

# **Leadership Capacity Development Needs and Strategies/Approaches for Enhancing Collaboration and Exchange Strengthening Women's Leadership in Local Government**

I'm honoured to have the opportunity to address you on the topic "**Best practice experiences from 3 projects and different donors**".

Allow me to briefly explain the **goals of the Development Partners Working Group on Local Governance and Decentralization** which I represent here today. We try to interlink the efforts of 24 donor organizations from all over the world in order to implement the Paris Declaration on Harmonization and Aid Effectiveness of 2005 in clear practical steps and thereby to become more effective.

Over the next few minutes, I'll be **presenting best practice experiences** from the donors perspective. Then, I'll be asking for **your point of view concerning these examples**. I'd also like to know what kind of support from donor organizations you want and need and how you feel this can be best carried out. I promise you, that I will **present your feed-back to our Local Governance and Decentralization experts** from the 24 donor organizations immediately after this conference.

To **begin**, a few general **questions** and some **answers**:

## **1. Why are donors intervening in the field of Strengthening Women's Leadership in Local Government?**

Poverty reduction is the primary consideration guiding the actions of all donor agencies. Poverty reduction includes questions of justice and reflects the vision of living in a community with values shared by all. We hope that by **fighting poverty we will also be able to strengthen the decentralisation processes and herewith democracy. And this includes the equal participation of all individuals** – both men and women. It sounds as easy and logical as that.

## **2. A) Which challenges do donor organizations face in supporting women's leadership?**

a) All over the world, it is usually men who try to find moral, cultural, religious or even biological arguments, why there are so few women in leadership positions. We reject these attempts to justify gender discrimination and we have to be very clear on this: **Men and women are equal**. It is not a matter to be bargained over.

Once women are recognized as equal with men, they will be granted the same rights and opportunities to participate in every sphere of society. If the situation of women makes it **more difficult** for them to achieve their **rightful share in politics**, economics and other cultural and social domains, then we need to develop the necessary methods, approaches and strategies to strengthen women's participation.

b) Speaking in practical terms, you are probably aware that every donor organization has the so-called gender issue at the **top of its agenda**. But when it comes to implementing concrete steps, we have to acknowledge a **gap between the widespread theoretical support** of gender politics on the one hand and very **few practical results** on the other.

c) And this point is especially important: **donor organizations need you to make very specific demands for empowering women's leadership**. Because we are often confronted with the problem of deciding which partner organizations to support and we do not always know all the relevant individuals at the local level.

I will leave the list of challenges at that, for now, because you will soon see some of the other obstacles we have to face.

Due to time restrictions I'll be presenting best practise experiences from 3 projects. If you wish, I can send my presentation and even more examples to you by email, if you give me your email address after the presentation.

## **Some Examples of Successful Implementation:**

### **1. Project from one German development organization called –: “Equality of Opportunity and the Promotion of Women’s Interests” in Yemen, GTZ:**

- **Actual Project Phase:** 10/06-09/08
- **Project budget:** 3.536.134 EUR in total; 750.000 Euro for the current phase
- **Project partners:** GTZ, UNDP

#### **Initial Situation:**

- **Participant and Problem:** In 2003 the Women National Committee in it's National Strategy to empower women, in cooperation with all important stakeholders- realized at district level in particular, but also at regional/governorate level, that the **different needs of the men and women are not always taken into account**. For example: the water sector. Even though it is the task of women and girls to fetch water for the household, the water committees only made up of men
- In addition, at district and governorate level, there is **insufficient familiarity with existing national guidelines such as the gender strategy and PRSP**, which means that these are not given due consideration. Hence in the course of sectoral development planning, there is not enough attention paid to the different gender-related needs of the population which was already identified as the core problem by the Ministry of Local Administration in 2006.

#### **Strategic approach of the project**

- **Gender-related considerations should be appropriately embedded in the new and revised development plans** of the participating regional governments / governorates.

#### **Results:**

- Through **various workshops**, organized in cooperation with the Women Department of the MoLA (National Ministry of Local Administration) and financed by GTZ, the capacity of the General Directorates for Women Affairs have been **strengthened in networking, communication, teambuilding, leadership, and gender sensitive development planning and budgeting**. They are now part of the meetings of the executive boards in their respective governorates and act as experts on the situation of women. The collaboration with the Women National Committee has improved considerably.
- The staff of the Women Department in the national Ministry has developed **terms of Reference for the General Departments for Women Affairs on the national and the regional level** in cooperation with the donors (GTZ, UNDP). This can serve as a **model for other departments**.
- **Criteria** for the local authorities concerning the **promotion of gender-sensitive local development for the ministerial, governorate and district level have been developed** and agreed upon in joint discussions.
- In **2007, a gender audit** has been supported by ILO (International labour organisation), UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), the Women National Committee and GTZ. One of its **consequences** is that, **since January 2008 the Ministry of Local Administration and the Women's Sector are now headed by a female Deputy Minister** (Undersecretary of State).
- At the moment, the Women Directors, together with the Women's Sector in the Ministry, are **preparing advocacy campaigns**, which will be supported by the Ministry, to **enhance Women's Political Participation in the coming parliamentary elections**.

#### Problems:

- The President of Yemen has **replaced most of the Governors twice in the last two years**. Last week, based on changes in the decentralization law, the governors were elected for the first time by the local councils for 4 years. Each change has of course renewed the problem, that some members of the administration were replaced and that each new governor had his own view about the importance of women development.

