

# GIZ GENDER COMPETITION 2022

<b>Category:</b>	<b>Gender mainstreaming within the company</b>
<b>Submitted by:</b>	<b>WG Gender Syria</b>
<b>Topic:</b>	Self-organized capacity development measure for GIZ GFPs in the region on <b>“Gender in (post-)conflict contexts in the Arab region”</b>

## Our contribution – what did we do to mainstream gender?

In June 2020, the GIZ Syria Portfolio’s working group on gender (**WG Gender Syria**) **initiated and facilitated a participatory process** with Gender Focal Points (GFPs) from Syria, Iraq, and Yemen **that resulted in a self-organized capacity development measure in February and March 2021 on “Gender in (post-conflict) contexts in the Arab region”**.

Through the planning and implementation of six virtual half-day sessions, this process provided space for technical input to increase participants’ **competences**, operationalized our **corporate culture** for our particular implementation contexts, and brought together GFPs from different portfolios for peer-to-peer **cooperation** and mutual learning.

## Our rationale – why did we chose this approach?

### 1. Increase the GFPs’ context-specific **gender competences**:

In our everyday work as GFPs, we face the expectations to provide guidance and advice not only on GIZ-internal formalities (i.e. processes), but also on the importance of gender in different sectors (i.e. content). In both cases, being able to meet the expectations requires gender competences. While GIZ/AIZ provides great training measures for GFPs on the process-aspect of our role, GIZ/AIZ currently does not provide any training measures that are focused on gender in specific sectors or regions. And even though GIZ is increasingly implementing in conflict and post-conflict contexts, existing capacity building measures are relatively blind to the particular implementation modalities and challenges in such contexts. **Mainstreaming gender in such conflict environments requires context-specific competences.**

### 2. Operationalize GIZ’s **corporate culture** for our implementation context:

GIZ clearly formulates why gender equality is a core value of our work. In practice, however, working towards gender equality is still often understood as an add-on or a nice-to-have. Particularly in conflict settings, gender equality is therefore often not a priority. However, working in and on conflicts requires the acknowledgement that gender aspects are at the core of conflicts and conflict-resolution. And this acknowledgment requires each and everyone of us to reflect on our own responsibility to wait for others to promote

gender equality but to actively contribute. **Ensuring gender as a core value of our corporate culture requires a context-specific operationalization and individual ownership.**

**3. Facilitate regional cooperation and mutual learning:**

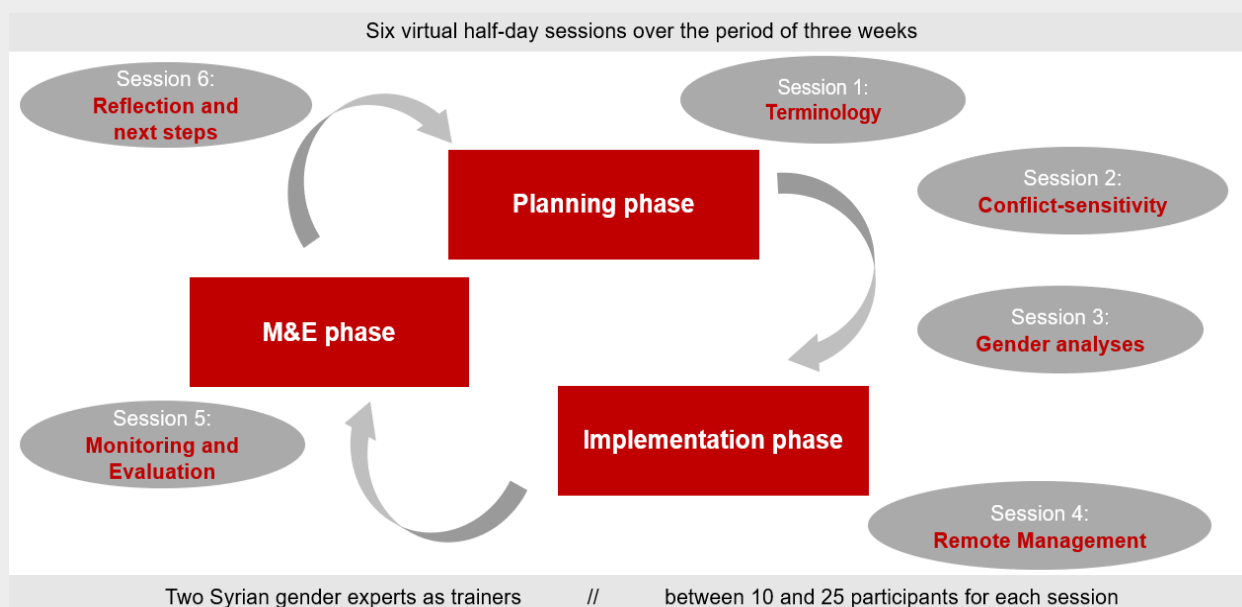
In our everyday work, we often lose ourselves in our country- and project-specific contexts and are absorbed by the nitty-gritty and politically sensitive nature of our work. We face the same challenges over and over again but feel somewhat alone and sometimes unable to think about new solutions. Having the space to reflect, to share ideas and to listen to other experiences provides not only a beneficial but necessary resource for our work.

