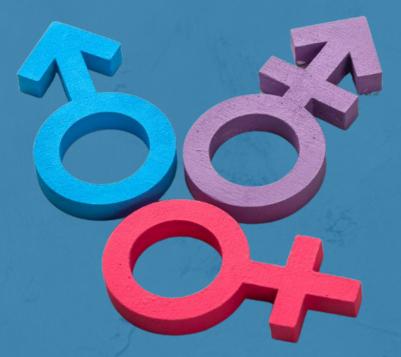




REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT Cycle 4, 2024



GENDER EMPOWERMENT NOW!

Building Capacities of Government Officials from Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon

Report Date: December 2024





Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

UNITAR – Hiroshima Office Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment programme was created to support the progressive achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. The programme provides a customized and context-sensitive gender-equality training for government officials in the Middle East and North Africa region.

Programme Objectives

The UNITAR training programme "Gender Empowerment Now!" – Cycle Four aimed to enhance the skills and capacities of government officials from Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon so they could effectively implement gender-equality initiatives within their institutions. It sought to build a comprehensive understanding of gender-sensitive policies and practices and equip participajhbkjnts with the tools to advocate for and drive change in their sectors.

Cycle Four also sought to foster greater collaboration among the participants, creating a supportive network that encourages the sharing of best practices and experiences. By emphasizing practical applications and real-world scenarios, this cycle aspired to translate theoretical knowledge into actionable strategies that contribute to the advancement of gender equity in the region.

Participants

29 government officials (24 women and 5 men) from Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon completed the programme. There were 15 from Iraq, 13 from Lebanon, and 1 from Jordon. They join a growing network of professionals dedicated to promoting gender equity in their countries.

Structure and Methodology

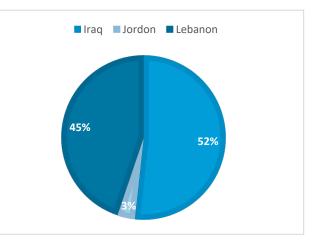


Figure 1: Breakdown of participants by Country

Over 10 weeks, participants learned through a combination of on-demand self-paced ecourses and live webinars with experts in the field, as well as prepared their capstone projects in teams. They also received mentoring throughout the course.





Summary of Outcomes

Participants overwhelmingly indicated that the programme content was highly relevant to their professional contexts, with 85% of respondents agreeing that the topics covered resonated deeply with their work in addressing women's issues. This alignment is crucial, as it fosters engagement and ensures that the learning experience is directly applicable to participants' roles.

- 78% reported that they gained new insights that enhanced their understanding of gender equality, indicating that the programme successfully introduced concepts and perspectives and enriched their knowledge base.
- 83% indicated they intended to apply the knowledge acquired in their professional settings, suggesting that the programme fostered practical skills that can lead to tangible changes.
- 88% found the programme useful overall. Many highlighted the practical applications of the training, noting that the methodologies could be directly integrated into their existing projects.
- 70% of participants rated their achievement of the programme's learning objectives as "good" or "excellent" indicating a strong sense of accomplishment.
- Pre-training evaluations showed that 55% of attendees considered their knowledge of gender equality to be "fair". In contrast, post-training evaluations indicated that 80% rated their knowledge as "good" or "excellent". This transformation underscores the programme's impact on enhancing participants' understanding and confidence in the subject matter.

While the programme achieved many of its objectives, participants provided constructive feedback for future iterations. Common suggestions included increasing the number of inperson sessions to foster deeper discussions and improving the accessibility of training materials. These insights will be invaluable for refining future programmes and ensuring an even more effective learning environment.

The overall satisfaction rate stood at 90%, with participants expressing gratitude for the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue and learning. This high level of satisfaction reflects the programme's success in creating a supportive and enriching atmosphere for all attendees.

In summary, the programme effectively enhanced knowledge and skills related to gender equality and women's empowerment. The feedback and measurable outcomes underscore its relevance and impact. Addressing the proposed improvements will further refine the programme, ensuring greater engagement and lasting results. Participants' eagerness to apply their learning reflects the programme's potential to inspire meaningful change in their communities.





