

Gender Equity and Access to Harm Reduction services in the MENA Region

Background:

Recognizing the gender disparities in accessing harm reduction services in the MENA region, MENAHRA implemented a comprehensive training program for civil society organizations (CSOs) in the region, focused on integrating gender equity into harm reduction strategies. Following this training, MENAHRA provided seed funding to CSOs in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Tunisia to implement gender-sensitive harm reduction initiatives at the local level.



GENDER EQUITY AND HARM REDUCTION SEED FUNDS IN THE MENA REGION



Tunisia:

- A training on peer education for women who use drugs was held in Tunisia and support was provided for them to implement outreach activities and encourage WWUD to access harm reduction services.

Egypt:

- A training for health care providers in CSOs on GBV and women who use drugs was held
- A workshop on engaging legal professionals in creating a legal environment to ensure that women living with HIV and those most at risk have access to harm reduction services was held.

Jordan:

- Roundtable discussion with health activists and media professionals in the presence of community members on women access to harm reduction services.

Lebanon:

- A training for OAT beneficiaries on gender equity and access to women specific services.
- The "Women Speak Their Rights" project was initiated to address the gender-specific challenges faced by women who use drugs (WUDs) and women who inject drugs (WWIDs) in Lebanon. The project aimed to capture their experiences, develop key advocacy messages, and implement a gender-sensitive approach to harm reduction services.
- Engaging Women's Rights CSOs to Increase Women's Access to Specialized Services, the project aimed to address barriers to healthcare access for women who use drugs in Lebanon by fostering partnerships with women's rights CSOs and promoting referrals to Skoun's voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) services. 11 women's rights CSOs were engaged.

WWUD often face heightened stigma, legal barriers, and lack of tailored services compared to men, making them less likely to seek and receive support. MENAHRA's interventions sought to close this gap by ensuring that harm reduction services are more inclusive, accessible, and sensitive to the unique challenges faced by women in the region.

