

INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING



GENDER-BASED POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Joint Programme: Integrated Prevention and
Constructive Transformation of Social Conflicts

Thematic Window: Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

Main Participants: UNDP, UNHCHR, UNICEF,
UNWOMEN, UNODC, Ministry of Autonomy, Ministry
of Justice, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Institutional
Transparency and Fight against Corruption and others

UN Photo/John Isaac



1. Introduction

The Bolivian Association of Councilwomen (ACOBOL), through the Joint Programme on Promoting Peaceful Change has been successful in creating strategies to address political harassment and violence against women in the context of politics. In particular, progress has been made on assistance to the victims of political violence, working at the same time on their empowerment and the development of a political and legislative framework, via the passage of a national law against political violence, the first of its kind in the world. The practices, lessons learned and challenges for the future are analysed below in more detail.

2. Initial Situation

In recent years Bolivian legislation has been improved to promote the political participation of women in public decision-making. This process, based on criteria of equity and parity has been gradually evolving. The Quotas Act of 1997 applied to the Legislature, although only to seats elected by proportional representation, equivalent to 48 per cent of total seats (62 seats out of 130).

In 2004, a new quota was introduced requiring one woman for every three nominations, but proved not to be a definitive solution. One weakness was the absence of sanctions for failure to comply with the law, despite the fact that the National Electoral Court and the Departmental Courts were charged with the responsibility of ensuring compliance. This gap made it possible, in many cases, for political parties and citizens' associations to undermine the law by presenting candidates who were in fact men posing on the lists as women.

After a lengthy process, the 2010 promulgation of decisive affirmative action in support of the political participation of women was finally achieved, applying the principles of equity and parity to the Political Constitution of the State and the electoral laws in force.

While Bolivia has registered significant advances in the participation of women in quantitative terms, these advances have brought new challenges. First, there is an evident need to carry out constant, sustained actions to verify the fair participation of women and men in election processes, as well as to establish clear sanctions for non-compliance. In addition, problems related to discrimination, manipulation and political violence against a growing number of women in public life have become recurrent, making it necessary to adopt sustained policies and concrete actions to enhance the political participation of women, including through freedom from violence.

3. Objectives

The actions taken, aimed at creating the spaces and mechanisms to challenge harassment and political violence against women, fall within the Political Representation Strategy of ACOBOL's Five-Year Plan. These actions commenced at the start of 2000 and have been guided by the following objective: To promote actions and operational instruments to defend against harassment and political violence against women, maintaining their political, civic and civil rights.

“I was locked in the council for over 13 hours. They told me what they wanted. I was threatened. The police union threatened me with sticks, until I signed my resignation... Yet the Mayor asked the other leaders who were there... that they would not say that I had been forced.”

MUNICIPAL COUNCILWOMAN

4. Key Actors

The Bolivian Association of Councilwomen is a national association founded in the city of La Paz in 1999. It is made up of Bolivian women mayors and councilors and is organized into nine Departmental Associations of Councilwomen (ACOs) with a national presence. Its purpose is to achieve the institutional and political representation of women councilors and mayors as regards their rights and emerging interests. ACOBOL forms part of the Federation of Bolivian Municipal Associations (FAM-BOLIVIA) and is part of its organic structure. ACOBOL has become the only non-state body with the capacity to attend to and advise in cases of harassment and political violence against women.

Political Rights for Women Action Committee, a body which has made it possible to articulate the efforts of other non-state bodies which have common goals of the defense and promotion of women's rights. The work done by carried out by this body has contributed to the empowerment of women and to lobbying efforts carried out to ensure that the anti-violence law was passed.

Plurinational women members of parliament were also key actors in promoting the passing of the Law against the Harassment of and Political Violence against Women in the Bolivian Plurinational Congress.

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal, the Intercultural Service for Democratic Strengthening (SIFDE) and the Departmental Electoral Tribunals also contributed to the design of the Protocol for Dealing with Cases, supporting the process and actively participating in the departmental workshops that were held, with proposals and contributions for the Protocol. SIFDE has included matters related to inter-cultural and ethical democracy in politics, which enriched the process.

UN Women supported the development of this process with the goal of promoting and formalizing the response to and handling of gender-based harassment and political violence in the electoral jurisdiction bodies in Bolivia through a Response Protocol, as well as supporting the adjustment process for the draft bill and advocacy carried out in the 2011 administration.

5. Strategy

In taking stock, four lines of action were identified, each of them with a specific strategy:

- **Development of actions to support those affected by harassment and political violence.** A decentralized intervention strategy was employed using the Departmental Associations of Councilwomen network, offering affected women technical advice.
- **Design, dissemination and updating of the Draft Bill against Gender-based Harassment and Political Violence.** From the start, a strategy has been developed to form alliances with other institutions interested in this matter, and advocacy work was jointly carried out with them aimed at having this bill made into law.
- **Design of the Protocol for dealing with cases before the Electoral Tribunal.** In designing the Protocol, a joint strategy was agreed between the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and ACOBOL with the support of the Programme, aimed at developing awareness-raising processes, enhancing capacity and validating the Protocol.
- **Actions to empower councilwomen.** A combined strategy was developed. One strand consisted of processes carried out for awareness-raising, training and information in general about this issue with various types of stakeholders; the other strand was through actions taken to empower and strengthen councilwomen's self-esteem, particularly in rural areas.



6. Progress and Results

PASSING THE LAW AGAINST THE HARASSMENT OF AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The legal reform process dates back to 2000 at a session of the Congress of the Republic's Commission for the People's Participation where "...together with the Vice-minister for Gender, Generational and Family Affairs, councilwomen publicly denounced the harassment and political violence which was being carried out against them in different municipalities of the country."³⁰ In 2001, the first acts of affirmative action aimed at women were carried out with the design of the First Draft Bill against Gender-based Harassment and Political Violence.

On the basis of this first draft, coordination work was done in 2002 with different institutions working in the field of gender equality, with the aim of systematizing and disseminating the Bill, a process which continued in 2003 and 2004 through the organization of dissemination workshops on a national scale. The next stage was the lobbying carried out at the National Congress's House of Senators in 2004. Though this did not result in the Bill's passage, it did demonstrate the importance of continuing the work. The formation of the Political

Rights for Women Action Committee supported the process in subsequent years.

One of the most important outcomes of the work done has been the formation in 2004 of the Political Rights for Women Action Committee, made up of representatives from various institutions working on gender issues:

- ACOBOL
- Vice-ministry of Women
- Vice-ministry of Justice
- Vice-ministry of People Participation
- Ombudsperson
- Union of Women Parliamentarians (UMPABOL)
- Citizen Participation in Democratic Development (DDPC-3)
- National Women's Political Forum
- Women's Coordinator
- Program of Assistance for a Representative Congress, State University of New York (PARK-SUNY)

From the formation of this Committee, women in various public bodies became more aware of and more empowered regarding the importance of harassment and political violence issues.

³⁰ "Incidencia política para la Aprobación de ACOBOL" ["ACOBOL's Political Lobbying for the Law"]; La Paz-Bolivia; 2009; p. 11.

Passage was finally achieved in the context of an enabling environment brought on by the 2012 administration, as well as media attention and consequent heightened awareness of the extent of political violence against women generated by the tragic assassination of Councilwoman Juana Quispe. As a consequence, the time was ripe to pass and enact Law 243 of 28 May 2012, the Law against the Harassment of and Political Violence against Women.