Lessons Learned

The 2024 cycle illuminated opportunities and challenges for future iterations of the GEWE programme.

- The ever-growing network of government officials in different countries creates a multiplier effect for the future.
- Course content that focuses on practical application of theory is valuable to the participants.
- Combining self-paced e-learning and live webinars improves programme access and enriches the learning experience.
- Adding structured live sessions or incorporating a hybrid modality may be needed to overcome the limits of online learning.
- Pre-emptive collaboration with local institutions may be needed to anticipate country-level political instability and disruptions. The political and social instability in certain regions significantly influenced the participation levels in the programme, especially from Jordan.

Recommendations

The identified opportunities and challenges and feedback from participants and experts lead us to the following recommendations.

- Consider a hybrid learning methodology in future phases that combine the ease and flexibility of the online self-paced courses with valuable human interaction of in-person meetings and a final group presentation event, where participants can share their work and be recognized for their efforts.
- Increase interactive sessions and use more interactive examples and best practices.
- Implement a training of trainers programme so that the learnings through the training can be cascaded to others.
- Scale up the course to other Arabic-speaking countries and develop regional networks.





Programme Overview

UNITAR Hiroshima Office – Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) programme was created to support the progressive achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. The gender-equality training programmes are customized for government officials in the Middle East and North Africa region, based on the baseline and needs assessment among the intended participants of each programme.

In 2021, the first GEWE programme was launched. The "Gender Empowerment Now! Building the capacity of government officials in Lebanon and Jordan" programme, Cycle One, aimed to leverage the competencies, professional and personal skills of government officials in the two countries to act as advocates and leaders of change in their communities and affiliated public institutions, towards achieving gender equality and mainstreaming gender at all levels.

In this introductory phase, participants from Jordan and Lebanon learned the foundations, definitions and conventions of gender equality, gender and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the United Nations 1325 Resolution on Women, Peace and Security. It was designed to meet the identified needs to support the two countries' efforts to operationalize their national action plans on women, peace and security.

The advanced phase of Gender Empowerment Now!, Cycle Two, was held in 2022 to further boost the knowledge and gender-sensitivity skills of the cohort from the Cycle One introductory phase. In this phase, the participants learned how to use frameworks, tools and skills on gender mainstreaming in government institutions, policies, programmes and projects, so that they could operationalize what they learned through their work and institutions.

The 2024 Gender Empowerment Now! Programme

The Gender Empowerment Now! – Cycle Four brought together a new cohort of government officials from three countries: Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. It trained them on practical ways to mainstream gender into government policies and projects, introducing them to the scope of gender mainstreaming, toolkits and mechanisms that they can adapt to operationalize gender indicators and guidelines in projects and policies at all levels in their countries.

To help participants use what they learned, they were placed in country teams from the beginning and worked together to design an action plan for a gender-mainstreaming project that exists in their ministries/countries. UNITAR built strong partnerships with the national councils of women in the participating countries so that the councils may mentor the participants – where possible – or supervise the participating government bodies as they implement their action plans.





The diverse backgrounds of the participants from three countries enriched the networking and online discussions. Participants shared their experiences, challenges and successes, and helped others replicate those successes in their own contexts. To sustain these networks beyond the training, UNITAR enrolled the participants in an online alumni management system, which will help them stay connected and continue exchanging their expertise and experiences. UNITAR will also invite alumni to future cycles of the programme as coaches and mentors, who will help new learners enrich their understanding and learning. These steps will expand the networks beyond each learning cohort and help create a sustainable network of gender champions in the region.

The programme was delivered in Arabic.

Participants

Twenty-nine participants (24 women and 5 men) completed the 2024 programme. They were all mid- to senior-level government officials, from Iraq (15 participants), Jordan (1) and Lebanon (13). The participation from **Jordan ended low due to the** notable political shifts and social tensions, which created administrative and procedural delays, and extensive reviews of the programme content to ensure alignment with updated national guidelines. They were in positions that qualified them to act as advocates and change leaders for gender equality and gender mainstreaming in all government sectors, policies and projects.

