



## GENDER AUDITS: AN INNOVATIVE TOOL FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

### INSTITUTIONALIZING GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN MIDDLE EASTERN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

#### CONTEXT AND INITIATIVE

Women's political participation in the Middle East is among the lowest worldwide. A goal of the programme Strengthening Women in Decision Making in the Middle East – LEAD is to support an enabling environment for gender equality and women's leadership in political and public life in Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon. The programme is implemented by GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Focusing on the local governance level LEAD works with local institutions and civil society. The main tool used to create a gender-responsive organizational culture and work environment is the Participatory Gender Audit (PGA).



LEAD supported the ILO certification of 5–7 PGA facilitators from each partner country, amongst them the first certified PGA-auditors in Jordan and Lebanon. Through practical experience and a network for exchange and joint learning, they are empowered to facilitate PGA on demand for the LEAD programme and beyond.

#### GENDER – A QUALITY FEATURE OF OUR WORK

PGAs initiate multi-layered sustainable change: from perceptions and attitudes to systematic institutional change by embedding gender principles and approaches into formal structures and processes, by looking at and providing recommendation on following themes:

- Gender equality issues within work units' context, existing gender expertise in terms of competence and capacity building;
- Gender inclusion in public institutions' objectives and programmes during work implementation and selection of partner organizations;
- Information and knowledge management and gender equality as reflected in the public institutions' products and overall image;
- Staff recruitment and human resources, decision making, and organizational culture;
- Achievements in the field of gender equality integration.

#### GENDER IMPACT

Municipalities, which completed the audit, are adopting and following-up on the recommendations. Male decision makers, who were involved in the Gender Audits in Palestine, are familiar with and supportive of gender sensitive approaches in the work of the local government and at ministries. The Palestinian Ministry of Local Government is institutionalizing gender unit/focal points in the audited municipalities, with clear roles and

responsibilities. In addition, 12 gender-sensitive indicators have been included in the ministry's monitoring system for municipalities. The National Commissions for Women in Lebanon and Jordan are committed and engaged in supporting and implementing PGA in national and local institutions, and advocating for the systematic use of the tool by public institutions. The main partner in Lebanon, the National Commission of Lebanese Women is applying the concept to support gender mainstreaming in Ministries.



The trained facilitators in Lebanon are in the process of conducting PGA in three major political parties with other commissioners. Other development agents also adopted the approach in their work. In Jordan, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Jordanian National Commission of Women, a semi-governmental actor, collaborate towards a common goal with a civil society organization in three ongoing audits of municipalities, not a usual form of partnership in the region.

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