This Law does not limit its application to women in public office, but it extends its scope to women designated to or exercising a political/public role, which is different from the first draft bills presented. The Law classifies acts of harassment and political violence, categorizing them as slight, serious and very serious, and establishing the sanctions for each category, which makes it possible to clearly identify these acts and their sanctions. The Law defines harassment and political violence in the following manner:

- **Political harassment:** An act or set of acts of pressure, persecution, harassment or threats committed by one person or a group of persons, directly or through third parties, against women who are candidates, elected, designated or exercising a public/political role or against their families, with the purpose of reducing, suspending, preventing or restricting the functions inherent to their positions, to induce or oblige them to carry out, against their will, an act or omission in the performance of their functions or in the exercise of their rights.
- **Political violence:** Physical, psychological or sexual actions, conduct and/or aggression committed by one person or a group of persons, directly or through third parties, against women who are candidates, elected, designated or exercising a public/political role, or against their families, to reduce, suspend, prevent or restrict the exercise of their position or to induce or oblige them to carry out, against their will, an act or omission in the performance of their functions or in the exercise of their rights.

In cases of harassment or political violence, the report may be made by the survivor herself, her family members or any physical or legal person,

orally or in writing before the competent authorities. There are three pathways for reports: administrative, criminal and constitutional. In the case of the criminal route, an important advance in this legislation has been the introduction of new categories of crime in the Bolivian Penal Code. This route forbids conciliation, in order to prevent further pressure on the victims of harassment and political violence.

The tasks which remain pending and which have been defined by the Law itself are: i) regulation, for which the Plurinational Electoral Body is responsible; ii) the incorporation of rules governing the prevention of, response to and sanctioning of acts of harassment and political violence against women into the statutes and rules of procedure of political and social organizations, and the incorporation of specific provisions to promote and guarantee the political participation on equal terms of women and men, and iii) amendments to the personnel, disciplinary or other rules of procedure of public institutions, to include as offences the acts set out in Article 8 of Law No. 243.

Finally, mention should be made of the inter-institutional coordination work successfully carried out, a determining factor being the formation of the Political Rights for Women Action Committee, a body which facilitated awareness-raising work with various of the country's institutional and social bodies. The quality of this Committee had its basis in its ability to adjust the content of the draft bill and adapt its lobbying strategy to the new institutional political context, which came about in the country in the last ten years.

“*The patriarchal structure we have has been a limiting factor on the work, even though the Political Constitution of the State has included principles and rights to guarantee the participation of women in politics, attitudes and social structures are difficult to break.*”

JESSY LÓPEZ, ACOBOL LEGAL SPECIALIST

LESSONS LEARNED

- The ability of organizations to adjust to political and institutional changes has allowed them to survive and give actions continuity over time. The Political Rights for Women Action Committee has had the ability to adapt to the institutional changes that have occurred in the state apparatus. From its beginning, the Committee has been composed of public institutions, which in some cases have disappeared or have been transformed; nonetheless, the continuity of institutions such as ACOBOL, among others which have kept going over the years, has enabled this body to maintain one sole aim and perform its lobbying task.
- Involving key players (women and men), public policy decision-makers and empowering them around the problem of harassment and political violence has facilitated and made possible the passing of the Law. Lobbying activities were undertaken for many years before the National Parliament, now the Plurinational Assembly, without any favorable outcome; in the last two years, the strategy of involving and securing ownership of the issue by some women National Assembly members has led to the passage of this bill being expedited and prioritized through to its final definitive passing into law.

CASE-HANDLING PROTOCOL

The experience from recent years in political lobbying work for passing the Law shows the necessity of creating complementary tools to facilitate and guarantee compliance with the new legislation in force, whereby the Plurinational Electoral Body and, in particular, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) and the Departmental Electoral Tribunals (TEDs) play an important role, which created the need to formulate a Protocol for Attending to and Processing the Victims of Harassment and Political Violence in the Electoral Jurisdiction.

The goal formulated for the Protocol is to “establish the basis for action and/or intervention by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and the Departmental

Electoral Tribunals with regard to attention to and processing the victims of Harassment and Political Violence, as well as their timely and agile administrative processing, to guarantee such events will not go unpunished.”³¹ The Protocol has been designed with a vision of enabling prevention, attention or processing through to the resolution of cases. Within this process, the possibility is also being examined of creating Units for Attention to Cases of Harassment and Political Violence within the TSE and TEDs, with competency to check on cases of women resigning from political office.

To realize the design of the Protocol, a joint strategy was agreed between the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and ACOBOL, with the support of UN Women, aimed at developing awareness-raising, capacity-building and validation of the Protocol through workshops held in forums for dialogue and generation of ideas in the country’s nine departments.

The organization and implementation of these workshops was coordinated by ACOBOL, the Departmental Associations of Councilwomen and SIFDE. They were targeted at municipal councilwomen and officials of the Departmental Electoral Tribunals. The following subjects were addressed in the forums: i) The Bolivian electoral system; ii) Gender and the participation in political elections of women; iii) The Law against the Harassment of and Political Violence against Women; iv) Intercultural democracy; and v) The participatory construction of the protocol. ACOBOL was the body responsible for designing the minimum content of the Protocol.

One important aspect highlighted by the Director of SIFDE was the differentiated design of these forums, taking into account the political, social and cultural particularities of each department, which facilitated dialogue and the arrival at consensus. This methodology must be considered for replication in other processes for the collective generation of policy and also in capacity-building processes.

³¹ Draft Protocol for Attention to and Processing of Victims of Harassment and Political Violence in the Electoral Jurisdiction. ACOBOL, 2012.

To end this process the National Electoral Gender and Interculturality Workshop was held with the objective of “culminating and strengthening the process of capacity-building and dissemination of the main topics covered (electoral legislation with a focus on gender and interculturality, intercultural democracy and political participation: harassment and political violence), as well as validation of all the contributions received in the entire process at national level.” The results of the work done in the departmental workshops were presented in the Workshop, particularly from those contributions relating to the Protocol for Attention to the Victims of Political Violence.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Creating opportunities for dialogue between administrators responsible for dealing with cases and victims of harassment and political violence has enabled TED officials to gain a real grasp of the extent and importance of the issue. Those responsible for responding to cases of violence or political harassment did not initially grasp the full extent of the issue’s importance and the consequences that these cases have on the victims and on democracy. The discussion spaces designed for the construction of the victim care Protocol have made it possible for the authorities and TED staff to raise their awareness on this matter and undertake to improve the way in which they respond to cases, once the Protocol was approved.
- In spite of efforts made in the counselling support and handling of cases of harassment and political violence, very few cases are still settled in favour of the victim, with seven out of ten cases going unpunished. It is important that advice and support bodies monitor and support the progress of cases through to their conclusion. If this is not done, the risk is that the victim might abandon the case, either through fatigue or because the reason for the complaint has worsened, leaving the victim in an even more vulnerable situation. Further, it may discourage others from coming forward with complaints.

EVIDENCE COLLECTION AND RESPONSE TO CASES OF HARASSMENT AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

ACOBOL began responding from the first years of its foundation, in the absence of a public body mandated to respond, to reports of harassment and political violence against elected women leaders of municipal authorities. The evidence collected during these years was an important input to the design of the Law.

To record and monitor the cases supported by the ACOs and ACOBOL, a Harassment and Political Violence Report Form was designed to record the complainant’s personal details, political information and the antecedents of the case reported. This form has a section that must be completed by a specialist on the basis of his/her experience to assess the type of action (harassment or violence), the gravity of the case and the recommendation for further action to be followed. A Guide to Systematization and Classification for the recording of cases dealt with in the ACOs (see box below) was designed in 2011. This tool is important to ensure consistency of data collection.

2011 Development of the guidelines entitled “Systematization and Classification: Gender-Based Harassment and Political Violence,” and structured into three modules.

Module 1. A summary of the antecedents to cases of harassment and political violence.

Module 2. Presents the basic elements for a conceptual understanding of the classification processes, giving examples of their practical application, enabling ACOBOL to achieve consistency of data generated by each of the ACOs.

Module 3. Sets out statistical information on the cases dealt with by ACOBOL (2000-2009).

The systematized record of cases made it possible to classify acts as harassment or political violence, which contributed to terms used in the Law

against the Harassment of and Political Violence against Women. The main acts of harassment or political violence are related to the use of force to oblige women council leaders to sign all manner of documents and/or support decisions against their will (41.37 per cent), actions aimed at restricting or blocking the effective performance of their functions and/or powers (30.12 per cent) and discriminatory acts on the basis of social class, culture, race, etc. (16.47 per cent).