Participants came from a wide array of governmental institutions from the countries such as:

- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply
- Ministry of Labor
- Ministry of Local Administration
- Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
- Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs
- Ministry of Social Affairs
- Ministry of Social Development
- Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
- Ministry of Transportation
- Center for Educational Research and Development (CRDP)
- National Commission for Lebanese Women
- National Institute of Administration





Objectives

The three goals of the programme were to:

- Build government officials' capacity and skills to understand gender mainstreaming and gender-equality principles and foundations.
- Equip them with the tools, know-how and practical frameworks that can help them implement what they learned in their respective fields of work and institutions.
- **Familiarize them with the structure of the results chain framework** as a foundation to design, implement and follow up on any intervention.

Structure and Methodology

Over 10 weeks, participants learned through a combination of on-demand self-paced ecourses and live webinars with experts in the field, as well as prepared their capstone projects. Participants also received mentoring throughout the course.

Self-paced e-learning courses

On EdApp, a micro-learning platform, participants completed a self-paced course designed to give a solid grounding

The topics were further elaborated during the webinars, and the tools introduced in the course were practiced later in the capstone project.

Live webinars

As the participants progressed through the EdApp courses, they engaged in a series of four comprehensive webinars, each designed to deepen their understanding of gender mainstreaming and enhance practical skills. These webinars included the following components:

- **Expert lectures**: Subject matter experts shared their knowledge on gender mainstreaming tools and resource mobilization.
- **Preparatory group work and lectures**: Based on what they learned from the lectures on the design of gender-sensitive and gender-responsive interventions, participants engaged in group work to develop actionable strategies aligned with gender equity guidelines.

These webinars not only imparted theoretical knowledge but also promoted active participation, group discussions and peer learning. Participants reflected on and discussed the course content and shared their experiences, including challenges faced, best practices implemented and opportunities identified.

Capstone project

Participants were assigned to country groups to design a gender mainstreaming intervention for their country. The aim of the capstone project was to bridge theory and practice, where participants translate what they learned into tangible work that can be operationalized in their respective institutions.





Strategic Alignment

Sustainable Development Goals

In accordance with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, this programme will meaningfully contribute to the following:



This project is directly related to **SDG 5: Gender Equality**, which focuses on the attainment of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls by building government officials' understanding, capacity and networks to develop and

implement a gender-mainstreaming approach in their institutions to achieve gender equality.

The training programme is also in alignment with the following SDGs:



Goal 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries

10.2 By 2030 empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.



Goal 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions

16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels.





Outcomes

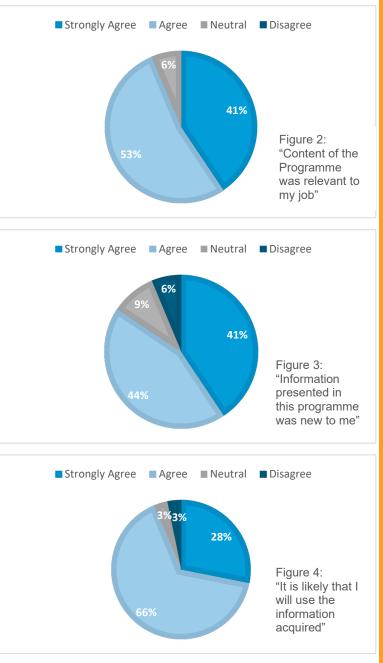
The outcomes of the programme were measured through a post-programme survey that participants completed on the last day. This survey assessed UNITAR's standard evaluation indicators (job relevance, new information, intent to use, and overall usefulness). Additionally, it evaluated the extent to which participants met learning objectives, the effectiveness of the methodologies used, and changes in knowledge from before to after the programme.

