

Lebanese Female Candidates Challenges & Barriers

2018 Parliamentary Elections



A research analysis on the challenges and success of Lebanese candidates/potential candidates during parliamentary elections 2018

نحو برلمان
2018

COUNSELLING
OFFICE
FOR WOMEN
IN POLITICS



A project by



Supported by



Kingdom of the Netherlands

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Kingdom of the Netherlands

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2018 Parliamentary Elections

This study is conducted by Women in Front with the support of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Lebanon

The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of WIF or the Embassy of the Netherlands.

December 2018

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SUMMARY

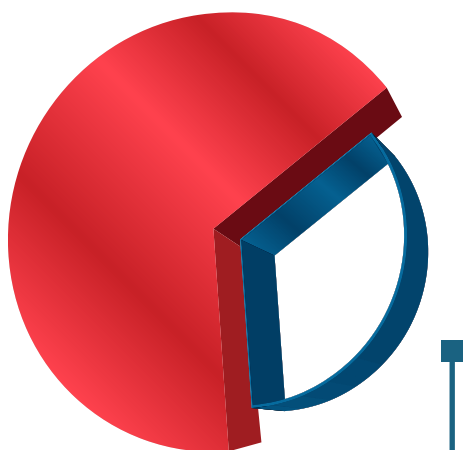
This research aims to explore the experiences and challenges of candidates in the 2018 parliamentary elections which took place in May 2018. It summarizes observations and lessons learned making them available to interested female candidates and different stakeholders for the next mandate in 2022.

A total of:

100
FEMALE
PARTICIPANTS

took part in this study

66 Candidates
(independent & politically affiliated) who **lost or won** in the elections



34 potential candidates (independent & politically affiliated) who **withdrew** their candidacy or **didn't run** for elections.



The study highlights the challenges and obstacles faced by the participants in both quantitative and qualitative form of analysis and provides a series of observations and recommendations.

The results show the depth and variances of challenges faced during the elections, along with a series of lessons learned by participants.

The findings imply that women interested in political life will continue working on achieving their goals, especially after immensely learning from their first electoral experience in 2018.

A big majority of independent and politically affiliated women intend to participate in the 2022 elections.

“

INTRO

”

INTRODUCTION



Women in Front

WHO WE ARE

Created in 2012, “Women in Front” is a Lebanese NGO (legal N# 15590) that aims at empowering women and increasing their participation in political and public life.

OUR VISION

“Women in Front” seeks for the creation of a new modern reformed Lebanese society where women are actively engaged in political and public life.

OUR MISSION

Strengthening the capacities of women and engaging them in decision-making positions.

Increasing the visibility of expert women by highlighting their achievements.

Partnering with the media to create public awareness on gender equality.

Lobbying to reform the Lebanese Electoral Law by advocating to include women’s quota.



Counselling Office for Women in Politics

THE PROJECT

Counselling Office for Women in Politics - COWP - is a Women in Front (WIF) project funded by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Lebanon.

COWP aimed to provide Lebanese female candidates who ran for the 2018 parliamentary elections with guidance and support by an advisory council of experts and coaches. This council accompanied the candidates during their electoral journey & shared with them new tools and techniques for 2018 elections.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase 25 female candidates' knowledge for political life and elections
- Provide them with continuous support and guidance for 2018 elections
- Produce a research paper on the challenges and successes of Lebanese women and elections

ACTIVITIES

Recruited 25 female candidates for the 2018 parliamentary elections from different regions and various affiliations (partisans and independents)

Mapped of the 2018 electoral law & provided female participants with knowledge to optimize their chances for elections

Conducted 6 days of training sessions, for 25 participants, in different topics

Created a counselling office to provide candidates with continuous support and guidance for 2018 elections

Provided the participants with 6 days of one-to-one support by the advisory council

Conducted and published a research study on Lebanese women in politics

“ METHODOLOGY

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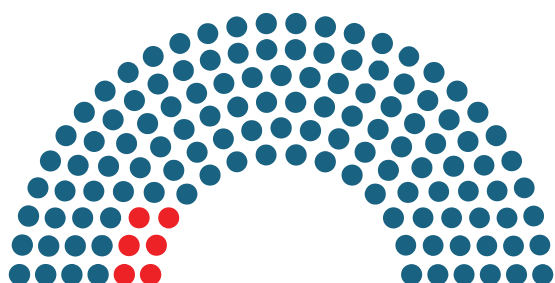
METHODOLOGY

1

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

- Women's political representation in Lebanon is one of the lowest in the world*. Women's current representation in the parliament is 4.68%. The gap between men and women is seriously high. Even though Lebanon witnessed an unprecedented number of female candidates running for 2018 elections, only 6 out of 113 candidates made it to the parliament.

** Lebanon ranked 142 out of 144 countries in political empowerment according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2017.*



4.68%

Women's current representation in the parliament

- There is a dire need for information on women's struggles, barriers and experiences in the political field specifically with elections to better understand the aforementioned phenomenon.

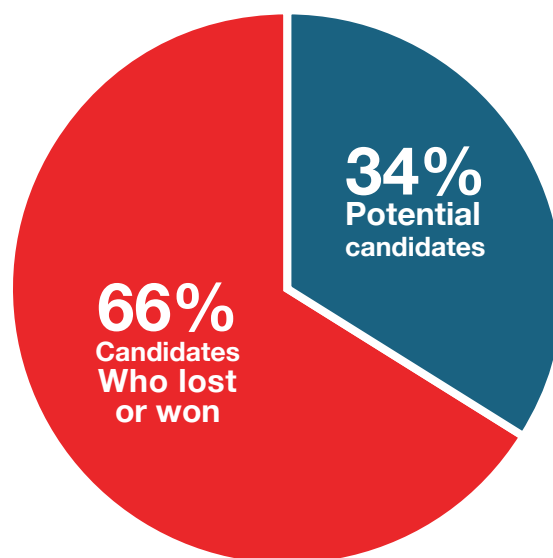
2

UNIT OF ANALYSIS

- This study is a research analysis on the challenges and successes of Lebanese candidates/potential candidates during the 2018 parliamentary elections. The study conducted interviews with a total of **100 women participants**:

66 candidates (independent & politically affiliated) who **lost** or **won** the elections.

34 potential candidates (independent & politically affiliated) who **withdrew** their candidacy or **didn't run** for elections.



Names of participants who took part in this study are listed in Annex I.

METHODOLOGY

3

DATA COLLECTION

- The information collected for this study is mainly based on a survey questionnaire given to the majority of participants to be filled out through a face to face interview. Some opted to provide additional digital recordings through these interviews, while a few filled out the questionnaire online.

Two types of tailored survey questionnaires were created for the 100 participants:

1st QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire 1: addressed to the 66 candidates (independent & politically affiliated) who lost or won the elections

The survey pertained questions mainly on the electoral phase (pre, during and post) elections along with some general questions.

2nd QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire 2: addressed to the 34 potential candidates (independent & politically affiliated) who withdrew their candidacy or couldn't run for elections

The first part of this questionnaire pertained questions mainly on the pre and post electoral Phases. Following, is the second part of this survey, directed ONLY towards potential politically affiliated candidates to better understand their perspectives.

4

ANALYSIS

- All descriptive figures presented in this study are based on the 100 participants interviewed.
- Data analysis was conducted by transcribing approved recordings provided by some participants, along with a careful interpretation of the 2 different survey questionnaires.
- This study employs both qualitative and quantitative methods.
- The last section of this paper provides observations and recommendations from lessons learned mainly towards:

- * Female candidates
- * Potential candidates
- * Different stakeholders



“ ANNEX 1

”

ANNEX 1

**89 names of the 100 female participants are listed. 11 names are not listed below based on the participants' request.*

**female elected MPs in red*

Names of women who took part in this study in chronological order

1. Alina Klonassian
2. Andera El Zouheiri
3. Antonia Ghamra
4. Carole Babikian
5. Corine Ashkar
6. Colette Boueiz
7. Cynthia Al Asmar
8. Daad El Azzi
9. Dalal Rahbani
10. Dalia Dagher
- 11. Dima Jamali**
12. Eliane Azzi
13. Fadwa Nassif
14. Faten Zein
15. Fatima Hamasni
16. Ferial Moughrabi
17. Ghada Assaf
18. Ghada Marouni Eid
19. Gina Chammas
20. Grace Kamel
21. Gulay El Assaad
22. Halime Kaakour
23. Hala Abou Kassam
24. Hanan El Chaar
25. Hanan Othman
26. Hosn About
- 27. Inaya Ezzidine**
28. Josephine Aoun
29. Josephine Zougheib
30. Joumana Haddad
31. Jeanette Geagea Rami
32. Josiane Khalil
33. Katia kiwan
34. Kholoud Wattar Kassem
35. Laury Hayatyan
36. Loyal Bou moussa
37. Lina Geokjian
38. Lina Hamdan
39. Lina Hussein
40. Lina Moukhaiber
41. Lina Jalkh Farjallah
42. Maggy Aoun
43. May Tabbal
44. Mariam El Chami
45. Maya Zaghrini Sfeir
46. Marcelle Saleme Kallas
47. Nada Zaarour
48. Nadine Itani
49. Najwa Azar
50. Nariman El Chamaa
51. Nariman El Jamal
52. Nayla Geagea
53. Nehmat Badreddine
54. Nuhad Yazbeck
55. Nawal Mdallaly
56. Nidal Assaf
57. Olfat Sabeh
58. Oula Boutros
59. Patricia Smida
- 60. Paula Yaccoubian**
61. Petra Semaha
62. Rasha Itani
63. Randa Abboud
64. Rana Chemaitelli
65. Rania Bassil
66. Rania Gaith
67. Rania Masri
68. Rindala Jabbour
69. Rita Louis Mallat
70. Rola Ghossein
71. Rouba Shoker
72. Roula El Mrad
- 73. Roula El Tabsh**
74. Roula Yameen Khoury
75. Roula Moawad
76. Salwa Al Amin
77. Sawsan Mhanna
78. Sophie Zaza
79. Theodora Bejjani
80. Therese Rizkallah
81. Vanda Ramia
82. Victoria Zwein
83. Violet Ghazzal Balaa
84. Waad Sukareyi
85. Yana Samarani
86. Zeina Kallab
87. Zeina Majdalani
88. Zeina Mounzer
89. Zoya Rouhana