To complement this, information and/or awareness-raising processes were carried out on harassment and political violence. The ACOBOL web site (www.acobol.com.bo) was used to disseminate information on this topic, in addition to publications created by the Association on this issue. The need and importance of having this type of information-giving mechanism was made clear in the National Electoral Gender and Interculturality Workshop, organized by ACOBOL in collaboration with the TSE. In this Workshop, the elected women leaders of municipal authorities recognized that, in many cases, women who fell victim to harassment or political violence were not conscious of, or did not know that their political rights were being violated, which is why they did not report or take any kind of action.

Another important development has been the creation of the Observatory of the Political Participation of Women at Local Level in Bolivia. The Observatory was designed to be a space to bring to the fore and disseminate throughout society knowledge about the political participation of indigenous women, women of pre-Columbian heritage, peasant women, women of African heritage and urban women in the municipal arena, their potential and contributions to municipal development, and their participation on national and international levels, in addition to the gender-based harassment and political violence suffered by councilwomen on the municipal councils of Bolivia. The objectives of the Observatory are:

- To establish a local and national information platform with international links, to disseminate throughout society information about the issues of harassment and political violence and the relevant laws on violence in political and public arenas.

- Within the ACOBOL portal, to construct a database on gender-based harassment and political violence.
- To open a virtual debate forum to build national and international support for the issue and the problem of gender-based harassment and political violence.
- To bring into political discourse and to denounce before the national and regional political communities or other international bodies the fact that the local setting is where harassment and political violence against women can be most clearly witnessed.
- To promote and lobby for the creation of an international body to defend against these acts and occurrences of harassment and political violence against women.

In the Observatory one can find information on the political participation of women at local level, the activities of Bolivian councilwomen, legislation supporting their political participation, antecedents, data, actions and projections to prevent, respond to and sanction cases of gender-based harassment and political violence. The importance of this tool lies in the fact that women who are victims of harassment and political violence can access information on the issue and it will be important to update it with the content and procedures emerging from the Law against the Harassment of and Political Violence against Women.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The records and correct classification by ACOBOL of cases of harassment and political violence became important inputs, which facilitated the classification of these acts and their incorporation into the new Law. One practice worthy of recommendation to institutions that attend to and/or process cases of harassment and political violence is to maintain consistent records of these cases, for which they should design tools enabling consistent data recording (using forms or other tools). Such records form the basis of responsive public policy design, in addition to providing a tracking mechanism.
- The technical and legal advice offered by staff of Departmental Associations of Councilwomen

does have limitations of a technical order, because not all the Associations are staffed with legal professionals. Political pressures may also create conditions that encourage members to abandon advising on and/or being involved in cases. This dual threat can contribute to fewer positive legal outcomes for victims.

- The majority of harassment and political violence cases take the form of pressuring women to sign documents and/or support decisions against their will. This situation brings with it the risk for councilwomen that, on top of the experience of harassment or violence, councilwomen may be coerced to approve decisions that are unlawful, which could create a series of future legal difficulties for them.

8. Sustainability and Potential Application

- It is important to continue with the processes of strengthening the capacity of women mayors and councilwomen, particularly on the conceptual and procedural matters established by the Law. This work could be widened to women in public office at other levels in the State, (departmental assembly members, parliamentarians, etc.) who are potential victims of harassment or political violence.
- Linked with the above recommendation, it is also important to develop dissemination processes and the capacity-building of strategic women and men officials of public institutions who are responsible for handling cases of harassment and political violence, not only at the TSE and TED level, but in different public institutions. This work could be broadened to representatives and activists in political parties, citizens' association and indigenous peoples, as a preventive measure.
- After the new Law has been in force for some time, it is important to go through a process of evaluating its implementation and reach, identifying any possible omissions and difficulties encountered throughout its implementation.
- The budgetary limitations borne by ACOBOL and the Departmental Associations mean in many cases that legal professionals are not available to deal with cases of harassment and political violence. One of the solutions found in analysis is to outsource this service, which seems to be the most recommendable route. For this way of working to be successful, dialogue needs to be established in coordination with the professional bodies and/or universities to train legal professionals and provide them with a certificate of accreditation to attest to this additional training and to their capacity to deal with these cases, with the database of professionals available to victims of harassment and/or political violence in both the national ACOBOL office and the ACOs.
- It is important to have the information available in the Observatory of the Political Participation of Women at the Local Level in Bolivia updated with the content of the new Law against the Harassment of and Political Violence against Women and, once the Care Protocol is approved, that flow charts are added as critical action paths, to be used as reference material both by municipal councilwomen who are victims of harassment and political violence and by those responsible for advising on and dealing with these cases.
- It is important to start a debate within ACOBOL over what the next step in its role should be in the national context in the light of the new institutional political framework. Its experience and leadership in the areas of lobbying, capacity-building and the promotion of its members' political rights could be well used in other areas of the State. At national level, there are some organizations (e.g. UMPABOL) with similar goals, but not with ACOBOL's institutional force. At departmental level, there are still no signs of the formation of representative bodies for women departmental assembly members. ACOBOL could become the leading institution in a new process, with a view to forming an association of women with political representation at national level, to represent women at all levels of State, whereby it would be possible to channel greater resources, optimize their use and undertake activities with greater impact.

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING OF THE OFFICE FOR THE DEFENSE OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND THE PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT FOR WOMEN AT NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

Joint Programme: Strengthening the Institutional Environment
for the Advancement of Women in Guatemala

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Main Participants: United Nations: UNFPA (lead agency),
UN Women, FAO, UNDP, PAHO/WHO; national partners:
Presidential Secretariat for Women (SEPREM), Office for
the Defence of Indigenous Women (DEMI)

Guatemala at Peace

YouTube



1. Introduction

The Joint Programme on Strengthening the Institutional Environment for the Advancement of Women in Guatemala (the Programme) has strengthened the Office for the Defense of Indigenous Women (DEMI) and the Presidential Secretariat for Women (SEPREM), both at national and local level, by promoting multi-sectoral and inter-agency cooperation, as well as activities with different levels of government and civil society. Thanks to the Programme, progress was made in the implementation of gender policies, in services provision for survivors of gender-based violence and for the empowerment of women in decision-making processes.

2. Initial Situation

Guatemala is a country where women still do not participate widely in decision-making processes, and have limited economic opportunities. Moreover, high levels of structural violence against women persist. In this context the institutions devoted to women's empowerment have historically had limited capacity for implementation and monitoring of existing gender policies, which is further challenged due to their weak presence at departmental level. Although in recent years significant changes have been promoted by municipal legislation, Guatemala remains a highly centralized country.

3. Strategy

The Programme identified the need to strengthen SEPREM and DEMI for better monitoring of implementation and impact of gender policies. At the same time, the Programme had a wide geographical coverage both at central and local levels, with activities in seven departments and municipalities. Through this structure, the programme aimed to strengthen activities implemented by SEPREM and DEMI mainly at local level.

The Programme worked in four focus areas: a) Institutionalization of National Policy for Promotion and Integral Development of Women 2008-23

(PNPDIM), Plan for Equal Opportunities (PEO) and the Coordinated Agenda for Indigenous Women; b) Eradication of violence, discrimination and racism against women; c) Women's economic empowerment; and d) Social and political participation of women. At the same time, the Programme developed strategic interventions with Ministries, Departments and governmental institutions, and at the local level with municipalities.

4. Progress and Results

DEMI has seven offices at departmental level working for 39 municipalities (with 68 per cent of indigenous and rural populations) for prevention and provision of legal, psycho-physical-social support (group and individual therapy) to survivors of gender-based violence. An estimated total of 9,265 cases were treated by DEMI nationwide.