ITAR Evaluation Indicators

Job relevance evaluates to what extent the programme was relevant to the participant's professional roles. Participants were asked whether they agreed with the statement "The content of the programme was relevant to my job." Participants overwhelmingly indicated that the programme content was highly relevant to their professional contexts: **85%** of attendees agreed that the topics covered resonated deeply with their work in addressing women's issues.

New information evaluates to what extent the programme imparted new knowledge to the participants and was assessed by the statement "The information presented in this programme was new to me." A substantial majority, **78%**, reported gaining new insights that enhanced their understanding of gender equality. This indicates that the programme successfully introduced concepts and perspectives that participants had not previously encountered, enriching their knowledge base and equipping them to tackle the complex challenges in their work.

Intent to use evaluates to what extent the participants intend to use their newly acquired knowledge in the future and was assessed by the statement "It is likely that I will use the information acquired." 83% of respondents indicated that they intended to apply the knowledge acquired to their professional settings. This is a promising

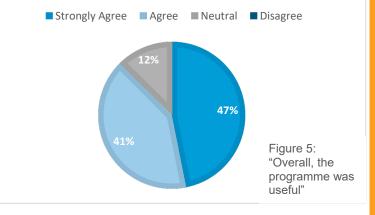






outcome, as it suggests that the programme is fostering practical skills that can lead to tangible changes in participants' organizations and communities.

Overall usefulness evaluates to what extent the participants see the programme as useful and was assessed with the statement "Overall, the programme was useful", with **88%** of participants finding it beneficial. Many highlighted the practical applications of the training, noting that the methodologies could be directly integrated into their existing projects.



The responses to job relevance, intent to use, and overall usefulness exceeded the

75% positive feedback target, demonstrating that the programme met its intended learning objectives. It provided participants with foundational and practical knowledge they can apply in their work and institutions.

Learning Outcomes

In terms of their learning, 70% of participants rated their achievement of the programme's learning objectives as 7/10 or higher, indicating a strong sense of accomplishment. There was a significant shift in knowledge: pre-training, 55% of participants rated their knowledge of gender equality as "fair", whereas post-training, 80% rated it as "good" or "excellent". This reflects the programme's success in enhancing participants' understanding and confidence in gender-equality topics.

Relevance of Learning Objectives to Needs and Extent Learning Goals Were Achieved

The participants were asked to evaluate the relevance of the learning objectives to their needs and the extent to which they achieved their learning goals. Below is a synthesized analysis of the feedback:

85% of respondents found that the learning objectives aligned with their roles, particularly those working in gender-focused positions in Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon. One participant noted that the programme fit well with the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda¹, a set of United Nations Security Council resolutions that aims to prevent war and promote gender equality and women's leadership.

78% of participants highlighted the value of the programme in helping them develop new skills and improve their understanding of gender-equality tools that are relevant to their work

¹ https://dppa.un.org/en/women-peace-and-security





80% of participants felt they had achieved the learning goals. Some explicitly stated that the training equipped them with new knowledge and tools for gender mainstreaming, which they plan to implement in their institutions.

90% of participants acknowledged several practical skills they acquired through the programme, such as:

- Analysing gender-related issues within their institutions
- Strategizing for gender equality in daily operations and decision-making processes
- Learning innovative ways to engage and empower women
- Improving their capacity to deliver gender-sensitive training within their organizations

88% of participants appreciated the interactive and insightful nature of the training, especially the focus on innovative approaches and how the course prompted them to think creatively. One participant highlighted the wide understanding of gender empowerment and development they gained through the sessions.

Knowledge, Skills and Competencies: Before and After

Participants were asked to evaluate their knowledge, skills and competencies concerning each learning objective before and after the training. Here's a synthesis of their feedback:

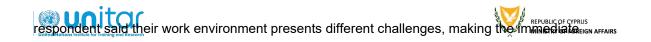
85% of respondents reported a significant improvement in their understanding of women's issues and gender equality. Some participants said they acquired new knowledge of critical standards to be considered in a workplace. They said that while they had a general awareness of the subject before the training, their knowledge became more profound after the course, especially regarding the intricacies of gender issues.

