



Empowerment of Gender through Water Wise Plumbers

1. Promoting gender equality

1.1. Situation

In Jordan, the educational system ensures equal access to both genders. This has provided a highly educated female population that has the potential to advance Jordan's economic, social, and political development. Despite this significant progress, women in Jordan remain under-utilized and often side-lined due to enduring social norms and traditions (culture of shame) that have stifled women's advancement. For decades, GIZ has been providing joint projects with the Government of Jordan and civil society organizations in order to support the well-being and empowerment of women. These projects have been providing support for women on different levels and among various backgrounds in an attempt to enable these women to become effective parts of the society. According to the Employment and Unemployment survey of (2015); it was found that more than 41.8% of working women in Jordan are engaged in the education sector, 15.3% in health and social services, 12% in social security and public administration, 6.6% in the industrial sector, 5.5% in trade, and the remaining 0.4% in home and tourism services.

1.2. Gender in "Water Wise Plumbers" phase 1 (2015-2016)

Given the fact that plumbing in Jordan is strict to men who had never undertaken any professional training to offer good services, this project aimed at first to introduce women to this occupation and prepare them to work as plumbers. As a common habit in Jordan, water management inside the house is the housewife's responsibility as she is the one who cleans and washes, who is responsible for water availability, and she is the one who fills the water tanks when the water cycle starts every week. Therefore, to teach women plumbing is an asset to the whole water management system that will enable them to become water ambassadors among their societies, while, men can offer more sophisticated works like the installation of the water network at the household level.

The project as a whole aimed to train both genders equally and to provide them with the opportunity to gain better skills and to increase their income. Thus, the project guaranteed a fair ration between men and women and gave them the chance to compete within the same sector.

1.3. Project Objective

The idea of the project was to enable women and men, support them and educate them about water issues and train them to become water wise plumbers. During its first phase, the project trained 167 women and 167 men on plumbing as a certified occupation from the Jordan Vocational Training Cooperation. Also, women plumbers got their licenses to work as plumbers from the Jordanian Centre of Accreditation and Quality Assurance "CAQA". With these two certificates, they can work officially as plumbers and generate

income. The project also supported them with a fully equipped plumbing tool box to enable them to work directly after graduation.

1.4. Project Approach toward sustainable women plumbers:

To improve the livelihood of the women plumbers and to provide them with a legal frame to work independently; the project supported the Wise Women Plumber Cooperative (WWPC) located in Amman/Jordan, which was established by GIZ water portfolio within the Wise Women Initiative. To cope with the increasing number of female plumbers especially in the northern governorates of Jordan, the project established a new branch of WWPC in Irbid. This branch helped the ladies to work under a Jordanian government supported legal frame. This branch also helps providing an umbrella required by most of the families to ensure that the ladies are parts of a group where safety and legal frame regulations are present. By empowering the WWPC, the project can ensure sustainability of this sector, the cooperative is now fully functioning by its members and the demand is also increasing as customers showed more confidence having the plumbing services through the cooperative and not as individuals as it provides them with the option of following up with the plumbers after the work is done.

With regard to men plumbers, it was easier to bring them to work as most of them were offered work after graduation, their new qualifications and the benefits of having a certificate paved their way to better job opportunities.

1.5. Follow-up with “Technical and Vocational Education and Training for Jordanians and Syrian Refugees in the Water Sector (Project Phase II)”

As mentioned earlier, the idea of plumbing trainings was highly accepted by both men and women and their families as it was very clear that women can work as plumbers. Even over a small scale, their work is highly appreciated as they will work on their own houses and will not require any plumbers, meaning that a reduction in the budget for household level maintenance is expected. As a result of this accomplishment, the project idea spread all over Jordan. More trainees have been applying to be trained as semi-skilled workers even in the southern governorates of Jordan. An upgrade for the plumbers to be trained at skilled levels and to have more training on TOT, finance and business development was also very clear in the impact assessment that was carried out during the first phase. Accordingly, VTW project was designed to include more training on semi-skilled and skilled levels and also to advice for cooperatives on developing and implementing business plans, implementation of water-saving and water loss-reducing services and products by sanitation professionals, provision of business start-up services for micro and small sanitation enterprises, identification of specific employment opportunities in public and private institutions for male and female sanitation services providers (e.g. schools for girls, universities and clinics), development and piloting of a strategy for water wise plumbers.