Human resources have increased, including at departmental level. At least 80 per cent of staff who had been employed as consultants under the Programme have been included in the organogram of SEPREM. In DEMI, progress was made in classifying positions according to the rules of the National Civil Service Bureau (ONSEC).

Departmental Delegations of DEMI and SEPREM supported by the Programme have influenced the national planning and budgeting processes with a focus on women's rights (mainly indigenous women).

At the local level, the Programme enhanced the participation of women in decision-making processes by strengthening and expanding the presence of SEPREM and DEMI in the territories, their dialogue with women's organizations at local level, strengthening their representation in the Council System of Urban and Rural Development and providing training in aspects of governance and women's rights promoted by both partners.

The Programme strengthened institutions that promote gender policies through inter-institutional and multi-sectoral action at national level as well as in the sectoral departmental working groups.

The Programme also made it possible for DEMI to provide direct services to women survivors of violence, discrimination and racism at central and local level. The Programme enhanced DEMI and Programme participants' expertise. The advocacy for community awareness at local level has been instrumental, to raise awareness around complaint procedures and characteristics of violence against indigenous women.

DEMI and SEPREM have been strengthened as public institutions, which has significantly improved their public image in the society, especially at departmental level. The political advocacy with departmental participants helped identify and position women leaders at local and community level, giving them support and training for lobbying and political negotiation.

The Programme was able to build leadership at departmental and local levels to manage the five per cent allocated within the Development Community Councils (CODEDES) budget for the development of specific training projects for women. In this way, DEMI and SEPREM have redefined their role in the departments as centers with the capacities to attend women and women's organizations needs and proposals.

5. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- In relation to participation of women in the departments, gender-based discrimination remains a powerful force in the country and within institutions. This has been a hindrance for increasing women's participation in decision-making. Concerted efforts to challenge these attitudes will need to continue in order to register greater gains.
- It is important to strengthen mechanisms for registration of cases of violence treated. Most records are not up-to-date and lack sufficient disaggregated information by ethnicity, age and municipality. It is therefore recommended to establish automated record systems.

6. Sustainability and Potential Application

DEMI and SEPREM have managed a transition process that includes the preparation of a toolkit to build capacity of their new officers, as well as the elaboration of good practices and lessons for future implementation, not only related to programme activities but also to relevant legislation.

Moreover, SEPREM will absorb 60 per cent of the staff positions that the Programme has promoted, ensuring continuity of established processes. At the departmental level, there is a need for continued support to offices that have recently opened. National partners have designed a transition plan to ensure the provision of local offices and services.

The issue of women's policies is on the public agenda. National partners should seek the support of women's organizations and international cooperation for advocacy and political lobbying as well as for monitoring the agreements established with other institutions in order to ensure sustainability.

In the area of economic empowerment, SEPREM is implementing national economic policies to promote women's access to credit, working directly with the Ministry of Finance to strengthen economic policies formulation.

7. Main Sources

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GENDER MAINSTREAMING TO ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE AND DEMOCRATIC WATER AND SANITATION MANAGEMENT

Joint Programme: Establishing Effective and Democratic Water and Sanitation Management in Mexico to Support the Achievement of the MDGs

Thematic Window: Democratic Economic Governance

Main Participants: ECLAC, FAO, UNIDO, UN-Habitat, PAHO, UNESCO, UNODC, UNDP, Veracruz Women's Institute, Veracruz Institute for Public, Tabasco Water and Sanitation Commission, Chiapas Water Institute, Chiapas Civil Protection Unit, Chiapas Institute for Public Information



1. Introduction

The Joint Programme on Establishing Effective and Democratic Water and Sanitation Management in Mexico to Support the Achievement of the MDGs (the Programme) aimed to improve the integrated management of water in peri-urban and rural areas of Mexico to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with regard to water and sanitation (W&S), and to combat poverty from the standpoint of environmental sustainability and gender equality. The Programme adopted a gender mainstreaming strategy focused on the institutionalization of gender units in key water-related public institutions and the promotion of women and civil society involvement in water management. It has led to increased democratic water governance, transparency and participation of civil society in the integral management of W&S, with special emphasis on women's participation.

2. Initial Situation

Mexico is reaching the overall MDG goal related to water access (89 per cent of population), yet there is still a large share of population that has no access to this resource in the quality and quantity necessary. In rural areas, especially in indigenous communities, there are thousands of marginalized and isolated localities with almost five million Mexicans not having access to water at all. Additionally, rapid urbanization in the main cities of Mexico is causing informal settlements with difficult access, no services and infrastructure and exposed to hydro-meteorological risks.

In Mexico, municipalities are the entities responsible for water access. However, their management and financial capacities are very weak, especially in poor areas. Furthermore, most institutions in charge of water access place a strong emphasis on infrastructure development, paying less attention to social participation issues.

Progressive realization of access to safe and affordable water for all is crucial for poverty eradication, women's empowerment and the protection of human health. Reduced time, health, and care-giving burdens from improved water services give

women more time for productive endeavours, adult education, empowerment activities and leisure. However, water resource use and management is highly gendered in Mexican society. While women are mostly responsible for domestic and community water, sometimes carrying the water for several kilometers, most water-related rights and decision-making are conferred to men. The Programme was put in place to improve population access to water, while increasing women's participation in water management and mainstreaming gender in water-related policies and institutions.

3. Objectives

The Programme aimed at improving the integrated management of water in peri-urban and rural areas of Mexico, from the standpoint of environmental sustainability and gender equality. The Programme focused in three states in the south of the country: Chiapas, Tabasco and Veracruz, characterized by high levels of social and economic deprivation, a significant proportion of indigenous population and high vulnerability to weather phenomena.

4. Key Actors

The Programme was implemented by eight UN Agencies: ECLAC, FAO, UNIDO, UN-Habitat, PAHO, UNESCO, UNODC and UNDP.

Strategic alliances were established with water institutions, gender institutes, civil protection units and institutes for public information at state level.

Civil society organizations, indigenous representatives, women groups and networks were active contributors to the process.

5. Strategy

The Programme adopted a dual gender strategy: on one side, a gender mainstreaming approach aimed at integrating a gender perspective in all Programme actions and, on the other side and simultaneously, specific interventions focused on women's empowerment and gender equality. Following are the three main axes of intervention:

GENDER-SENSITIVE DIAGNOSTICS ON WATER MANAGEMENT

The elaboration of the diagnostics followed a participatory approach that included: five workshops per state (for a total of 356 participants), 266 interviews with key informants and 139 questionnaires 139.

Workshops were based on the methodology proposed by the Women's Blue Agenda, developed and applied by the Gender and Environment Network since 2006. The aim was to identify women's and men's needs and challenges related to water access and management, from a gender and ethnic perspective.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN WATER-RELATED PUBLIC POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONS

The institutions in charge of gender issues in the three states were sensitized and strengthened to extend their mandates to environmental issues, such as water and disaster management. At the same time, sector institutions responsible for water management, access to public information and civil protection were provided with technical assistance and training to integrate gender and intercultural approaches into their work.

The Programme promoted citizen's involvement in water management. Several tools were developed to sensitize and train civil society organizations on social participation and transparency, including the Citizens' Guide to Inclusive Participation in Water Management and the With Information All Win – A Guide to Know Your Right.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN WATER MANAGEMENT

In several rural localities, local committees for water disinfection management were created and household based safe water systems were installed. Each process of installation was accompanied by a comprehensive strategy to foster women's participation in the management of the system.

6. Progress and Results

GENDER-SENSITIVE DIAGNOSTICS ON WATER MANAGEMENT

Three participatory diagnostics, one per state, were published under the title Water and Development: Local Agenda for Gender Equality. The diagnostics offer targeted and meaningful information on the issues of water, sanitation, gender and ethnicity in the three states. They present sex-disaggregated data on water situation in urban and rural areas, their availability, their uses and the vulnerability and hydro meteorological hazards. They also include information on women's political involvement, economic and labour market participation, maternal mortality, health, education and gender-based violence.