“ DESCRIPTIVE
STATISTICS

”

1st
QUESTIONNAIRE

2nd
QUESTIONNAIRE

113

FEMALES
PRESENTED THEIR CANDIDACY
OUT OF 976 CANDIDATES

11.57%

86

FEMALES
WERE INCLUDED ON LISTS
OUT OF 597 CANDIDATES

14.4%

49

**ELECTORAL LISTS
INCLUDED FEMALES
OUT OF 77 LISTS**

63%

**POLITICAL
AFFILIATION
OF THE 86 CANDIDATES**

**NUMBER OF PREFERENTIAL
VOTES OBTAINED
BY THE 86 CANDIDATES**

10.5%

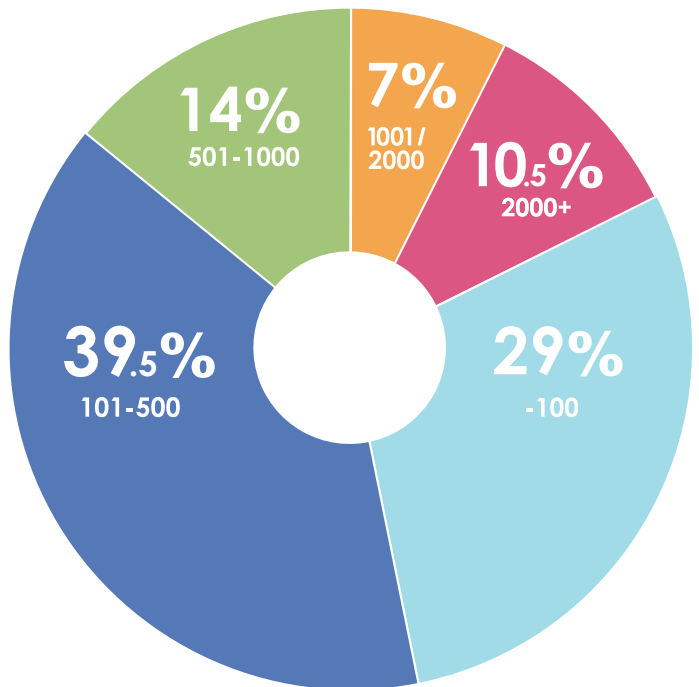
9 POLITICALLY
AFFILIATED
CANDIDATES

33.7%

29
INDEPENDANT
ALLIED WITH
POLITICAL PARTIES

55.8%

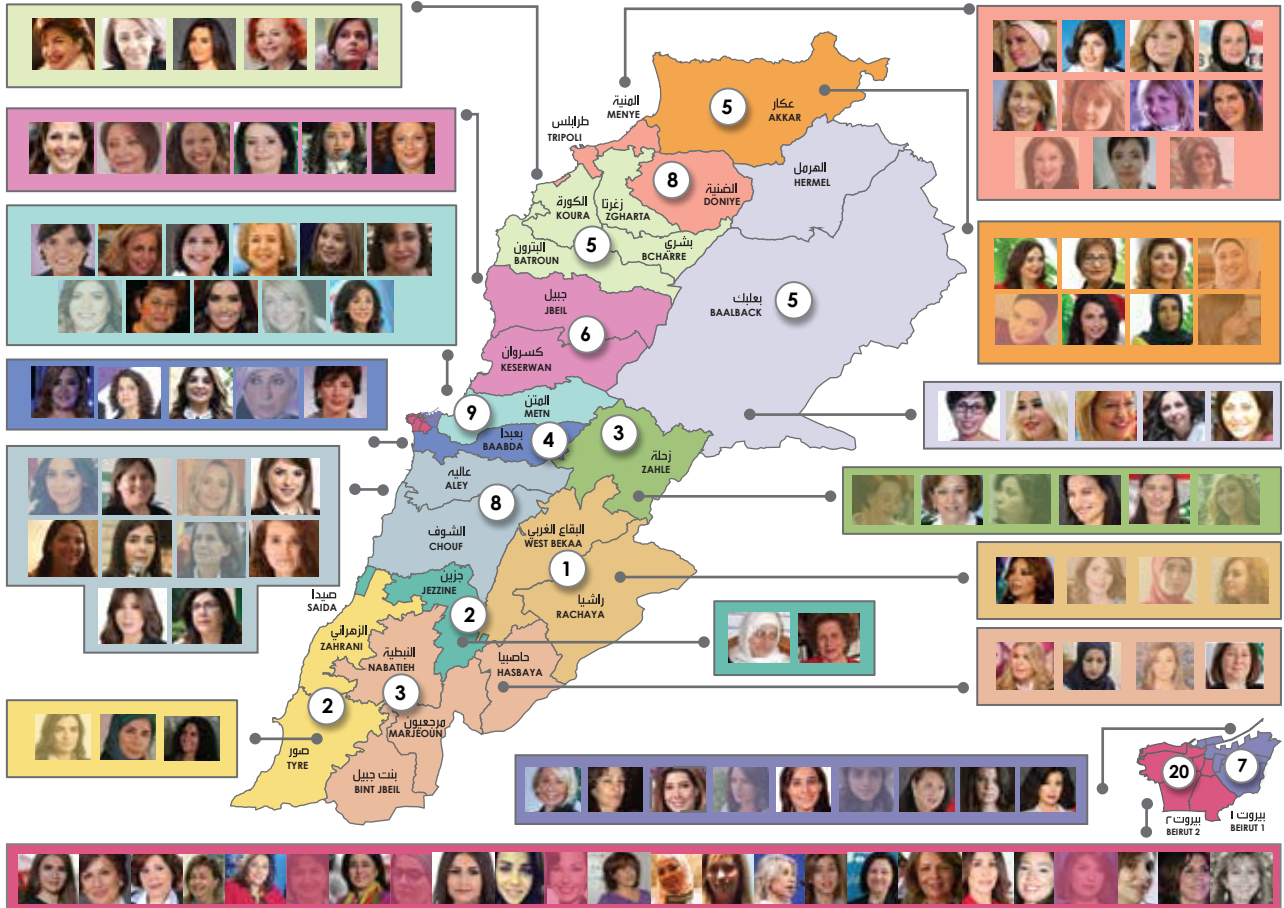
48
INDEPENDANT
CANDIDATES



86

CANDIDATES
INCLUDED
ON LISTS

76.10%
OF 113 FEMALE
CANDIDATES



6

ELECTED
FEMALE
CANDIDATES

4.68%
OF THE
PARLIAMENT



BAHIA HARIRI
FUTURE

DIMA JAMALI
FUTURE

INAYA EZEDDINE
AMAL MOVEMENT

PAULETTE YAGOUBIAN
KOULOUNA WATANI

SETHRIDA GEAGEA
LEBANESE FORCES

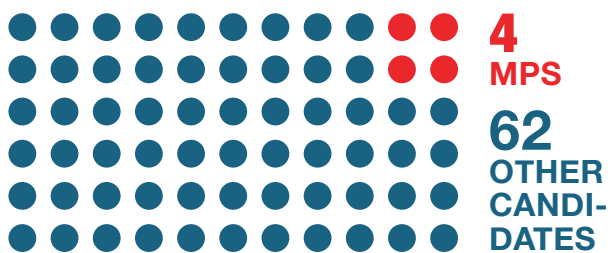
ROULA TABSH
FUTURE

“1st
QUESTIONNAIRE

”

CANDIDATES WHO RAN FOR OFFICE

66 candidates (independent & politically affiliated) who lost or won the elections were interviewed in this section.

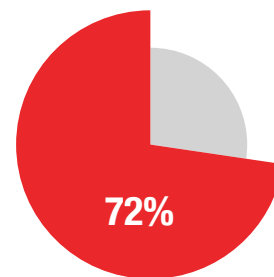


Out of 66 total participants, interviews were conducted with 62 candidates who have lost the electoral battle, while 4 interviews were conducted with winner candidates- present MPs

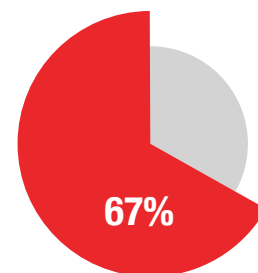
This year's wave of female candidates who ran, has some striking features besides its sheer size. There is also a great deal of diversity within the group. It includes both independent and politically affiliated women. In addition, the electoral scene witnessed some female candidates whose faces are familiar in the local media

■ Majority of candidates interviewed have a background in law and political sciences. Others, are experts in fields of Business, Medicine, Engineering and languages. Moreover, some candidates have a PhD degree

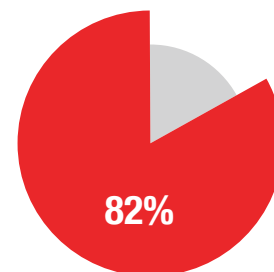
■ 72% of interviewees exclaimed that it was an easy decision to run



■ %67 have been involved in politics for more than five years



■ %82 said that their families & communities never had a female candidate who ran for elections



■ Majority of candidates attributed their candidacy decision as their own personal choice, while others attributed it to family members and co-workers

The questionnaire is divided into 4 categories:

- 1 Pre-Election**
- 2 During Election**
- 3 Post Election**
for candidates who lost or won.
- 4 Candidates who won**
A final category is solely dedicated with more specific questions for the 4 candidates who won.