75% of participants indicated that the training contributed to their personal development, helping them achieve specific learning objectives and competencies. Several respondents indicated post-training that their skills improved notably. They now feel more capable of discussing gender issues and explaining concepts like gender mainstreaming in their professional environments.

One participant said that after the training, they could fluently discuss course themes, demonstrating a substantial improvement in communication and application of gender-related knowledge. They highlighted how they could now organize training sessions to educate colleagues about gender-related topics, a skill they lacked prior to the training.

70% stated that they now have a better understanding of fundamental gender concepts and how to apply them in their daily work or organizational policies. This includes the ability to analyse gender issues in policies and programmes and to design strategies that incorporate gender equality in everyday operations.

65% of the participants expressed satisfaction with the training content. Some suggested a need for more practical application. A few noted that while they had acquired theoretical knowledge, implementing these in real-world scenarios was still a challenge. One



application of what they learned more difficult. However, they still appreciated the knowledge gained.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the programme, participants:

- Understand the steps to apply a gender-mainstreaming approach/strategy within their fields of work and institutions.
- Understand the different applicable frameworks and tools for gender mainstreaming and how to use them.
- Develop essential leadership capabilities and become catalyst for transforming gender empowerment.
- Adopt gender-sensitive behaviour in their personal and professional contexts.

Feedback for Future Improvements

Many respondents expressed a preference for in-person sessions to allow for more interactive discussions, deeper understanding and immediate feedback. This sentiment was echoed in both the Arabic and English comments. Some participants suggested in-person conferences and meetings, both locally and internationally.

Increasing the practical applications was also a common suggestion, as participants felt they would benefit from more hands-on experience to reinforce their theoretical knowledge and help them demonstrate the added value of gender mainstreaming in real-life contexts.

There was a strong desire for more interaction among participants to learn from each other's backgrounds, experiences and professional roles. Several respondents suggested organizing more online discussions or webinars to promote cultural exchange and knowledge-sharing.

Some participants emphasized the importance of continuing gender advocacy efforts and highlighted the need for further awareness about gender issues, especially in contexts where such concepts are misunderstood or opposed.

There was also a call for more awareness campaigns and trainings to focus on how gender equality supports broader societal and individual rights, rather than being associated with controversial topics such as same-sex marriage.





Conclusion

The training programme received overall positive feedback, with participants reporting increased awareness and understanding of gender-related issues. The content was highly relevant to their roles, and the skills and knowledge gained were seen as applicable in their work environments. Suggestions for improvement include incorporating more practical, project-based activities to strengthen the learning experience.

In summary, the programme effectively enhanced knowledge and skills related to gender equality and women's empowerment. The feedback and measurable outcomes underscore its relevance and impact. Addressing the proposed improvements will further refine the programme, ensuring greater engagement and lasting results. Participants' eagerness to apply their learning reflects the programme's potential to inspire meaningful change in their communities.

Lessons Learned

The 2024 cycle illuminated opportunities and challenges for future iterations of the GEWE programme.

Opportunities

The ever-growing network of government officials in different countries creates a multiplier effect for the future.

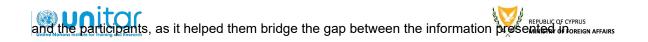
The programme participants had the opportunity to engage with like-minded colleagues from various governmental bodies from the three countries. Participants expressed their appreciation for the strong networks they built with newfound allies through the open discussions, reflections and sharing of real challenges and best practices and models to address them, given their respective national contexts.

Building this type of network can sustain the multiplier effect intended from our programme and builds strong connections among stakeholders that could support future projects and partnerships with the participating countries.

Course content that focuses on practical application of theory is valuable to the participants.

Participant feedback was very positive about the course content and the wealth of information provided – not only the theoretical information but, most importantly, the applicable toolkit and guide on gender mainstreaming, which participants said they can use in their work.

The final capstone project received a lot of positive feedback from the national coordinators



the lessons and the actual implementation challenges, and practice designing robust interventions that can respond to and mitigate any potential risks.