These diagnostics came to fill the previous gap on disaggregated data and analysis related to water access in marginalized communities. They have been used to support evidence-based advocacy action, as well as basis for the design and implementation of the Programme interventions in the communities.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN WATER-RELATED POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONS

Gender issues have been effectively integrated into the agenda, policies, strategies and plans of key sector institutions. Some of the main achievements are:

- The Veracruz Women's Institute has increased its budget dedicated to water management issues.
- The Tabasco Water and Sanitation Commission has created a permanent gender focal point position and has regulated gender parity in local water management units (UDESAS).
- In Chiapas, gender areas have been created in both the Water Institute and the Civil Protection Unit.
- The Institute for Public Information in Chiapas is replicating the methodologies developed to promote women and indigenous participation in 23 municipalities of the state.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN WATER MANAGEMENT

Several safe water systems (“water kiosks” and household based systems) were deployed in a number of rural communities of the states of Tabasco, Chiapas and Veracruz. These innovative facilities, for their simplicity and low maintenance, are a good example of sustainable solutions that are easily manageable by the community.

A local committee manages each safe water system. At present, women are the majority in these committees. Some of the water systems have become local microenterprises. Their impact on women's economic empowerment is still to be analysed.

In Sitalá, in the state of Chiapas, the water system is managed and operated by a group of midwives. Fifteen individual safe water systems have been installed in the midwives' houses, serving for both domestic and childbirth attending purposes. The systems were installed in collaboration with the Comprehensive Services Clinic -part of the Sanitary Jurisdiction of Ocosingo and Casa Materna. Thanks to the safe water systems, midwives no longer have to invest time and energy in fetching water. Additionally, the need for wood to boil water has decreased significantly, meaning less time, effort and respiratory complications. Midwives are coordinated with local authorities, which is a key factor for sustainability.

7. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- **Gender analysis is an essential tool.** Differences and inequalities between women and men influence how they perceive and participate in water use and management. Understanding gender roles, relations and inequalities can help

explain the choices women and men make and their different options.

- **Community involvement** is essential for the sustainability of the services and investments done in the water management sector, as well as to trigger behavioral changes in relation to water use and conservation.
- **Community representation** is always an issue. The term ‘community’ is often used as if it represents a homogenous, clear and defined structure. In actual fact it conceals a range of vested interests in terms of economic position, ethnic status, gender balance and age. It is of paramount importance to approach communities considering these complexities and to not fall back on false assumptions. Participatory gender diagnostics revealed differentiated women's and men's needs and interests.
- The role of **local and regional authorities** is essential to provide the required political, financial and practical support to water management local initiatives. While local communities usually perceive the advantages of cooperation, they frequently lack the financial resources, the technical skills, the expertise or the access to the relevant information to reach an agreement and put it into practice.

8. Sustainability and Potential Application

The strategy of sustainability put in place by the Programme is based on the institutionalization of gender units in key water-related public institutions and the promotion of women and civil society involvement in water management, as well as the installation of safe water systems based on appropriate technologies.

APPLICATION OF THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ENHANCEMENT METHODOLOGY FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN NAMIBIA

Joint Programme: Setting Things Right – Towards Equality and Equity

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Main Participants: UN: UNDP (lead agency), UNESCO, FAO, UNFPA, UNICEF. Government agencies: Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Ministry of Youth National Service Sports and Culture, Ministry of Safety and Security, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Regional Local Government and Housing and Rural Development, National Planning Commission, Ministry of Education

UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe



1. Introduction

Community Capacity Enhancement (CCE) through Community Conversations is a methodology used for mobilizing communities for action around HIV and AIDS built on trust, accountability and participation. It is based on a vision and recognition that communities have the capacity to prevent, change and sustain hope in the midst of the HIV and AIDS epidemic. It is an approach aimed at creating interactive spaces for facilitated conversations, reflections and applications based on relationships of trust and mutual respect.

The Community Conversation Enhancement was implemented by community facilitators who promoted dialogue on HIV and AIDS in the communities, and were able to stimulate community action on HIV and AIDS. The Programme also worked with Community Volunteers on issues of reproductive health especially for the Youth, and had direct reach to the communities in the agricultural interventions.

2. Initial Situation

Stigma, discrimination, cultural norms and practices remain the biggest challenges facing rural communities in Namibia, in relation to accessing treatment, care and support services. Multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships have been identified as key contributors to the high levels and rapid spread of HIV in Namibia.

Although Namibia is among the top five countries in terms of HIV prevalence in the world, the epidemic is now demonstrating a downward trend after peaking at 22 per cent in 2002. Routine antenatal surveillance measured an overall prevalence among pregnant women of 17.8 per cent in 2008. The epidemic has cut across all sectors of society and is severely affecting the population.

3. Strategy

The Programme has supported and strengthened the CCE, a UNDP-promoted initiative for responding to HIV and AIDS. The initiative aims to mitigate the negative impacts of HIV and AIDS at community

level, and scale up local responses. Other objectives of the Programme are to facilitate greater integration of community led initiatives through community capacity enhancement and community action, and to facilitate greater understanding of gender inequalities in the context of HIV and AIDS. The CCE facilitators held conversations with communities on matters such as gender-based violence (GBV), poverty, multiple partners, alcohol abuse, lack of information on basics of HIV and AIDS and several other issues of concern for the communities.

4. Progress and Results

Community Capacity Enhancement is providing an opportunity for communities to reflect on their cultural practices, norms and values. Communities in the five focus regions participated in awareness-raising sessions on GBV, HIV and AIDS and reproductive health. Results of the Programme included increased numbers of people going for Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) Services, increased use of condoms and opening new ground for discussion of “taboo” subjects such as sex, child abuse, gender issues, early pregnancy and HIV and AIDS stigma.

The CCE facilitators were very successful in engaging communities, raising social development issues and taking them up to the municipalities and regional councils for intervention. Increasingly, these have been including gender and HIV issues. The CCE facilitators confirmed that the solutions lie with and are generated from the community. For example, one community had passed a bylaw to regulate the hours of selling alcohol for all the business operators in the area. The community and local law enforcement officers enforce the bylaw. CCE has community, regional and national linkages and directly contributes to the National Strategy for HIV and AIDS.

The CCE Programme participants were educated to understand their rights and assert them. Where it was previously difficult and sometimes impossible for women’s voices to be heard, the CCE Programme created a platform for them to raise their concerns and engage men and to mutually propose the needed changes.

5. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- The CCE methodology is potentially very useful for entering into communities, particularly when introducing projects relatively new to the people and continual mobilization of community members around community projects. It was noted that projects mobilized by CCE facilitators performed better than those that were not.
- It is important for CCE facilitators to receive adequate gender training. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and United Nations Country Team should work on a modality for engaging the Regional and Local Councils more in executing gender activities. CCE respondents in the field reported not receiving any or inadequate training in gender. Two gender-training workshops were reported to have been conducted for CCEs. Where the CCEs reported receiving the training, gender issues were also reported as being addressed as key issues in the focus group discussions, whilst where CCEs were not trained these were not highlighted as key issues.

6. Sustainability and Potential Application

The CCE has been supported by many Regional Councils, and in all the four study regions of Caprivi, Karas, Kunene and Ohangwena the CCE Coordinators have been absorbed into the Regional Council structures. In the Karas Region, CCE has been scaled up throughout the region already, at the expense of the Regional Government. The Karas Region is the first region to scale up CCE to all the local authorities in the region. It has been a very successful CCE region, due to the full engagement

of the Regional Government that supported 80 per cent of the 14 training and field visit activities the CCE were engaged in between 2009-2012. In Ohangwena, CCE is also being scaled up to constituencies and trainings for Chief Clerks to facilitate the expansion of the Programme.