**Facilitating the cooperation with colleagues from the region allows for the necessary reflection, inspiration and mutual learning.**

**Our role – how did we facilitate the process?**

**Conceptualization**

The idea and need to organize such a training with GFPs from other countries in the region was **born out of a planning workshop** of the WG Gender Syria. While we wanted to include individuals from other countries, we wanted to **ensure that important criteria are shared by all contexts** and therefore identified the colleagues from Iraq, Yemen and Libya as potential countries – all contexts are in the **same region and implementation takes place in a (post-) conflict**. Consequently, the WG Gender Syria reached out to the colleagues from these three countries to initiate getting together for a **joint brainstorming** and was happy to receive a positive feedback from Iraq and Yemen. We set up an MS Teams room for the GFPs on country level and **facilitated a series of exchange calls** between the colleagues from Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Both the exchange of general information and experiences in the MS Teams Room as well as the **joint assessment of challenges and needs**, the WG Gender was able to draft the following **training concept** that mirrored the results of these discussions:



### Preparation

In order to ensure the necessary expertise for conducting such a training, the WG Gender facilitated a brainstorming process for potential experts who could provide technical input, prepared the contracting documents, ensured the inclusion of all country GFPs' feedback, and followed-up on the contracting process. After having **contracted the two Syrian trainers**, the WG Gender **facilitated the communication with the experts** to ensure that the identified needs are being met. This included multiple briefings, guidance in setting up the training agenda and expectation management. Further, the WG Gender Syria **covered the communication with participants from the three countries** both on logistics and content. To facilitate this process, the WG Gender Syria set up an MS Teams Room for all participants and the trainers as a reference and meeting point for the training.

### Implementation

Having **organized the MS Teams Room in line with the training outline** enabled the WG Gender Syria to guide all participants and the trainers throughout the training. By utilizing this space, the WG Gender Syria **guided the participants throughout the implementation** of the training: the WG facilitated introduction mechanisms, shared preparatory materials for the six virtual sessions, **supported the trainers in the facilitation** of the sessions, followed the sessions up by sharing the presentations as well as the documentation (final workshop report, and encouraged the participants for technical peer-to-peer exchange.

### Follow-up

The training concluded with an exercise for all three portfolios to identify individual lessons learned, to formulate context-specific measures to follow up on these lessons learned and **ensure ownership of promoting gender equality** within the respective countries.

On a meta-level, the WG Gender Syria **collected the feedback on the training, its design and its usefulness** from all three countries to **identify potential next steps for scaling-up**.

### Our lessons learned – what were challenges and outcomes?

Facilitating such a process of cooperation and coordination naturally came with its own **set of challenges**: Even though there was general awareness of the benefits of such coordination, it requires **additional time resources**, which are often scarce in light of our everyday tasks and responsibilities. This did not only cause delays within the process but also affected the distribution of work and responsibilities among all stakeholders. Even though the **virtual format** allowed for a more inclusive process beyond country contexts, it also limited the ability of participants to fully get to know each other and affected the ability of colleagues to fully commit due to internet problems. And even though the diversity of participants was one of the main benefits of this process, it also meant **different levels of expertise, language skills and expectations**. This impacted the ability to fully achieve the objective of making this process as beneficial as possible for each and every participant.

Despite these challenges, the process allowed us to mainstream gender within the company mainly due to three mutually reinforcing **success factors**: firstly, the **participatory nature of our approach** allowed for multiple feedback loops on all stages of the process and ensured a high level of **ownership and commitment**. Secondly, **building our approach on a joint needs assessment** enabled us to tailor the intervention to our realities and ensured its **applicability and usefulness**. Thirdly, selecting a **regional approach** to our coordination allowed us to contextualize our everyday work into a bigger picture and to remind us of the **relevance** of our work.

Consequently, our contribution to mainstreaming gender within the company resulted in both general and specific **outcomes**. Generally, the coordination between GFPs from the region has allowed us to **form connections beyond country contexts** that have proven helpful for collegial advice and exchange of information that go beyond the training setting. It has provided the **foundation on which future formats and measures can build**. Additionally, the process provided us with space to reflect on our needs and challenges. This enabled us to more clearly formulate such needs into specific recommendations. Being **equipped with these clear and informed messages**, we were able to present and communicate them directly and constructively to the EMC management during the GIZ Gender Network 2021. For the work of the WG Gender Syria specifically, facilitating this process of coordination and cooperation provided us with a useful **space for reflection** on our context-specific gaps and priorities. Additionally, examples from other countries provided **inspiration** on how to creatively tackle challenges that we also face. Both aspects directly fed into our planning processes and the development of our action plans. Further, as the process of **taking matters into our own hands** and claiming ownership has proven beneficial, it **motivated us to address additional challenges ourselves** – it directly resulted in creating a pool of Syrian gender experts to increase local expertise and context-sensitivity. Lastly, and overall, the regional exchange illustrated that many challenges are in fact contextual rather than individual. This **acknowledgement and reassurance** has increased our **motivation and energy to continue our important work towards gender equality – jointly and creatively**.