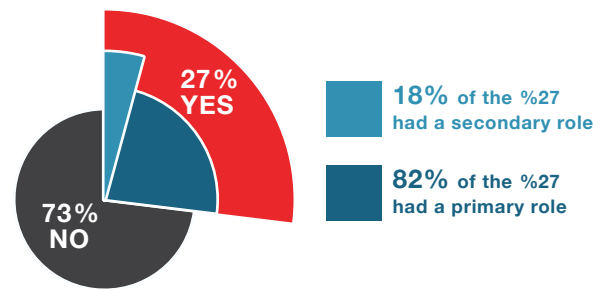
PRE-ELECTION PERIOD

Number of participants:
66 out of the 100 interviewed

- Distribution of candidates' answers when asked if they have previously worked in a political campaign:

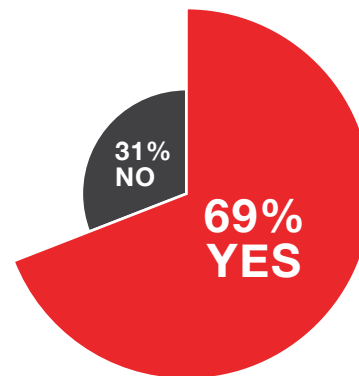
27% said yes.

82% of those who said 'yes' had a primary role while the remaining 18% had a secondary role working in campaigns.



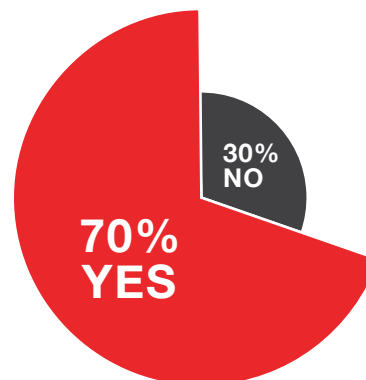
- Distribution of candidates when asked if they used statistics, voters lists and studies for their electoral campaigns:

69% of candidates answered 'yes'



- Distribution of candidates who met with politicians, head of municipalities and influential individuals in their electoral precinct while preparing for elections

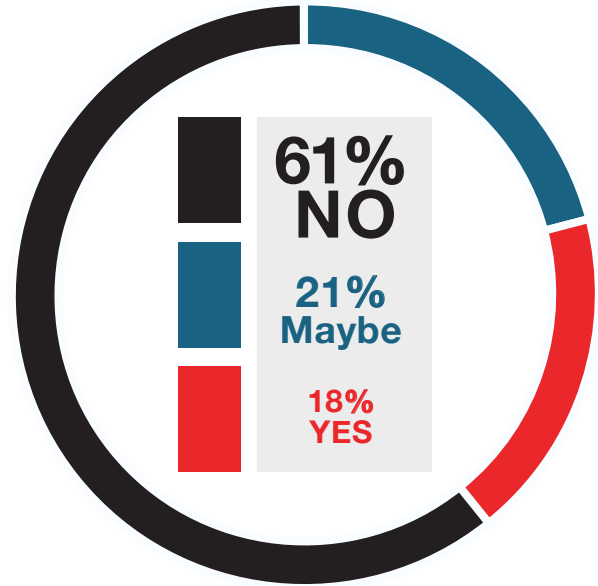
70% of candidates revealed that they have



- Candidates were asked if they resorted to 'electoral keys' in their precinct:

61% of interviewed candidates did not resort to 'electoral keys' in their own districts

This clearly shows the absence of technical and knowledge support followed by the short period of time candidates had to prepare for elections.



- Candidates responses when asked if they have been in a public position.

Their answers varied between

- * Different public positions
- * Independent member of negotiations within a civil society coalition
- * Consultancy
- * University council for students
- * Consultant with UN
- * International legal consultant
- * Minister

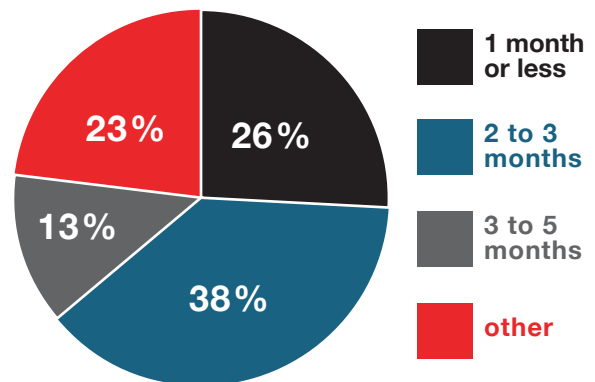


DURING ELECTION PERIOD

Number of participants:
66 out of the 100 interviewed

- This section provides descriptive answers to questions regarding candidates' electoral phase: Campaigning, Enlisting & Election day.

Outlines the time duration candidates had to prepare for their campaigns:



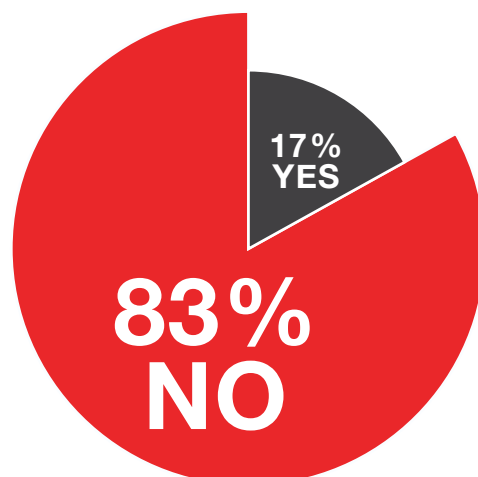
The figure clearly shows that 64% of candidates started their preparations in less than 3 months prior to elections, while only 13% had 5 months of campaigning. This is a very short period of time to prepare, let alone to achieve any results.

The remaining 23% who reported that they have been working on their campaigns for more than 5 months didn't have a proper strategy and lacked technical support and savviness.

- Candidates were asked if they faced any discrimination while presenting their official candidacy papers?

The majority of interviewees responded with a 'No'

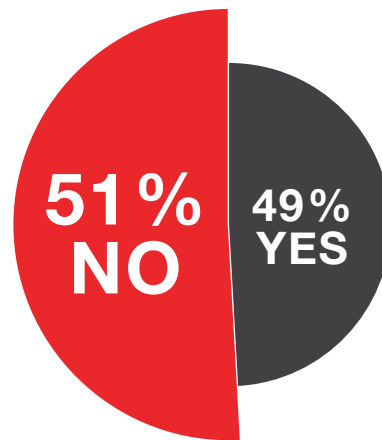
while 17% stated that they faced some kind of discrimination.



■ **Candidates were asked if they needed help in applying?**

A staggering 83% of candidates reported that they did not face any discrimination while presenting their official candidacy papers followed by

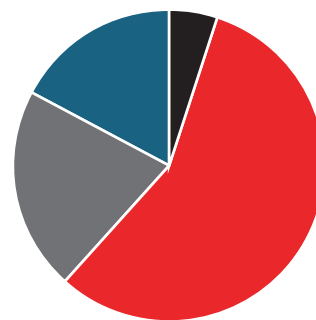
51% who added that they did not need any help in applying their legal papers.



It should be noted that the main reason behind these positive results is attributed to a female heading the Candidacy Bureau who facilitated the process of female candidates and ensured the absence of any discrimination against them. Thus, the importance of having female leaders in decision-making positions.

■ **What are the challenges that faced candidates during their campaign?**

The main challenge was financial. This study clearly points out the need of candidates to obtain financial support especially since politicians spent unrealistic amount of money on their campaigns.



43%

Financial issues

16%

lack of female support

13%

being independent

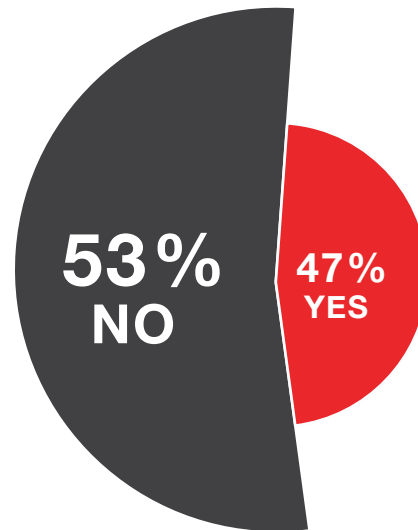
6%

family issues

“ **13% of candidates agreed that being independent -not joining a political party- was an obstacle for them.** ”

- Candidates were asked if they hired an expert campaign manager?

This clearly shows the absence of technical assistance that candidates faced.