Government partners mentioned that they would like to replicate the Programme to Regional Local Government Authorities. However, the government cannot afford to meet the standards set by UNDP in terms of financial contributions to CCE facilitators and would not manage the current staff structure which is parallel to the government structure. They would like UNDP to integrate the structure to operate within the government system, terms and conditions.

The CCE facilitators have potential to become lasting change agents in the communities, due to the rigorous and empowering methodology used in their training.

7. Main sources

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Mid-Term Evaluation of Joint Programme of Thematic Window on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Hope Kabuchu, Consultant, August 2010

GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING AT NATIONAL AND MUNICIPAL LEVELS

Joint Programme: From Rhetoric to Reality – Promoting Women’s Participation and Gender-responsive Budgeting

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

Main Participants: UN: UNFPA (lead agency), FAO, PAHO/WHO, UNCDF, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP.
Government agencies: Nicaraguan Women’s Institute (INIM), Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (MHCP), Ministry of Health (MINSa), Ministry of Labour (MITRAB). Other key stakeholders: Parliament, regional and municipal governments



1. Introduction

The Joint Programme “From Rhetoric to Reality:” Promoting Women’s Participation and Gender-responsive Budgeting (the Programme) fostered significant advances in gender-responsive budgeting and planning in Nicaragua, by developing methods and tools for integrating a gender perspective in the National General Budget (PGR) and the Planning and Budgeting Municipal System (SPPMDH), as well as by promoting the inclusion of projects aimed at women’s empowerment in the local budgets of the 15 municipalities participating in the Programme.

2. Initial Situation

The Nicaraguan government has acknowledged gender equality as a strategic component to further representative and participatory democracy and to construct a more fair and equitable society. It has also recognized that integrating a gender perspective in policy-making implies, among other things, promoting redistribution of public resources, power, positions of authority and recognizing the value of women’s work.

3. Strategy

The strategy adopted by the Programme aimed at integrating a gender perspective in the formulation and implementation of municipal results-based development plans and budgets in 15 municipalities in the country. Furthermore, the programme supported the integration of a gender perspective in national policies and budgets, with a focus on key ministries such as the Ministry of Health (MINSa) and the Ministry of Labour (MITRAB). The overall goal was to guarantee the exercise of human rights in these spheres, women’s economic autonomy and the reduction of gender-based violence.

The Programme supported the strengthening of the network of local gender advocates by training them on the methodology for

integrating a gender perspective in municipal planning. This led to an increase in women’s participation in local consultation processes and, as a consequence, the incorporation of a gender analysis in the discussions around the improvement of the Municipal Planning System.

In order to achieve the integration of a gender perspective in the PGR and the Mid-Term Budget, the Programme worked to guarantee the high-level commitment of the participating institutions.

4. Progress and Results

- Approval by the Ministries of Finances and Public Credit, Health and Labour of a methodology to integrate a gender perspective throughout the process of formulation, implementation, monitoring and accountability of the PGR and the Mid-Term Budget.
- Approval of the [Law 786](#) of Reform of the Law of Municipalities, which introduces the principle of parity in the election of local authorities and the integration of a gender perspective in the elaboration of local budgets.
- Creation of gender units in nine national-level institutions and seven local governments. These units are placed at high-level and are equipped with qualified human resources.
- Creation of Municipal Investment Funds for Gender Equality in 15 municipalities, which have co-financed 32 projects aimed at women’s empowerment.
- Women’s participation in the process of elaboration of municipal plans and budgets largely exceeded the expected targets: a total of 113,814 women participated in the 15 municipalities, against the 66,000 expected. This participation took place through community assemblies, and through meetings with technical teams and lobby groups.

5. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- On the Caribbean Coast, the Programme was adapted to the political, cultural and ethnic characteristics of the region. Yet, these elements and their linkages with gender equality need to be further considered.
- The practical and strategic needs identified by women in the municipalities should be included in the National General Budget. This would be possible through the integration of these demands in the annual budgets of institutions providing essential social services such as health and education, by formulating these budgets at the local level.

6. Sustainability and Potential Application

The Programme provided the participating institutions with a wealth of methodologies, tools and capacities to integrate a gender perspective in their structures and services. It also promoted the creation of gender units and commissions charged with the coordination of the different departments. Finally, the Programme introduced significant advances at public policies level, which will modify institutional actions at central and regional level.

Furthermore, the improvements, from a gender perspective, in the Law of Municipalities have made gender analysis mandatory for the approval of municipal projects.

7. Main Sources

Evaluación Final Ventana Temática de Género y Empoderamiento de la Mujer, “De la Retórica a la Realidad: Hacia la Equidad de Género y Empoderamiento de las Mujeres a través de la Participación y Practicas de género en los Presupuestos Públicos,” Celso Asensio Flores, Maria Hurtado Cabrera, Ana Maria Sanchez Barquero, Consultores, mayo 2012. (Final Evaluation of the thematic window on gender and the empowerment of women, “From Rhetoric to Reality: Promoting Women’s Participation and Gender-responsive Budgeting,” Celso Asensio Flores, Maria Hurtado Cabrera, Ana Maria Sanchez Barquero, Consultants, May 2012.)

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INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN WATER MANAGEMENT

Joint Programme: Strengthening Equity in Access to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation by Empowering Citizens and Excluded Indigenous Groups in Rural Areas

Thematic Window: Democratic Economic Governance

Main Participants: WHO/PAHO, UNICEF, ILO, UNDP, Ministry of Health

Fernando Bocanegra/UN Women



“The joint Programme highlighted the role of women within the community; women have more relation to water than men. The participation of women is more representative; this has led to the empowerment of women. Women have been given great opportunities, and I will keep joining together to strengthen and promote them.”

DR. DEBORA GODDARD/GENERAL PRACTITIONER AND DIRECTOR OF THE BISIRA HEALTH CENTER

1. Introduction

The Joint Programme on Strengthening Equity in Access to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation by Empowering Citizens and Excluded Indigenous Groups in Rural Areas (the Programme) provided access to safe water and sanitation systems, giving men, women and children the opportunity to improve their living standards and conditions. Despite the fact that gender equality was not a specific objective of the Programme, women's empowerment and participation turned out to be crucial for the successful results of the project.

2. Initial Situation

Indigenous peoples have the lowest standards of living in Panama with 96 per cent of the population living in poverty, and 41.8 per cent of these living in extreme poverty. The Ngäbe Bugle represent 78.4 per cent of the indigenous population of the country and live in rural areas. In the areas of Bisira and Kankintu, where the project has been carried out, living conditions are precarious and difficult. Gender analysis indicates that there is a high level of discrimination towards women. That, coupled with lack of income and access to basic health services, safe water, sanitation and especially to education, are elements that make women an extremely vulnerable group.

3. Objective

Ensure the access and the provision of efficient water services and sanitation to the most excluded populations in the Ngäbe Bugle region.

4. Strategy

A two-fold strategy was adopted:

- Intercultural approach that focused on the empowerment of citizens through trainings and capacity-buildings; and
- Improvement of sanitation infrastructure and health services.

Gender analysis identified more specific areas of intervention than were initially considered by the Programme. Prevailing traditional cultural patterns, the gender divisions of labour, decision-making patterns, the access to and control of economic resources, and their benefits marked the “roadmap” to promote gender equity and the empowerment of women during the development of the Programme.

It was necessary to strengthen and develop some basic social skills that heavily conditioned women's participation and roles within the community (Bisira and Kankintu) and to break the paradigm “that such things were for men and such things were for women,” thus promoting the joint work of both the “brade” (“men” in the Ngäbe language) and the “meri” (“women” in the Ngäbe language).

The Programme adopted a set of guiding principles in relation to promoting gender equality:

- Promote gender equality in management to the highest level.
- Treat all men and women equally in the workplace - respect and defend human rights and promote non-discrimination.

- Ensure the health, safety and welfare of all workers.
- Promote education, training and career development for women.
- Carry out gender-equitable and inclusive business development practices, supply chain and marketing.
- Promote equality through community initiatives and lobbying.
- Evaluate and disseminate the progress made toward gender equality.

