance Basil Fuleihan, Ministry of Finance Dr Caroline Sleiby - Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering
11:00-11:15	***Coffee Break***	
11:15-11:55	**Round Table 2** Building Pathways to Women's Leadership: Higher Education, Professional Life and Entrepreneurship *Moderator: Prof. Véronique Kazpard*	Dr Myriam Sfeir - Arab Institute for Women - Lebanese American University Mrs. Abir Chebaro - Lebanese League for Women in Business Dr. Nada Khaddage-Soboh, OSB Center for Women in Business, American University of Beirut
11:55-12:35	**Round Table 3** Beneficiary Voices: University-Municipality Partnerships for Gender-Responsive Leadership	Representatives of beneficiary universities Representatives of the associated Lebanese municipalities
12:35	***Lunch***	