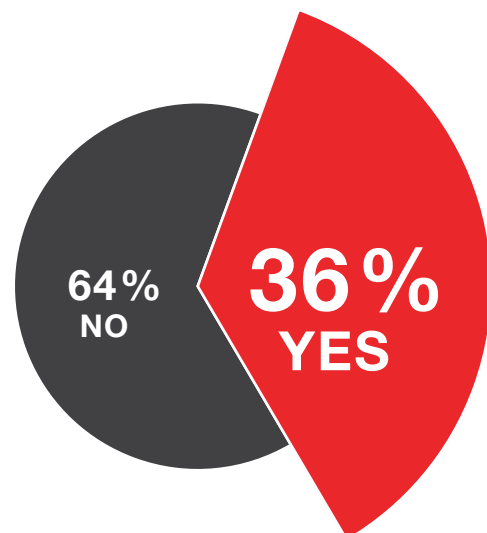


- Candidates were asked if they resorted to experts for a complete strategical campaign?

Again, such a small percentage of

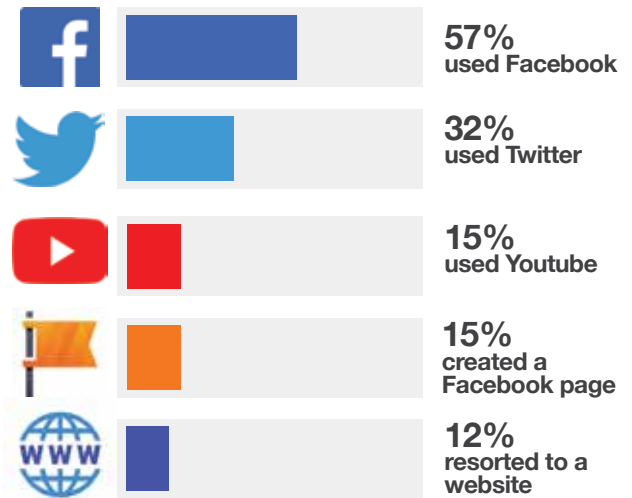
ONLY 36% of candidates benefited from a complete strategical campaign

because the list or political party has initiated one. This reveals a dire absence of technical support and electoral campaigning savviness.



■ This study provides relevant details and statistics on which social media tools candidates used most for their campaigns

Moreover, according to the questionnaire, **63% of candidates revealed that they needed expert help with their campaigns on social media**



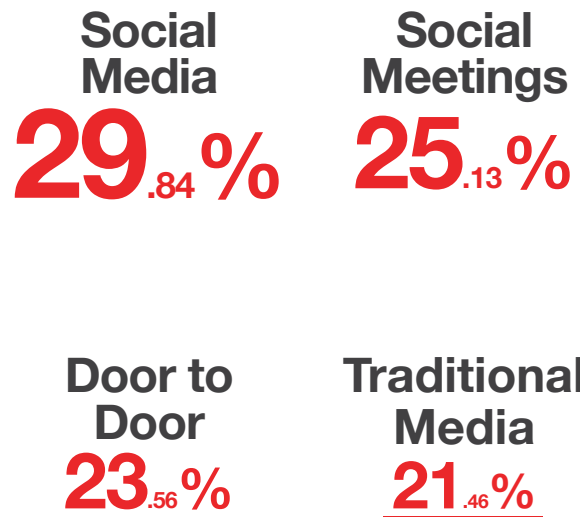
■ What were the most employed strategies by candidates:

It is important to point out the fact that

21.46% of traditional media visibility received by candidates was due to the efforts of women focused NGOs

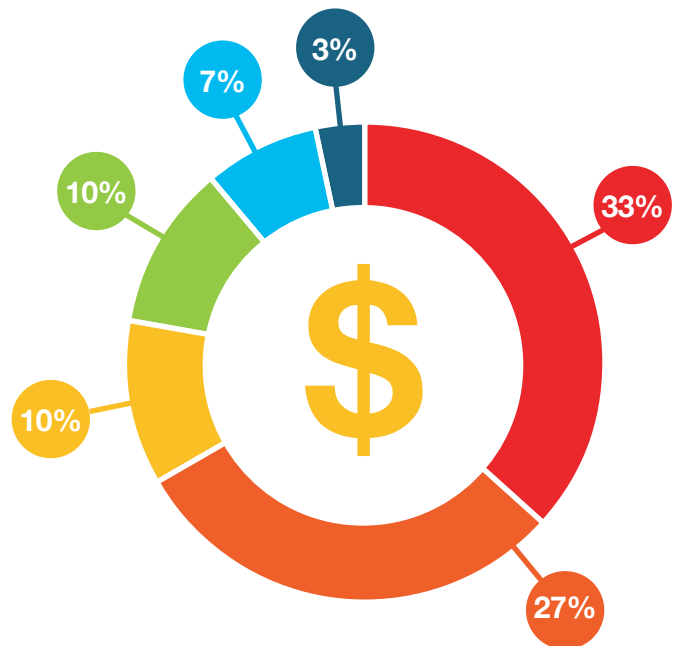
who supported the candidates through different projects which provided such visibility. Without such NGOs effort, the visibility rate would have been very low.

On another note, figures show that ‘Door to Door’ strategy and social meetings “holding gatherings for voters” is a great technique in the absence of financial resources that candidates suffered from.



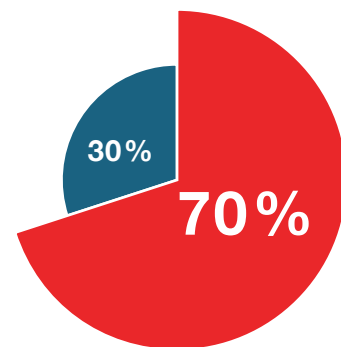
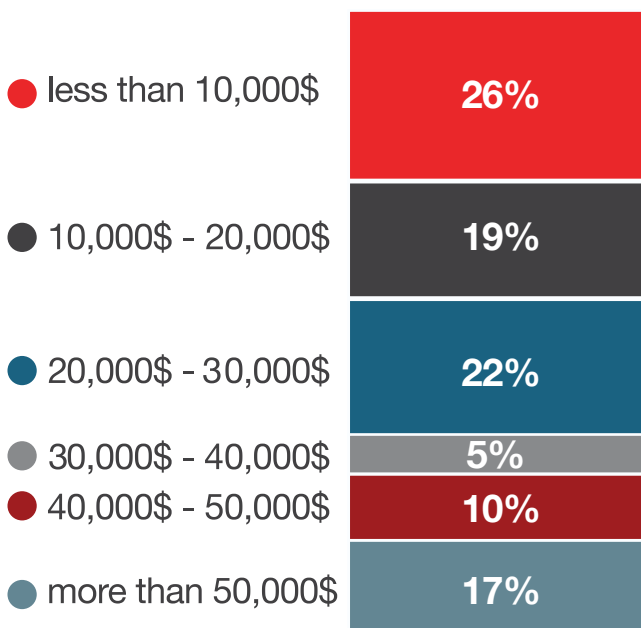
■ The questionnaire asked candidates how they paid for their campaigns.

- The majority reported that they financed their own campaigns (33%)
- Family (27%)
- Friends (10%)
- Fundraising events (10%)
- Political parties (7%)
- Donations (3%)



According to the low percentages, candidates MUST host more fundraising events and work on receiving higher donations as proceeds for their campaigns.

■ In addition, candidates' answers varied when asked about the amount of money spent for elections:



Almost %70 of participants paid less than 30,000\$ during their electoral journey

This is a very low amount of money spent in comparison to the huge amount spent during elections. This clearly points out that finance is the major obstacle that faced candidates.

“ Despite the fact that all candidates had an electoral slogan, voters were not familiar with the majority of such slogans. This is the result of poor campaigning (marketing) directly linked to the prominent fact of lack of financial resources.

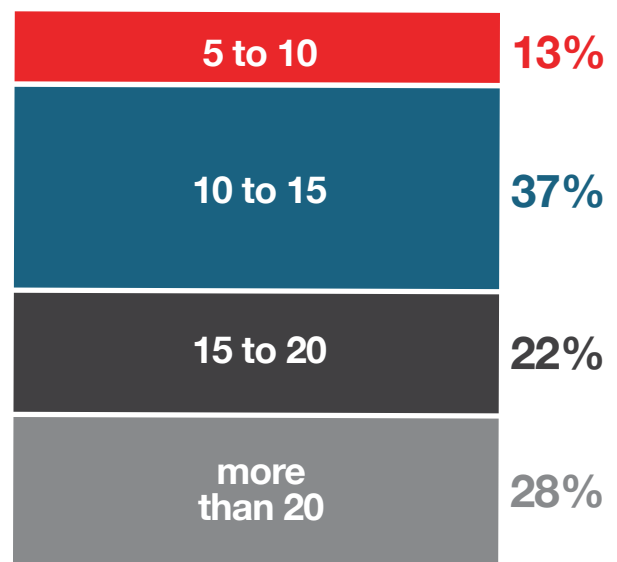


■ **Figures on the number of ‘Delegates’ assigned by candidates:**

A striking figure of 70% of candidates had less than 20 delegates again pointing to the lack of logistic and technical support faced by candidates.

In addition 78% of candidates had volunteers assisting them free of charge, while 22% paid their volunteers.

This concludes the fact that independent candidates need to be part of a political party or political coalition to provide them with such needed support.