Concerning the political structure of our partner countries, the described problem is a typical one:

- **lack of stability in the governments** resulting in frequent changes in the administration which leads to the demand for new negotiations at all levels;
- the **transfer/distribution of budget from the national to the local level** is often unsatisfactory. This means that **projects which can be of help to mainstream gender concerns are planned, but their implementation** at local levels occurs **slowly, if at all**, which of course is disappointing for everyone involved.

As mentioned above, the budget process is a bit difficult - which is a common problem that donor supported projects are often confronted with. Sometimes these **projects fail to achieve their full potential because of the lack of the budget money, which creates even less support or even aversion to the project!**

## **2. - Project name: UNDP - Women's Political School (WPS) Project in Pakistan**

- Project-Duration: **From 2004 – 2007**
- Project budget: **almost four and a half million US \$,**
- Project donor partners: **UNDP, and  
Swiss Agency for Development Corporation (SDC)  
Department for International Development (DfID)  
Royal Norwegian Embassy (RNE)**

### **Initial Situation:**

- The Local Government Ordinance 2001 of Pakistan **envisaged 33% representation of women in the local government system.**
- However, the vast majority of **women elected as councilors lacked basic knowledge of the political system at large.**
- To sustain W3P -the predecessor project-, was a **need for institutionalising the process of training women political leaders.** Therefore, the WPS (Women's Political School) was implemented at the federal level

### **Strategic Approach of the Project:**

- Designed as a **sustainable, long-term initiative** for empowering women in public office to raise their issues in the policy agenda and address them through public policy.
- **By whom:** In provinces: the National Social Welfare and Women Development Department linked with the provincial local government departments
- **How:** - The modules were revised in consultation with various stakeholders and followed by more revisions later on. Six studies were undertaken to map training initiatives undertaken from 2000-2004 for councilors across Pakistan for **stock taking** of existing training material for women councillors.
  - A **detailed screening process** was carried out for the selection of master trainers. **Withstanding political pressures,** a concentrated effort was made to focus on merit and quality. **WPS had over one and a half year for capacity building as well as institutionalization of training within governmental training institutions (4-2006 - 10-2007).**

### **Results:**

- **Women councilors themselves became trainers or mentors for other women councilors.**

- For institutionalization and strengthening, WPS created strategic **government ownership** through its decision to partner with local government.
- The WPS **trained women councillors have been/are being utilized in other projects for social mobilization and training** such as USAID and UNDP initiatives.
- The WPS established and strengthened District Support Networks (DSNs) in order to **provide relevant documentation to the councillors ensuring that the benefits derived were extended to the community levels.**
- A key strength of the project is the development of **district resource pools of women councillors comprising of potential, existing and former women politicians.** Around **50% of the WPS trained women are reportedly active and engaged in similar activities.**

#### **Key ingredient to the success of WPS:**

- **Committed Project Personnel at the federal and provincial levels coupled with the whole-hearted support from the government and UNDP**

#### **Typical donor problematic - missing strategically cooperation:**

- It was purely coincidental that the selected consultant was also being used by other donors for similar trainings (p. ex. ADB) thus creating synergies and donor harmonization.

### **3. Project from another German development organization called InWEnt in Bolivia: Dialogue on Gender discrimination in the leadership of local authorities**

After presenting two costs-intensive projects, now, I would like to present the least expensive one. This project shows that sometimes **partial interventions** can also have an important impact for our partners.

#### **Initial Situation:**

The Bolivian Association of Women Councillors (ACOBOL), which works for the **right of women to hold public office**, was pressing for a law to protect them from discrimination and political harassment on the part of their male colleagues. They are often the victims of **intimidation and even death threats, especially in rural areas.** In the meantime, 168 testimonies had been collected from women councillors who were **forced to leave their elected positions** because they were perceived as a threat to the mayors' plans. There are 327 town councils in Bolivia. The country's electoral laws require **30 percent** of each **political party's** candidates to be women, and for **citizen groups** the proportion required is **50 percent.** **But this affirmative action does not extend to executive positions.** Only 14 percent of mayors are women.

#### **Strategic approach of the project:**

The National Association of the Communities and the Association of Women Councillors asked InWEnt to help present a **conference** for 60 women and 13 male councillors and representatives of ministries, including Ministries of Decentralisation

and Transparency, and of Health. The purpose is to promote a dialogue, exchange the experiences and elaborate a draft law. Furthermore, the demand of capacity building in gender training for public political offices and general local administration topics for Women councillors was recognized. InWEnt funded the conference in 2007 with 10.000 €.

### **Results:**

1. The female participants of the conference prepared a **draft bill banning gender discrimination against assembly women.**
2. The draft law is presently being debated in the Chamber of Deputies, and will go from there to the Senate. The draft law is an attempt to **fill a legal vacuum by declaring harassment and violent behaviour as punishable offences and crimes.** It also extends protection to all women elected to positions in municipal, provincial or national governments.
3. The **specific demand of (gender) training is being considered in the design of running programmes of InWEnt in the Andean-Region.**
4. Other initiative of **ACOBOL was supported by other donors before and after the conference, such as: GTZ, UNIFEM** (United Nations Development Fund for Women), **PNUD/UNDP and INSTRAW** (United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women)

These **3 examples have shown different needs, approaches and possibilities to strengthen Women's Leadership in Local Government by means of capacity building.**

Let me conclude by saying thank you for your **interest**, and above all, your **patience.**