The objective of this upgrading is to enable especially the female graduates to compete in the market and to enable them to develop businesses ideas, increase income, and to develop their soft skills to give them the strength needed to stay in this sector.

2. Sustainability

The onset of this project was as an idea to save water resources and to reduce water losses at household levels plus providing women with some income. In fact, the project helped in the establishment of a women group most of whom has never worked before or generated any money, a group of women who have been totally dependent on men within their families to support them financially. The sustainability of the women plumbers is their responsibility among the societies which now believe in women plumbers and offer them job opportunities. Alongside the Wise Women Plumber Cooperative, many women are working with a

customer base of not less than 20 houses, women who are taking the experience to their families and friends, two women managing plumbing companies and offering services on a large scale. The sustainability of this project was based on offering these ladies the chance to be as qualified as men plumbers and to compete in the market. On the other hand, the social acceptance of these women plumbers is now different than 4 years ago, the support of the governmental institutions and public NGOs is available via the national campaigns to advertise women plumbers under the umbrella of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation or via the different NGOs and local cooperation willing to adapt the same concept to their societies. For men plumbers, no market limitation was observed, as it is a normal job for men in Jordan, but more organized groups were requested to moderate and organize the work.

3. Gender and RBM

The proposed measure is directly linked to several indicators. Gender-disaggregated data needed to monitor activities and results that will be collected from processes and documented through monitoring procedures. The Lack of participation by women at the start of the project needs analyses and the project design was very clear as this type of job is known to be men driven occupation and no women has ever practiced it. Therefore, the initial need analysis was based on the analysis of the first phase. Also RBM helped in identifying opportunities to empower women (improve their confidence, self-esteem, build capacity of leadership and self-organisation) and identifies activities that contribute to women's empowerment to be a major part of phase II of the project.

MSC Tool was also used because it provides data regarding impacts and outcomes, which can be used to assess the performance of the programme as a whole. MSC stories helps improve project impacts by supplementing the quantitative M&E analysis; it also provides a more complete understanding of what is happening in the field. Thus, it is a very useful tool to help explain the project goals (IFAD definition).

In this project a lot of success stories where highlighted and discussed to give the project more comprehensible approaches. These stories focused on the impact of this project on 4 levels:

- 1- personal,
- 2- social,
- 3- economical
- 4- educational,

These changes were very clear during the follow-up activities that the project initiated. While, social change was highlighted as a bonus on this project. On the educational level, more participants are now applying for additional trainings in finance, languages, and management even on a private base to enhance and upgrade their qualifications.

4. Cooperation

This project initiated cooperation with many different governmental institutions and NGOs, as the project is targeting a profession that is new for women and the existing men plumbers are lacking official certification in this regard. So cooperation with GIZ projects in Jordan like “Promotion of training to improve efficiency in the water and energy sector - TWEED” and “Water Program” was highly needed in order to ensure the best outcomes. The urgent need of public entities was very clear to guarantee the success of women training in such occupation, the support of the women department at the Vocational Training Cooperation in Jordan made a huge difference in the acceptance of the local societies for such trainings, their support accredited the training for some families and gave it more trust. For women, it is still hard to work individually as plumbers, so, team work was always appreciated and recommended. Ministry of Water and Irrigation also played a role in introducing the concept of female plumbers to the Jordanian culture by inventing the National women plumbing campaign by the support of the project. This campaign played a major role in not only supporting the idea, but also, in transferring the idea to other occupations.

This project following the aforementioned methodology and strategies in terms of expansion and cooperation among different levels has made this experience a transferable one that can be adopted in other sectors or even other countries.



Figure 1 Woman plumbers recently at COP 23 in Bonn



Figure 2 Woman plumbers at work in a mosque



Figure 3 Woman plumbers in training



Figure 4 Women plumbers with visitors

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