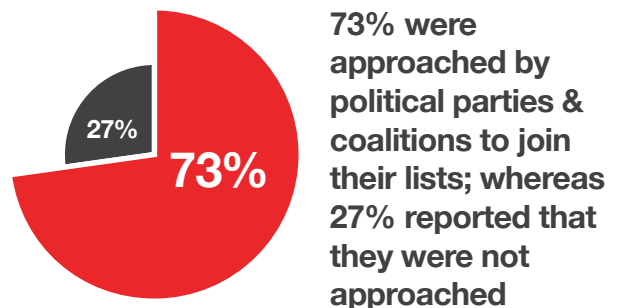
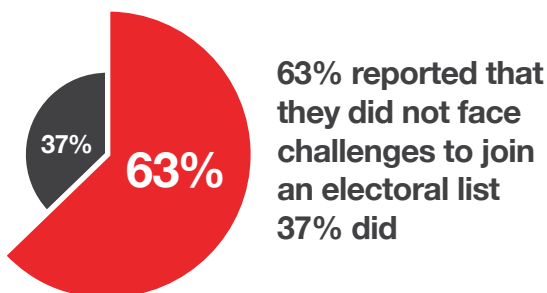


almost
70%
of candidates had
**LESS THAN
20 delegates**

■ List of challenges & obstacles that faced candidates during their campaigns:

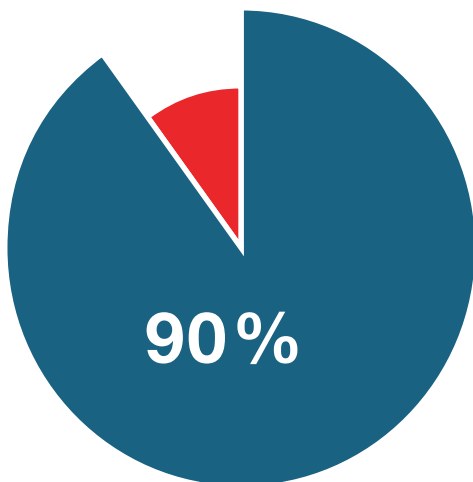
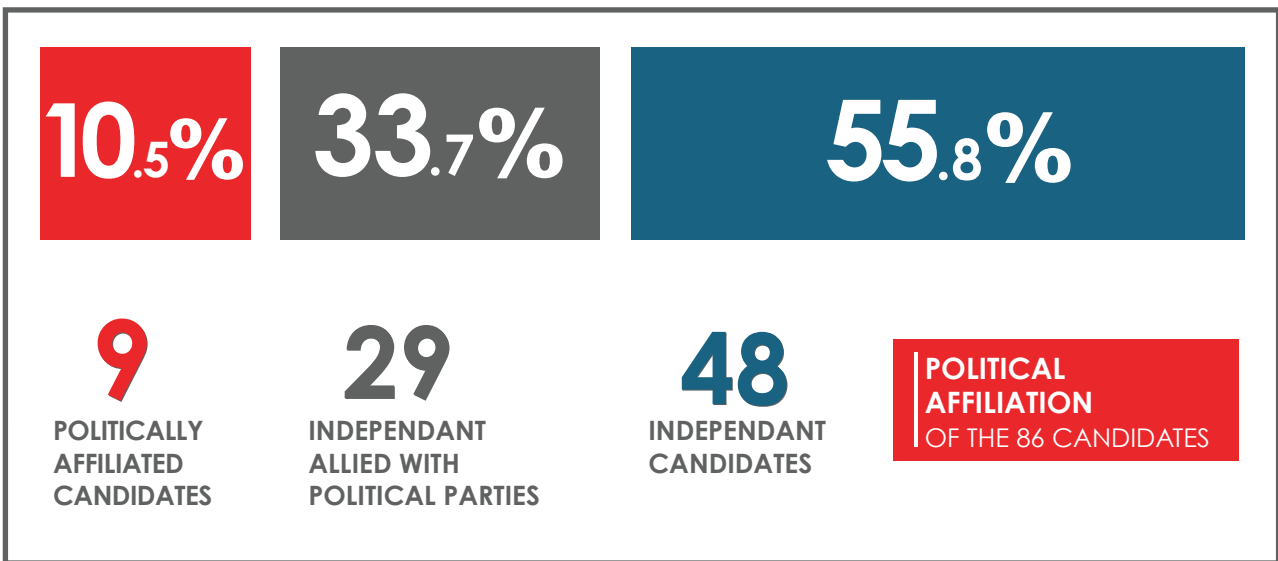
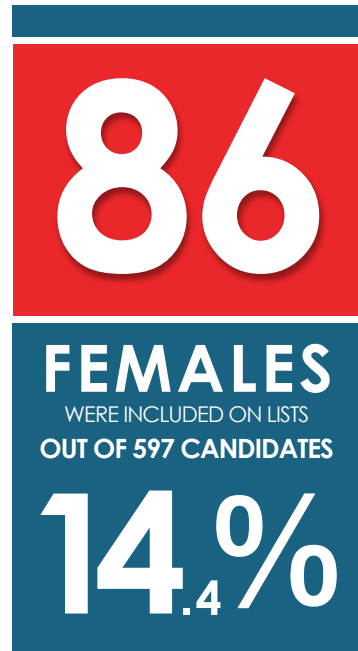
25% Candidates	Financial challenges	14.58% Candidates	Unrealistic High media appearance fees	10.41% Candidates	Gender Discriminatory media
8.33% Candidates	Threats	6.25% Candidates	Fierce competition over preferential vote	6.25% Candidates	Lack of time
6.25% Candidates	Fighting political realm	6.25% Candidates	Lebanese society is not ready for change	4.16% Candidates	Delay in forming electoral lists
2.08% Candidates	Patriarchy	2.08% Candidates	Social media platforms	2.08% Candidates	Unserious attitude towards women candidates
2.08% Candidates	Few numbers of delegates	The above table represents the main challenges reported by candidates.			

■ Questions with candidates on Joining a list.



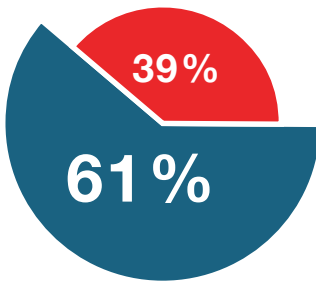
The figures are indicative that female candidates did not face major challenges with ‘enlisting’. They were approached by political parties and political coalitions to join lists. Political parties enlisted expert candidates on their lists.

CANDIDATES
WHO RAN
FOR OFFICE



Statistics show that almost 90% of candidates did not settle for anything to join political lists.

This highly shows that political parties wanted female candidates to join their lists.

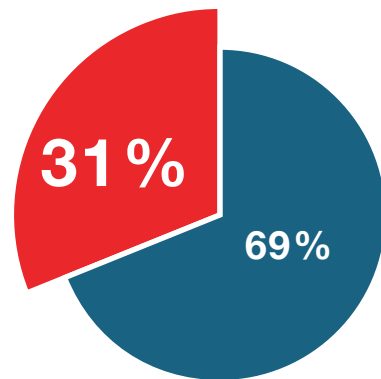


39% of independent candidates had to form new political affiliations by joining political lists.

61% of candidates remained independent by joining different coalitions of independent lists.

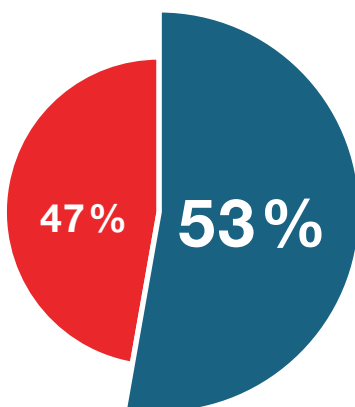
■ Was there a clear role distribution and a sense of cooperation between members of the same electoral list?

31% of candidates were affiliated with traditional political parties;

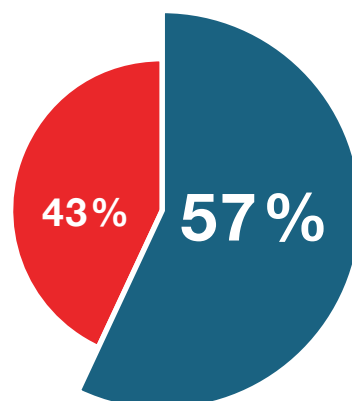


but, they did not receive the usual cooperation and needed support as candidates. While 69% who joined different coalitions of independent lists were more involved, received support & participated in decision making.

■ Where candidates asked to fund the lists they joined?



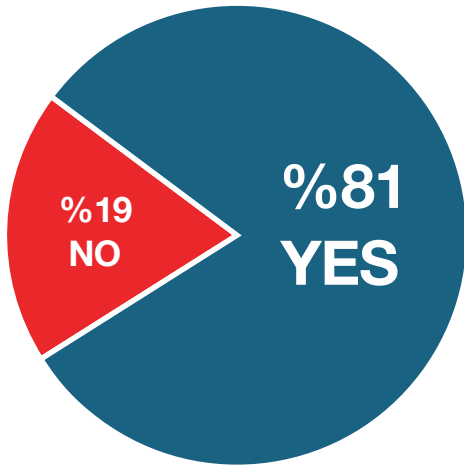
53% YES
47% NO



57% benefited from the lists' funds
43% did not

Most of candidates reported that financial capabilities played a vital role in assisting candidates to enlist

■ Candidates were asked if their lists conducted an electoral campaign?



Being on a strong list provided candidates with the chance of being included in an electoral campaign.

■ Candidates were specifically asked about obstacles they faced with enlisting:

Majority reported NO challenges. This indicates that the majority of women as stated earlier were approached by political parties and coalitions. Others reported the challenge of choosing a coherent and suitable list, a direct outcome of not being a member of a political party

“ Questions with candidates pertaining to election day. ”

■ What challenges did candidates face on election day?