5. Progress and Results

Women's empowerment driven within the framework of the Programme fostered processes of change for women, increasing their participation in the community. From this perspective, empowerment for women meant:

- Self-confidence and internalizing the fact that women have the same rights as men.
- Autonomy to make decisions about their own lives.
- Identification of their interests, priorities and transformation of their relationships, structures and institutions that had limited them.

The Programme provided community education and specific trainings in different areas such as: women's and children rights, environment awareness, promotion of entrepreneurship, water management

and health practices that resulted in some significant social changes:

- Women increasingly share with their partners and problems are resolved together, they are respected by the community and participate actively;
- Partnerships are strengthened and responsibilities and the caring for children are shared among the family members; and
- Women have started their own economic activities such as restaurants, hostels, arts and crafts shops.

Women are participating actively in local organizations and in Infrastructure construction and development such as the water, sanitation and health system. Now:

- 99 per cent have no more problems of access to clean water and sanitation;
- The number of cases of diarrhea and skin problems in infants under 5 has decreased significantly, also due to the health trainings that improved the knowledge on health issues of indigenous people;
- Water system sustainability has been improved through the strengthening of the Rural Aqueduct Administration Boards (JAAR) and the increased participation of community organizations; and
- Women have been elected as JAAR and neighborhood presidents.

“The Ngäbe society is a sexist society that has been changing in modern times. Being a woman is to be discriminated against. Today, they see me as the doctor without regarding my gender. The Joint Programme highlighted the role of women within the community; women have more relation to water than men. The participation of women is more representative; this has led to the empowerment of women. Women have been given great opportunities, and I will keep joining together to strengthen and promote them.”

DR. DEBORA GODDARD/GENERAL PRACTITIONER AND DIRECTOR OF THE BISIRA HEALTH CENTER

“The Programme allowed me to socialize within the community. Through the Rural Aqueduct Administration Boards, we are the ones that are taking care of the systems being offered. The majority of women are the principal water users, and we are the ones that guarantee the aqueduct’s sustainability. We are nobody without water. We no longer want to drink water from the river.”

MRS. MITZY ELENA CASTILLO/ JAAR PRESIDENT IN BISIRA

6. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- It is important to incorporate an explicit gender equality strategy (as opposed to mainstreaming) in local development programmes in indigenous areas, as well as to involve women and men community members from the early stages of programme planning.
- The integration of men taking part in housework as support to their partners facilitated the incorporation of women in all the Programme activities.
- Due to the construction of infrastructure in the Kankintu and Bisira communities, economic potential that generated income was identified, giving women the opportunity to benefit in equal measure as men.
- Women, as well as men, have been actively involved in the implementation of infrastructure projects both in the rural aqueduct system and the healthcare system this allowed them to gain respect from the rest of the community.
- The remote location of these communities means that there are few professionals who are willing to take the risks necessary to share with and train these groups. Therefore it is absolutely necessary to strengthen local capacities to carry out these activities.

“At the beginning of the Programme, there were limitations to integrate women, but each UN agency took a piece of the work. UNICEF achieved the goal of integrating them into the Programme activities, and the Programme strengthened the leadership of the women, especially those engaged in small businesses, in decision-making and their work or activities. Men and women have equal rights and equal duties. ILO formed women entrepreneurs and PAHO/WHO recognized and identified the leaders.”

MR. CARLOS BECKER, BISIRA AND KANKINTU COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

7. Sustainability and Potential Application

Knowledge and capacities have been improved in the local community and this will support sustainable results. Moreover local institutions have committed to monitor the implementation of activities initiated during the Programme, although budget increase will be needed in the future.

Women’s participation in the Administrative Boards of Rural Aqueducts is a key to sustainability. This is based on the fact that women migrate less and hence maintain greater permanence in the community and therefore their membership and leadership contribute strongly to the continuity of efforts.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

Joint Programme: Occupied Palestinian
Territory: Culture and Development

Thematic Window: Culture and Development

Main Participants: UNESCO, UN Women, UNDP and FAO are working jointly with governmental institutions, local authorities, community-based organizations and civil society at large

UN Photo/Milton Grant



1. Introduction

Within the framework of the Joint Programme on Culture and Development (the Programme), the gender equality dimension was mainstreamed in the Ministry of Culture. While relevant development strategies existed, they were gender blind, as were the institutions charged with implementation. A turn-around has been achieved through an innovative strategy, based on strategic partnerships, policy formulation and analysis, needs assessment and capacity-building at all levels. Enhanced cultural capabilities are now contributing to attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) while focusing on women's empowerment in related cultural fields.

2. Initial Situation

The incorporation of Palestinian women's perspectives and contributions into Palestinian culture in the form of policies and activities had remained stagnant. Although women are contributing to Palestinian culture in the context of production, i.e. literature, crafts, agricultural production, cinema, arts and more, these contributions are limited in scope due to the social oppression generated by a patriarchal society, occupation restrictions, as well as the absence of family or community support. To enhance and sustain Palestinian women's contributions to a coherent and creative culture, their perspectives, contributions and needs must be acknowledged and supported at different levels.

Prior to the Joint Programme on Culture and Development, Palestinian cultural heritage was not assessed from a gender perspective and women's contributions and roles in the culture were not institutionalized with national policies and capacity development strategies.

The Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP 2011-2013) stressed the importance of the strategy for culture as a pioneering platform for development, yet there was a need to analyse it from a gender perspective, to assess gender gaps in the institutionalization and capacity development plans related to women's roles within

Palestinian Ministries or as culture producers in general. Finally, observations by the Programme gender experts indicated limited resources provided for addressing gender inequality in culture national plans and policies.

3. Key actors

- UN Agencies: UNESCO (lead), UN Women, UNDP, FAO
- Ministries: Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
- Local Authorities and NGOs

4. Strategy

The Programme adopted an innovative and interdisciplinary strategy seeking to reach an integrated and holistic approach for the promotion of cultural diversity as a venue for development. This strategy was built along a circular feeding back process system structured along the following interlinked components: capacity building, policy-making and partnerships establishment.

The implementation of this strategy followed a bottom up approach by: (i) including all actors involved in the protection and promotion of Palestinian cultural diversity (local communities, private sector, civil society at large and government officials both at central and local level); (ii) piloting on site activities (on-the-job training) and using the lessons learned at the grassroots level to feed the national policy development and vice versa.

5. Progress and Results

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND RAISING AWARENESS

Activities were conducted to consolidate partnership within the framework of the Programme. A number of meetings were held with representatives of the different administrative levels of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Women Affairs. Also, personal and collective meetings were organized

and workshops were carried out with gender-related supporters and academic institutions. Based on that, several activities (steering meetings, meetings with high level staff from the Ministries, UNDP and UNESCO) were held to develop and prepare the implementation of the participatory approach.

SUPPORT IN POLICY FORMULATION

In March 2011, the Ministry of Culture approved the first gender-responsive Palestinian Culture Sector Strategy. This achievement was preceded by different phases.

Phase 1: Capacity-building

A workshop was organized on gender mainstreaming in the National Plan for Palestinian Culture (NPPC) addressed to a focus group of 40 experts in cultural and gender issues. The Minister of Culture and the Minister of Women's Affairs participated. The following were the objectives of the workshop:

- Develop the ability to read and analyse developmental projects and design activities promoting social equality and fairness based on gender.
- Provide training on analysing projects from a gender perspective.
- Discuss some of the practices and cultural elements of the Palestinian society with the use of the gender concept (i.e. the relation between culture and gender).
- Review the cultural strategy including analysing the realities/cases, strategies and interventions from a gender point of view.
- Modify the NPPC from a gender point of view, including the analysis of realities/cases and objectives while focusing on policies and interventions.

