

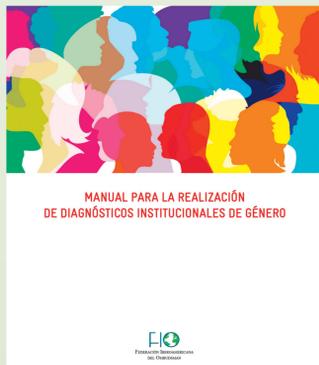


## THE “GLASS CEILING” FOR WOMEN ALSO EXISTS IN NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS

STRENGTHENING OMBUDSMAN INSTITUTIONS TO PROTECT VULNERABLE GROUPS (PROFIO)

### CONTEXT AND INITIATIVE

At first glance, the world of ombudsman institutions in Latin America is female: The majority of the staff is female and in almost all institutions, there is a specialized unit dealing with women's rights. Yet, this reality is different: While women submit a large majority of claims directed at the Ombudsman Offices across Latin America, only one third of the Ombudspersons are female. Moreover, almost 75% of the decision-making positions of these bodies are held by men. Very often, the human resource management in the Ombudsman institutions lacks designated mechanisms for the promotion of qualified women, and staff members regularly report a work climate that is hostile to the integration of gender-specific concerns. To change this, the GIZ programme for the strengthening of the Ibero-American Federation of Ombudsman Offices (PROFIO) conducted trainings targeted towards breaking down organizational barriers and putting an end to gender-based stereotypes and discrimination – breaking the glass ceiling (“techo de cristal”). At the beginning of the



programme, none of the more than 100 human rights institutions in Latin America had a strategic work plan with a gender perspective, nor a gendered policy, nor a clear approach to gender mainstreaming. PROFIO is implemented by GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

### GENDER IMPACT

Together with the FIO-Women's Rights Network (Red de Defensorías de Mujeres), which is part of the Ibero-American Federation of Ombudsman Offices the programme designed a results-oriented learning process to strengthen institutional capacities for gender mainstreaming with the following characteristics: regional diversity (five teams), interdisciplinary (senior management, administration, women's adjunct), team commitment, three face-to-face workshops, three final products per institution. Almost all National Human Rights Institutions in Latin America have participated so far.

### GENDER – A QUALITY FEATURE OF OUR WORK

During the trainings, mixed teams from the Ombudsman Offices developed three products:

- 1) an institutional Gender Diagnostic,
- 2) an institution-wide Gender Policy, and
- 3) a Gender Action Plan.

15 Ombudsman Offices have successfully completed the training and have produced the before mentioned policies. Based on the evaluation of the trainings, PROFIO produced two online trainings, one on Violence against Women and one on Gender and Human Rights. In addition, monitoring resulted in the foreseen development of three further manuals. All studies and material developed are publicly available on the programme's website. Almost all the institutions have modified their registration systems and other protocols to be able to provide differentiated attention according to the different needs of women, men, and other groups, such as LGBTI, and indigenous peoples. Cooperation with the Ombudsman Office in Costa Rica has been particularly successful, as it resulted in the incorporation of an indicator on sexual harassment into the national indicator framework.

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