35%

Reported Lack/ absence of delegates

14.86%

Reported fraud & manipulation with votes

13.51%

Reported foul talk & insults at the polling stations

6.75%

Obstacles facing Delegates

6.75%

Finances

6.75%

Having a hard time/ not allowed to enter the polling stations

4%

Dismissing of Delegates

4%

Buying votes

4%

Lack of media visibility

4%

Chaos at polling stations

An important deduction from the **main challenges** reveals that the majority of obstacles faced by candidates **on election day** is the direct responsibility of the **Lebanese government** as seen below:

unclear & fraud
results
with candidates'
votes

insults
directed at
candidates at
polling stations

evicting
candidates'
delegates
out of the
polling stations

Candidates
were restrained
or found it extremely
difficult to
access
the polling station

POST ELECTION PERIOD

Number of participants:
66 out of the 100 interviewed

- A stunning number of 96% of candidates who created new political affiliations during the elections did not remain affiliated post elections.

This shows that the political parties did not exert enough effort and have failed to enroll affiliated candidates to join their parties.

70% of candidates stated that they are not interested in joining current political parties.

Political parties need to work on implementing new strategies to attract new female members/ potential candidates for the next parliamentary elections.

- Candidates listed the Lessons learned from their experiences with 2018 elections

- Not to **trust** anyone
- Better **preparations**
- Allocating **financial** resources
- Amend the electoral **law**
- Lebanese are not ready for **change** (to see new political faces and affiliations)

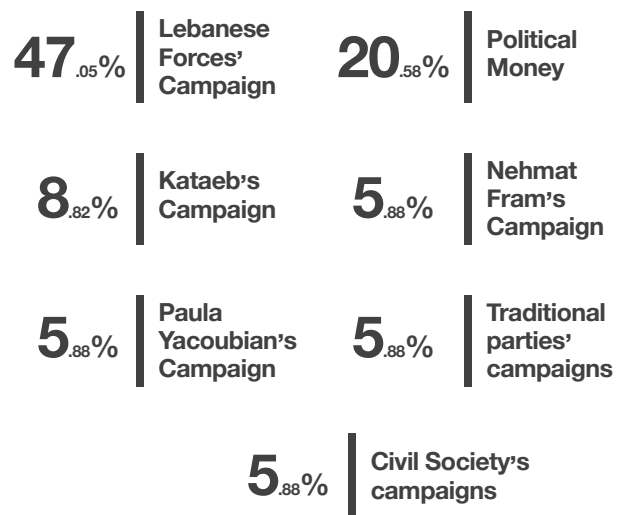
“ Questions with candidates regarding the post-election phase ”

96%
created
new
political
affiliations

70%
are not
interested
in joining
current political
parties

60%
are planning to
run for the
next 2022
parliamentary
elections

- Candidates' response to the best political campaign?



CANDIDATES WHO WON

Number of participants:
3 politically affiliated & 1 independent
out of the 100 interviewed

“ Specific Questions with elected MPs ”

■ 4MPs are 100% supportive of women's issues in Lebanon and will work towards amending gender discriminatory laws

■ To what do you attribute your success?

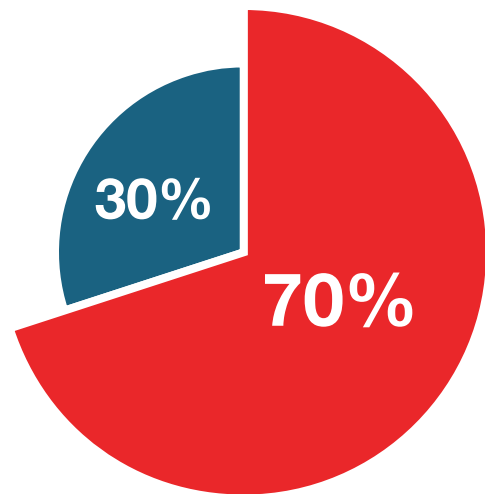
■ **Political support by a specific party**
Winner candidates/ current MPs reported that from the 100% support they received, 70% was from their party.

■ **Personal expert experience**

■ **Society's frustration**

■ Moreover, they agreed in unison to work closely with civil society organizations in amending the new electoral law and endorsing gender quota.

100%
of interviewed
MPs
supported
women's
issues



“2nd
QUESTIONNAIRE

”

POTENTIAL CANDIDATES WHO DIDN'T RUN OR WITHDREW

*34 potential candidates (independent & politically affiliated) who **withdrew** their candidacy or **couldn't run** for elections were interviewed in this section.*

part of this 2nd questionnaire is directed **ONLY** to potential candidates who are politically affiliated



- Results reveal that participants have different academic backgrounds mainly in international and political fields as well as in the fields of sciences, engineering and law.
- Potential candidates are experts in different fields holding sufficient knowledge to run for candidacy.

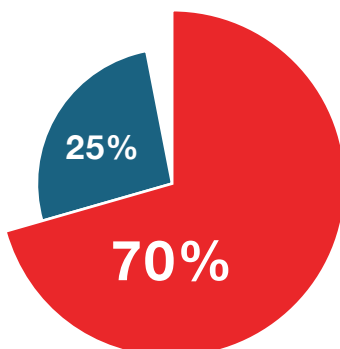
- Majority of participants said that their community encouraged them to run. While others attributed their candidacy to their families and co-workers.

This shows that the Lebanese community - who is familiar with candidates - is encouraging women to run; hence, willing to vote for them.

- **70 %**
of potential candidates

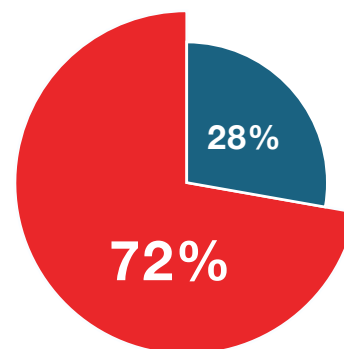
have more than 5 years of experience in politics

25 % of potential candidates have 2 to 5 years of experience in politics



- %72 of participants stated that they were the first in their families and communities to consider running for elections.

Potential candidates were encouraged to run despite having no political lineage.

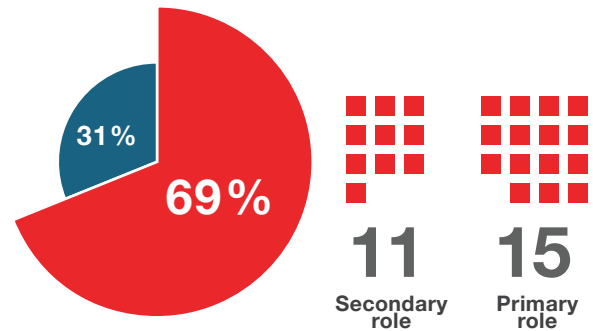


■ **69% of participants stated that they have previously worked in a political campaign:**

15 participants had a primary role
11 had a secondary role

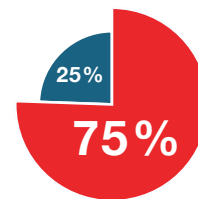
These are the politically affiliated participants who have acquired best knowledge from their parties.

based on the figures it is important to note that the remaining 31% need to acquire such knowledge in preparations for their future candidacy.

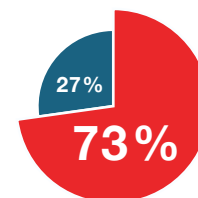


■ **In comparison between independent & politically affiliated potential candidates on referring to «electoral keys»:**

Both had similar percentages, but the politically affiliated participants were more encouraged to refer to «electoral keys», since being part of a party, they knew its importance.



75% of politically affiliated said they need to resort to 'electoral keys' in their precinct



73% of independents said they felt the need to resort to 'electoral keys' but couldn't do it

■ **97% of participants** said that they have not changed their political affiliations



This indicates the loyalty and dedication of politically affiliated female members to their parties.

According to figures, leaders of parties need to work on gender strategies to support their female members for the next elections.

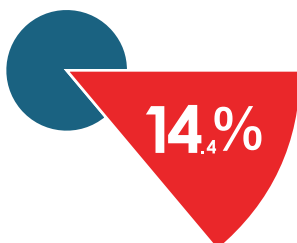
■ These are the main challenges that restricted potential candidates from running:



Majority did not run ONLY because their party did not nominate them.

Candidates reported that candidacy fees for female candidates should be reduced. Unlike male candidates, they are not supported by their party leaders.