Phase 2: Identifying gaps in the NPPC from the gender perspective

The main gaps from a gender perspective were identified inside the NPPC by evaluating the phases through which plans were formulated, as follows:

- **Preparatory phase:** A gender gap was identified in that the representatives of the active parties were mostly men. Also, despite the representation of the Ministry of Women Affairs, the other participating institutions lacked the professional and/or academic experience in the field of gender equality. Additionally, none of the experts in gender issues had participated in any of the phases of the plan formulation.
- **Second phase:** Lack of knowledge and expertise in gender. The research topics and subjects were not viewed through a gender lens. They did not rely on the case/reality analysis of women and men from a gender perspective within the Palestinian context.
- **Methodology:** It did not show any sensitivity to the special needs of both women and men. Gender dimensions were not highlighted in the preliminary information as a background for intervention. Moreover, the justification did not have any analysis related to gender equality. Nor did the strategic goals and interventions reflect the different needs of women and men. Furthermore, the interventions were specifically targeted to men and did not include any corrective measures that could promote gender equality.

Phase 3: Assessing the needs of the Ministry of Culture's functional staff

In 2011, a study was conducted to assess the needs of the Ministry of Culture's functional staff through a consultative process including representatives from the Ministry of Women Affairs and Ministry of Culture.

This unveiled three levels of needs related to knowledge and skills: the first level related to the staff's knowledge capabilities which were directly related to the identified gender gaps. The second level, indirectly related to gender mainstreaming, focused on issues not only related to gender but including wider cultural and legal issues pertaining to human rights, children's rights and other issues that deepen the comprehensive understanding of culture. As for the third level of needs, it focused on the technical skills required to develop

the functional capacity of staff in general—and the gender unit in particular—in order to advance towards the attainment of the overall vision and goals of the cultural sector.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE NPPC ACTION PLAN

Gender was mainstreamed in the Action Plan in a manner similar to the process through which gender mainstreaming was done in the NPPC, including the results and activities. This was done by relying on a participatory approach and collective efforts on the basis of full partnership between two main Ministries interested in developing the strategy, the MOWA (Ministry of Women's Affairs) and Ministry of Culture. As a central partner, the MOWA contributed to the process on two main levels by managing the planning process and the Gender Unit. As for the Ministry of Culture—as a leader of the PA institutions working in the Cultural Sector (from a technical perspective)—all its employees from the various higher and middle-level administrative levels were involved directly in the process. Also, there was a review of the Action Plan for Culture, including the results and mechanisms, by carrying out personal interviews, collective workdays and focus groups.

CREATION AND TRAINING OF PIVOTAL TEAM TO CARRY OUT DUTIES FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

A training plan has been designed by the National Expert on Gender aiming to enhance and strengthen the skills of a pivotal team. This team is composed by 25-30 (male and female) employees from the various administrative levels of the Ministry of Culture who serve as focal points on gender mainstreaming at the Ministry and its offices in the governorates.

Within this framework, three training workshops have been conducted addressing the following subjects: 1) concept of gender mainstreaming and its relation to culture and related issues; 2) gender mainstreaming dimensions in action plans, follow-up indicators, evaluations and policies; 3) analysis of developmental projects from a social justice perspective; and finally 4) "On-the-job Learning."

The creation of a pivotal team comprised of various general administrations from the Ministry of Culture and various Palestinian governorates and formulating a tightly knit training plan covering gender and culture strengthened the effectiveness and continuity of developmental programs. This will be reflected in the process of change in relation to knowledge, skills and the delegation of authority among the functional staff, hence attaining social justice.

6. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- Building strong partnership relations between the stakeholders from international bodies, official institutions, NGOs, national and academic institutions on the basis of dialogue for the sake of attaining gender quality and equality is considered the primary key for success. Key success factors also included the development of a common vision to reach agreements and consensus to support the gender equality-related goals within a country's strategy or developmental activity.
- The presence of the Minister of Culture and Minister of Women's Affairs was crucial for the purpose of showing commitment, support and advocacy and to give legitimacy to the issues related to the development of gender-sensitive policies in the cultural sector.
- Addressing gender inequality issues at the Ministry of Culture through research, international analysis and needs assessment based on gender is considered one of the elements of success.
- The mobilization emanating from the gender needs assessment of the Ministry of Culture's functional staff is an integral step for the planning process based on the gender perspective.
- The involvement of all Ministry of Culture employees directly in the process of creating the Action Plan was crucial since the success of any mission largely relies on the functional staff's understanding of the duties expected from them. Gender equality cannot be achieved by a small group of individuals working separately and single-handedly. It can only be attained

when there is strong leadership with commitment to promoting gender equality and clear responsibilities laid out for functional staff from the various administrative and executive levels.

7. Sustainability and Potential Application

In order to guarantee the sustainability of the achievements, the various activities have been framed within the capacity-building methodology. Additionally, some practical methodologies have been adopted, such as the “Learning by Implementing” method which was the main method applied in executing all gender-related activities. Some recommendations on how to guarantee sustainability at different levels follow.

POLITICAL WILL

1. Establish a Memorandum of Understanding between the highest Ministry levels and UN Women in order to continue to develop women’s contributions in the Cultural Sector.
2. Work on institutionalizing a thorough partnership between the Ministry of Culture and the various official ministries whose work intersects/cross-cuts that of the Ministry such as: the Ministry of Education, MOWA, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Ministry of Local Governance, in order to support the Ministry of Culture in adopting the nationally-proposed cultural vision which is gender sensitive.

CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

1. Generalize the concept of gender equality among the Ministry of Culture’s functional staff in a prioritized manner, through the use of tools and methods that suit the thought patterns of employees.
2. Target decision-makers inside the Ministry of Culture and intensify the training on Gender Mainstreaming concepts on the premise that if decision-makers have a comprehensive vision concerning working in the cultural field with a

gender perspective, it will have positive effects that guarantee the transfer of that same vision to the overall functional staff. It would also ensure that gender-sensitive implementation mechanisms are applied in all programmes and activities related to culture.

3. Accelerate formulation of a pivotal team inside the Ministry of Culture made up of various cultural directorates in the governorates, which would need specific procedures and conditions to organize the work between the team and the various administrations inside the Ministry of Culture. It would also govern the relations between the Ministry of Culture and various partners.
4. Review the follow-up and assessment system from a gender perspective in order to develop follow-up mechanisms that would be designed in a way that monitors progress and affects men, women and other societal segments.
5. Come up with assessment indicators that are sensitized to gender in the Cultural Sector in order to measure the degree of progress in attaining the goals of policies, programmes and projects aimed at men and women. Through these indicators it is also possible to ensure that the same policies, programmes and projects do not support any gender disparities through the conducted interventions, but that they actually achieve progress in reaching gender equality.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GENDER UNIT

1. Empower the Gender Unit based on concepts related to gender as well as the international charters and agreements related to women.
2. The adoption of a comprehensive Strategic Plan for the Unit relying on the National Strategic Plan for the Cultural Sector.
3. Support the Unit as much as possible by funding projects that could be introduced based on the strategic National Plan for Palestinian Culture (NPPC).

The main methodical steps have been formulated by the Programme for gender mainstreaming as a means to achieve gender equality in the cultural

sector. However, it is important to guarantee continuity by exerting efforts and overcoming impediments and challenges which were previously indicated for the purpose of achieving the gender mainstreaming process in a comprehensive and clear manner.

Under the same Programme, similar efforts are currently being exerted at the Ministry of Agriculture. This methodology could actually be multiplied and easily used by other ministries. The gender capacity-building activities are within the framework of a comprehensive practical means, most notably establishing the existence of a National Expert in Gender and Cultural issues as an original part of the Ministry of Culture. Also, there is the utilization of the participatory work method and the trial to work on institutionalizing partnerships with stakeholders from United Nations institutions, ministries and civil society organizations. Another strategy would be to build a communication bridge between Gender Units inside of the ministries to disseminate lessons learned and work on deepening experiences and knowledge in gender mainstreaming.