



البلديات والإتحاد البلدياتي
لجنة رؤساء البلديات اللبنانية
Comité des Maires Libanais



LEBANESE MUNICIPALITIES ACTING FOR CHILDREN (LMA4C) 2018-2019

Lebanon signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989. However, now more than ever, children's rights are far from being respected in Lebanon. Today, children growing up in Lebanon are facing multiples challenges. The instable social, economic and political context in Lebanon, exacerbated by the Syrian crisis since 2011, has deeply harmed the population. In the last few years, poverty has increased in the Lebanese and refugee community, affecting primarily the children. The population is composed of 2.16 million children, representing more than a third of the population, and more than half of them are in need for basic services¹. The increased of refugee child, in an already weakly developed country in terms of basic services, puts the national and local institutions under pressure. 85 468 of primary school-aged Lebanese children are out of school.² More than half of the Palestinian and Syrian refugee children don't go to school and most of them are forced to work to support their family. The health services keep degrading, jeopardizing the full development of children in Lebanon. More generally, the lack of protection of child rights is linked to the lack of protection of basic human rights in Lebanon like the promotion of equal participation and equal opportunities in the exercise of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.

At the local level, the Lebanese local authorities' law does not especially target the children's rights. However, municipalities and federation of municipalities have multiples competencies that directly participate to the realization of children's rights at the local level. By creating a safe environment in the city, delivering basic public services and promoting equal rights for every citizen, support the most in need population, local authorities can conceive public policies that comply with the UNCRC and answer needs and priorities for children in their city. Some municipalities have already expressed their interest in developing such public policies, but they lack the tools to engage toward achievement of child rights.

In this context and taking into consideration the needs of the Lebanese local authorities, United Cities of Lebanon, in partnership with UNICEF, is developing a reference guide for municipalities on children focused policies. This guide aims at sensitize the elected representatives from the cities and municipal agents about the fulfillment and protection of child rights. It is a tool for local authorities to understand the extent of their competencies in the field of children's rights and will encourage them to engage toward achievement of the UNCRC. Examples of good practices from Lebanese and foreign local authorities will be shared. Many stakeholders (Lebanese and European local authorities, local associations and NGOs) are solicited to enrich the content of this reference guide. All the interviewed stakeholders will be invited in February 2019 to validate the reference guide for municipalities on children focused policies before the publication of the final version. This workshop will give the opportunity to Lebanese and European local authorities, local associations and NGOs to exchange and network. The project will also lead to the identification of a core group of Lebanese municipalities willing to implement child rights in their actions.

¹ Data from Save the Children – Annual report 2016.

² Data from UNESCO – Lebanon 2016