Others, faced the challenge of joining a party or enlisting

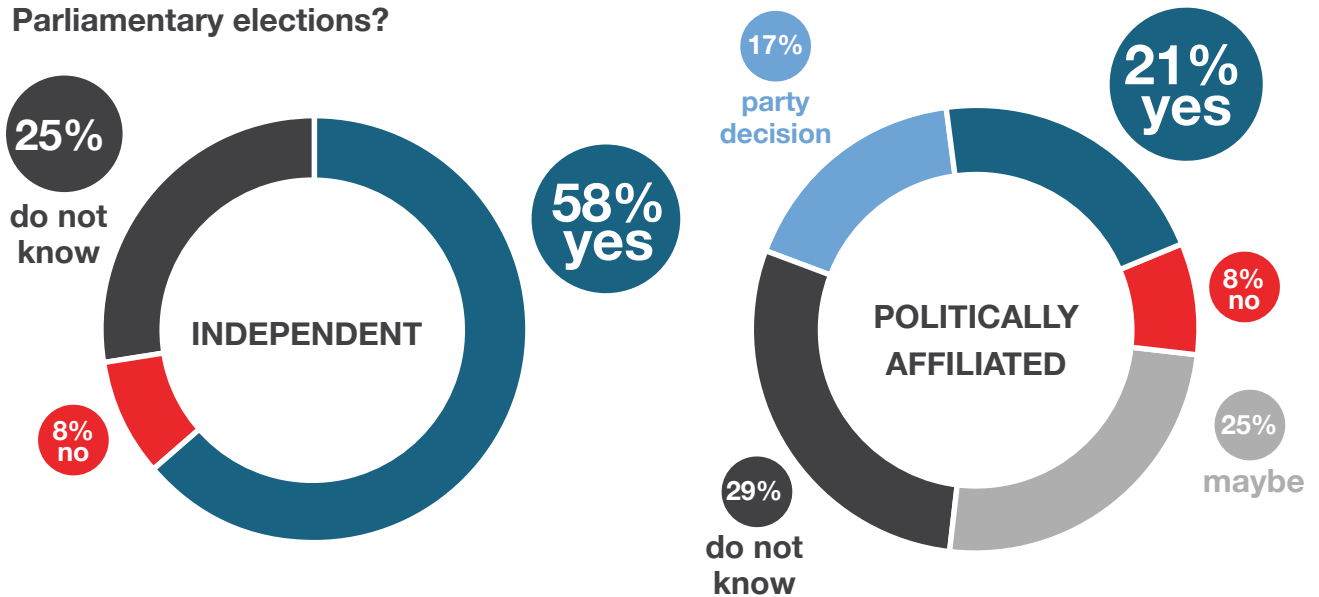


■ 17% of independent participants who were interviewed stated that they will be joining a political party in preparation for next elections.



Head of parties must integrate encouraging gender strategies in their parties to attract these expert women.

Are you planning to run for the 2022 Parliamentary elections?



Both independent and politically affiliated candidates were asked if they will run for the 2022 parliamentary elections:

71%
of politically affiliated
(stated that they are not sure about running)

This shows the participants' interest and readiness to run is solely the decision of their party. This is directly stated by the 17% who responded "it's the decision of my party".

58%
majority of independent
(said they will run)

21%
of politically affiliated
(said they will run)

This shows that potential candidates (both politically affiliated and independent) have been encouraged by the unprecedented number of women who ran this year influencing their decision to run in the 2022 elections.

Have you started preparing for your next electoral campaign?

64% participants stated they have not started planning yet

9% said they started

61% politically affiliated said they haven't started planning for the next electoral campaign

13% said they have started

Following the previous question and following their intention to run, independent participants have to start preparing at this present time to be ready for next elections

2022 parliamentary elections will witness a number of female candidates more prepared than this year's election.

Candidates' response to the best political campaign?

32.43% answered | Lebanese Forces' Campaign

32.43% answered | Other

18.91% answered | Kataeb's Campaign

5.40% answered | Future's Campaign

5.40% answered | FPM's campaign

5.40% answered | Sabaa's Campaign

What have both independent & politically affiliated learned from the 2018 elections?

“Public Opinion is not used to elect women”

“Female candidates have to increase their political experience & financial resources”

“Joining a political party or coalition is vital to succeed in elections”

POTENTIAL CANDIDATES WHO ARE POLITICALLY AFFILIATED

Last part of this 2nd Questionnaire is directed ONLY to potential candidates who are politically affiliated.

- What are the main causes that didn't lead your party to nominate you as a candidate?

1
Women are not Given equal opportunities

3
preferences were given to male candidates

who in accordance to political parties have a **solid history in politics**

2
the electoral law

4
nominated candidates had financial resources

The analysis of the above shows that the electoral law was tailored to the needs of political parties in Lebanon. Parties had to choose candidates with a long history in politics & an efficiency in financial resources. Women were not given same opportunities as men.

Electoral law is discriminatory towards women.

- How did you take your party's decision in not considering you for the 2018 elections as party candidates?

“I accepted and understood my party's decision, rather than taking it negatively out of respect to my party”

“If any of my fellow party candidates won, it means I won”

“I was frustrated for a while but started working on strengthening my skills and knowledge”

- On political parties nominating independent candidates, female party members responded as follows:

“ It is a good idea ”

“ I accepted the idea ”

“ Independent women need a political party for support ”

The responses show the dedication and support of political female members to their parties despite not being nominated.

Moreover, when asked about their **party's gender strategy during elections**, the majority of participants reported the need of developing such a strategy within their party.

- Main 2018 electoral lessons learned from political female members:

“ Amending the electoral law ”

“ Having a close relationship with voters ”

“ Winning the elections is not possible unless you are part of a party ”


- After 2018 elections, will you change your strategy in your party to reach your political ambitions?

52% said NO

21% said YES

Political female members need to reconsider their previous strategies within their parties. They need to find new alternative ways and exert a firm approach to being nominated.

“DISCUSSION & FINDINGS”



DISCUSSION & FINDINGS

1ST QUESTIONNAIRE CANDIDATES WHO RAN FOR OFFICE

66 candidates (independent & politically affiliated) who lost or won the elections.

67%

are well experienced in politics with more than 5 years of experience.

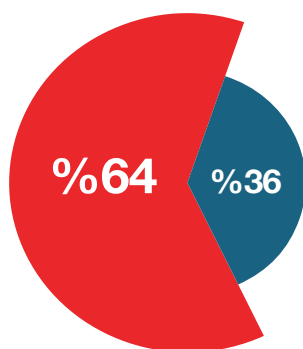
A. Candidates' profile

This year's wave of female candidates has some striking features besides its sheer size. There is also a great deal of diversity within the group. It included both independent and politically affiliated women, a majority whose background stems in law and political sciences, as well as other academic fields. Moreover, the electoral scene witnessed some female candidates whose faces are familiar in the local media.

B. Main Findings

This survey highlights the main challenges that faced the participant candidates during the 2018 elections.

1. Technical experience, support and resources



As seen in the descriptive statistics, 64% of participants had less than 3 months duration to prepare for elections, a very short period of time to accomplish results. Hence, the lack of technical expertise and knowledge support, as some candidates did not have ample time to refer to 'electoral keys' and meet with political and influential individuals in their precinct a vital element for any electoral campaign.

Moreover, lack of **technical expertise** is embodied in the **absence of social media experts** and **campaign managers** to direct the participants' campaigns. This is followed by a limited number or **absence of volunteers and delegates** to support the candidates.



NO
Campaign
Managers



NO
Technical
Support



NO
Social Media
Experts



NO
Delegates
& Volunteers

Candidates' slogans were not visible to all voters. This is the direct result of limited preparation time and the absence of an expert team assisting the candidates to produce a full successful campaign.

Finally, financial resources were the main challenges reported by all candidates. This was clearly seen in the lack of human resources and the amount of fees paid by the candidates during their candidacy.

According to statistics almost

70%
of interviewees
paid less than 30,000\$

In comparison to the unrealistic high amount of money paid by politicians. Candidates were struggling in the pool of competition.

2. Governmental support

The majority of challenges that faced candidates during election day is a direct responsibility of the Lebanese government.

Participants reported **unclear & fraud results** with their vote results.

They were **insulted & pressured** by opponents at the polling stations.

Moreover, some reported the **eviction of their delegates** from the polling stations while they themselves were restrained or found it **extremely difficult to access the stations** on election day.

3. Role of political parties

Statistics reveal that

73%
of candidates were
approached
by political parties
to join their list

This is indicative of the candidates' expertise and backgrounds and the need of parties to enlist such candidates, especially that 90% of candidates affirmed that they did not settle for anything to join such lists.

In total, a stunning

96%

of candidates who created new political affiliations **did not remain affiliated or join the party post elections**

13% out of the 96% joined traditional parties and did not receive the anticipated support and coordination.

70%

not interested in joining current political parties

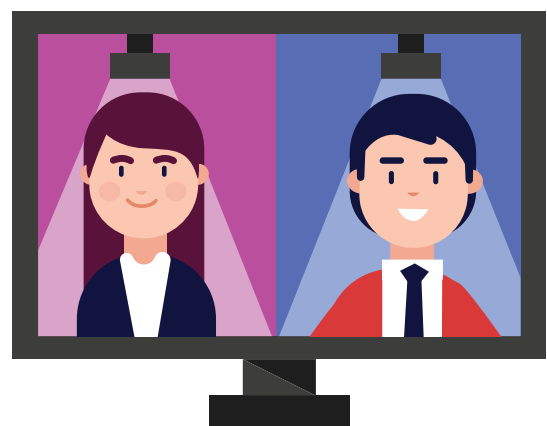
Hence, this concludes that political parties failed to enroll or even maintain their independent affiliated candidates especially since 70% of interviewees stated that they are not interested in joining current political parties as active members.

4. Joining political parties and political coalitions

37% of total interviewed candidates said they struggled with enlisting as they were not approached by any political group. Hence, 13% stated that not being part of a party or coalition was a main obstacle throughout the election period.

5. Media Visibility

It is important to point out the fact that the respondents' positive replies on media visibility, a 21.46% on which they have received during elections, is due to the efforts of women focused NGOs who supported the candidates through different projects provided such visibility. Without such NGOs, the visibility rate would have been very low.



6. Women supporting women

83%

of candidates did not face any discrimination while presenting their official candidacy papers

A staggering 83% of candidates reported that they did not face any discrimination while presenting their official candidacy papers followed by 51% who added that they did not need any help with their candidacy legal papers.

The main reason behind this success is attributed to a female heading the Candidacy Bureau who facilitated the process of female candidates and ensured that they were not discriminated against. Thus, the importance of having female leaders in decision-making positions to support other women.



Under this broad title, the 4 winner candidates- our current MPs, interviewed in this study are

100% supportive of their fellow female Lebanese

They reported that they will work towards amending gender discriminatory laws, in collaboration with women focused NGOs, to endorse gender quota in the electoral law.



