JOINING EFFORTS FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATION

INTEGRATED PROCESSES FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN CENTRAL AMERICA

5 GENDER EQUALITY

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

CONTEXT

In Central America, strong patriarchal structures are found in all societies resulting in gender-based inequalities across all sectors, such as gender pay gaps, gender-based discrimination and violence against women and LGBTIQ, unequal access to the job market, land, and property.

All projects based in El Salvador are multi-country projects in diverse sectors that are supported by various donors (SICA Portfolio). The establishment of a Gender Committee (GC) was an important milestone to bring together representatives of all projects to start working as a team. To pave the way for gender transformation, an integral approach with complementary trainings, awareness-raising and dialogue processes was key.

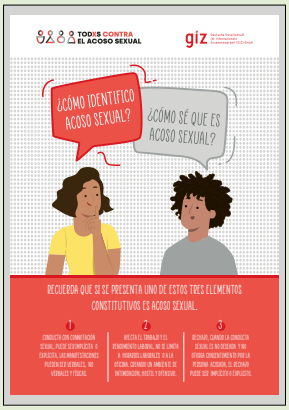
GENDER – A QUALITY FEATURE OF OUR WORK

The starting point was a staff survey in late 2019 to identify gender gaps and areas of interest, resulting in the following prioritisation: prevention of sexual harassment, gender-specific capacity building and equal job opportunities. It showed that there was not a lack of interest to mainstream gender, but rather a lack of information, knowledge, and opportunities for reflection. These topics were addressed by the GC through an annual plan backed up with a budget provided by the SICA Portfolio projects.

GENDER IMPACT

To promote a safe and inclusive corporate culture, a central milestone has been the development of an Anti-Sexual Harassment Protocol, the result of a participatory process of broad consultation through focus groups and interviews with staff, along with a continuous process of sensitisation and training of staff, including trainings on hegemonic masculinities. In response to a gender analysis of staff structure, the GC implemented empowerment workshops for female employees, as well as trainings on gender-responsive leadership for leading professionals. To encourage collective reflection, the GC also organised cinematic forums, internal campaigns, and dialogue events.

Another key milestone has been the development of 21 regional gender indicators that promote accountability. These indicators that monitor mainstreaming within GIZ and the aggregate results of the SICA Portfolio, were developed through exchanges on challenges and best practices, as well as a training for gender focal points and monitoring and communication staff in gender-sensitive monitoring. To improve gender mainstreaming in GIZ projects, the GC developed additional instruments, such as a checklist for gender-sensitive events.

Working virtually, the GC has contributed to the integration of GIZ staff throughout and beyond Central America. By now, staff are involved in spaces and processes beyond their project and country and exchange experiences and lessons learned.

Coordinating with other gender focal points has had positive spill-over effects: Other Central American countries set up formal gender working groups including a dedicated budget, strengthening the promotion of gender equality across the region.