DISCUSSION & FINDINGS

2ND QUESTIONNAIRE

POTENTIAL CANDIDATES WHO RAN OR WITHDREW

*34 (independent & politically affiliated)
participants interviewed.*

70%

are well experienced
in politics with more than
5 years of experience.

A. Candidates' profile

Potential candidates are those who ran for elections but withdrew their candidacy or wanted to run but couldn't. Given this, 34 independent and members of political parties took part in this study.

* Participants have different academic backgrounds and are experts in different fields with a few who have a PhD degree

* 70% have more than 5 years of experience in the political field.

B. Main Findings

I. INDEPENDENT and POLITICALLY affiliated potential candidates

The findings listed here are directed towards both: independent and female members of political parties.

1. Encouraging start

A high majority of participants reported to be the first in their families and communities to consider running for elections. Moreover, many attributed a strong sense of encouragement from their communities & co-workers.

Hence, the Lebanese community is in favour of supporting familiar faces in politics.

“

Majority First time running

”

2. Technical experience, support and resources

69%
of interviewees
reported to have
**political
campaign
knowledge**

15 participants had leading roles and 11 had secondary roles. These participants are members of political parties; hence, the knowledge experience.

While 31%, independent participants, have no previous knowledge in this area.

Politically affiliated participants as well as independent participants recognize the vitality of resorting to electoral keys during elections but members of parties were more encouraged with this technical strategy due to their party's resources.

3. Main Challenges for not running

The Party
did not
nominate me

9%
were not able
to form coalitions

Political Female Members:

"The party did not nominate me" was the direct response of politically affiliated potential members when asked about why they did not run for elections.

Political parties need to know that they have expert women ready for elections.

Independent Members:

9.80% responded that they agreed that being independent, not joining a political party was an obstacle for them. Thus, the main idea resonating in this research is the necessity of joining a political party or coalition for support and gaining different kinds of resources.

Out of the total participants, 17% have reported their intentions to join a political coalition or party after this year's elections.

58%
reported their unwillingness in joining political parties



Both independent & politically affiliated
agreed on financial challenges being a huge obstacle that hindered their candidacy.



Whereas, 58% reported their unwillingness in joining political parties. The main reason behind this decision is the lack of support received by independent members who affiliated with a political party & ran this year.

Hence, the decision of independent candidates was based after witnessing the uncollaborative and unsupportive relation between other independent candidates and their new political affiliations.

4. Running for 2022 parliamentary elections

Independent Members:

58% would run, since it is based on their own personal decision. Hence, statistics reveal that 9% have started working on their future campaigns, while 64% haven't yet but are planning to start.

Political Female Members:

ONLY 21% stated YES since it's not their decision, but that of their party. This explains why almost 69% of them haven't started planning for the 2022 elections.

58%
of independent interviewees would run

69%
Haven't started planning for the 2022 elections.

II. Politically Affiliated Potential Candidates

Listed below are the findings

based on a set of questions directed only towards members of political parties to better understand their party's decisions of not nominating them and their response to such a decision.

“**Members stated that the electoral law itself was the main reason their parties did not nominate them**”

The elections were highly competitive and each party wanted to ensure the success of their candidates. Hence, preferences were given to candidates with a solid political background and a steady flow of financial resources.

“**As a response to not getting nominated, members expressed that the aforementioned reasons are valid enough and that they have accepted the decision.**”

When asked about their opinion on the fact that their parties chose independent candidates rather than themselves, the majority stated that it was a good idea. Moreover, they elaborated on the fact that these independent female candidates needed the support of parties for elections.

These answers reveal the dedication and support that politically affiliated members have towards their parties. Even though they were frustrated, they still considered what is best for their party.

On a final note, 52 % of affiliated members, despite their party's decision to unlist them, expressed that they shall not change their strategies to reach their political ambitions. In comparison, 21% felt the urge to change their strategies

21%

“ **stated that they are reconsidering their previous strategies** by finding new ways of approaching & working **within their party** ”

RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS LEARNED



RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS LEARNED

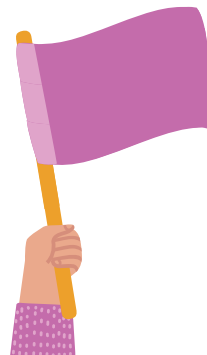
The following section introduces lessons learned along with a series of recommendations stipulated by the respondents who shared different backgrounds & experiences. Based on this fact, the recommendations are mainly directed towards (1) female candidates, and generally towards (2) different stakeholders to pave the way forward for next parliamentary elections:

1. Recommendations to female candidates

- Initiating early preparations for the coming elections. It is never too early-preparation for next mandate starts immediately after election day.
- Doing politics is an ongoing daily process
- Running for a local office to kickstart a political career (as possibility)
- Developing skills vital to a political career
- Joining a political party or political coalition
- Forming a well-defined strategy with the help of experts



“
Preparation starts immediately
after election day
”



“
Joining a political party or coalition
”

■ Linking your name to a special cause or expertise & making political statements

■ Declaring an opinion about all hot political topics

■ Encouraging door-to-door strategy to communicate with voters

■ Actively taking part in different demonstrations and protests regarding imperative national issues

■ Assigning a campaign manager along with a professional team for guidance and support

■ Networking and making connections

■ Recruiting well-prepared and trained volunteers and delegates

■ Securing funding is critical through different channels and conducting fundraising events

■ Introducing yourself and political agenda to voters:

1. Getting involved locally.

Actively engaging with local communities through working on socio-economic initiatives

2. Conduct awareness & information sessions across Lebanon,

mainly in one's electoral precinct. Sessions are encouraged to continually take place, not only months prior to elections

3. Host electoral events and gatherings in public facilities



“
**Declaring
political
opinions**
”



“
assigning a
professional
team
”



“
**Securing
funding**
”

4. Harnessing social media platforms.

Personal Facebook account is one of the many platforms, but not the only one. Having a Facebook page, a YouTube channel and a Twitter account are effective tools. Twitter is a vital market tool for politicians and must be employed by candidates

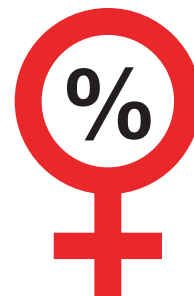
5. Increasing social media visibility

by posting relevant news and discussions on different socio-political issues

2. Recommendations to different stakeholders

- Amend the current electoral law tailored for the very needs of politicians
- Introduce the mandatory quota system for women in the Lebanese Parliament and ensure that the form of such quota will certainly ensure a minimum of 30% females in the parliament (on results)
- Building a gender streaming strategy within the party to ensure equality at all levels
- Encourage political parties to implement women's quota within their internal structure. This is the first step towards discovering female potential in their own environment and ensuring their nomination for future elections
- Political parties need to work on new strategies to attract new female members and maintain the independent candidates who were affiliated with them during the elections
- Enlist of female candidates by political parties, on electoral lists, and promote them similarly to their male candidates
- Intensify civic and voter education for Lebanese; i.e. it is a civic duty and obligation to vote in order to increase the "know how to vote" among the Lebanese population for future elections
- Build a culture of holding politicians accountable

“ a Minimum of 30% female quota on results ”



“ encourage political parties to implement quota in their internal structures ”

♀ Equal ♂
+ Opportunities



“ Know how to vote ”

- Raise awareness & change mentality regarding the role of politicians. Legislating and implementing change are the main role of politicians, not the provision of social services
- Increase transparency & accountability of possible fraud during election phase, specifically on election day
- Fixed and early announcement of future election dates, providing sufficient preparation time for those planning to run
- Early announcement of “electoral list formation” facilitating candidates’ choice of joining a list
- Reduce TV rate fees and setting a limit fee for hosting candidates during elections
- Encourage Lebanese media to highlight women’s expertise and achievements providing them with more visibility
- Dedicate much needed attention to the needs of ‘voters with disabilities’ through accessibility of polling stations
- Effective organization of civil society coalitions that formed, for the very first time, during 2018 elections:
 1. Maintain what has been built
 2. Remain consistent in political messages
 3. Form a stronger coalition by working together towards specific goals
- Based on 2018 elections, opportunity knocks for new political parties in Lebanon



“ **increase
transparency &
accountability** ”



“ **Reduce
TV rate fees** ”



“ **Highlight
Women’s
expertise** ”

CONCLUSION

2018 new electoral law is unfair towards women since it is specifically tailored towards the needs of politicians and does not contain a gender quota. This year's election proved that political parties were only interested in having expert independent women on their lists without the intention of advancing their status or even maintaining them in their parties. This is clearly seen with the majority of independent women who affiliated with parties during elections, clearly expressed their lack of interest in joining these same parties post elections.

Moreover, on this same issue, it was clearly seen that the inclusion of women on political lists was solely in the hands of heads of political parties.

Female members in political parties need to revisit their strategies and work on innovative approaches to place much needed pressure on their parties to develop gender strategies; hence, ensuring their nomination for the next elections.

As for individual candidates, results clearly portray the importance of joining political parties and coalitions to receive much needed technical and financial support.

On a final note, both independent and politically affiliated women interested in joining the political sphere need to initiate with early preparations and gain much needed experience for the next 2022 elections. They need to learn from the challenges, experiences and successes of their female fellows who ran for the 2018 elections referred to in this study.



Kingdom of the Netherlands



**Lebanese Female Candidates
Challenges & Barriers**
2018 Parliamentary Elections

 COWP - Counselling Office for Women in Politics

 @COWP_2018

A project by



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