Combining self-paced e-learning and live webinars improves programme access and enriches the learning experience.

The online modality allowed more people from different countries to join the programme, since the course content and the webinars could be accessed from anywhere via mobile phones. The self-paced learning also gave participants more flexibility to fit the course into their busy schedules.

In order to mitigate the lack of in-person interaction among participants, we scheduled the webinars to come after participants completed each section of the self-paced lessons, so the participants could discuss and reflect on what they learned, express their views and ask questions. In addition, we invited experts to share insights about key topics.

Challenges

Adding structured live sessions or incorporating a hybrid modality may be needed to overcome the limits of online learning.

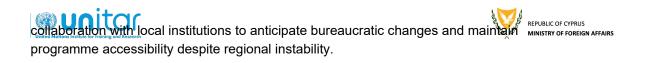
The flexible, online self-paced format allowed participants to access materials when it suited them and to move through the course at their own speed. However, it also presented challenges for engagement and interaction. Additionally, more engaging, hands-on experiences like group exercises and role-playing are also harder to replicate online.

While keeping the accessibility of the online format, adding structured live sessions or taking a hybrid approach with in-person sessions could provide the best of both worlds: flexibility and the benefits of real-time interaction, making for a more connected and engaging learning experience.

Preemptive collaboration with local institutions may be needed to anticipate countrylevel political instability and disruptions.

The political and social instability in certain regions significantly influenced the participation levels in the programme. **Jordan**, in particular, experienced notable political shifts and social tensions, which created administrative and procedural delays. In addition, heightened sensitivity around gender and equality topics led to extensive reviews of the programme content to ensure alignment with updated national guidelines. This often slowed down approval times and introduced an added layer of complexity for participants and organizers alike. Consequently, many Jordanian professionals faced delays or were unable to participate, leading to a noticeable reduction in their representation in the programme.

This combination of administrative roadblocks and heightened content scrutiny illustrates how political instability and evolving social climates can pose challenges to programme participation. Efforts to adapt the programme for future participants may involve preemptive







Recommendations

The identified opportunities and challenges and feedback from participants and experts lead us to the following recommendations.

- Consider a hybrid learning methodology in future phases that combine the ease and flexibility of the online self-paced courses with valuable human interaction of in-person meetings and a final group presentation event, where participants can share their work and be recognized for their efforts.
- Increase interactive sessions and use more interactive examples and best practices.
- Implement a training of trainers programme so that the learnings through the training can be cascaded to others.
- Scale up the course to other Arabic-speaking countries and develop regional networks.





Annexes

Annex I: Programme Agenda

WEEKS	MODULES	COMPLETED BY
Weeks 1-8	Modules 1 to 6	25 June – 19 Aug
Weeks 9-10	Capstone project – Individual and group work, mentoring and coaching	20 Aug– 2 Sep

Webinars

A number of webinars were held during the course period, where we hosted renowned experts and opened a space for participants to share their experiences, best practices, challenges and how to overcome them.

WEEKS	ΤΟΡΙΟ	DATE	TIME
Week1	Introductory webinar	Tuesday, 25 June 2024	11 AM – 1 PM (Beirut/Amma n/ Baghdad time)
Week2	Resource mobilization expert session	Tuesday, 23 July 2024	11 AM – 1 PM (Beirut/Amma n/ Baghdad time)
Week3	Gender empowerment expert session	Wednesday, 21 Aug 2024	11 AM – 1 PM (Beirut/Amma n/ Baghdad time)
Week4	Project follow-up and closing session	Thursday, 12 Sep 2024	11 AM – 1 PM (Beirut/Amma n/ Baghdad time)





Annex II: Contribution to the 10 Core Values of UNITAR Division for Prosperity

	ADDITIONAL EXPLANATION	RESULTS
(1) Generate change agents		
Number of people trained		43
Intensity of Training	Number of hours engaged (e.g., 100 hours). Type of training (hybrid, online, f2f)	10 weeks of self-paced online lessons (EdApp: 9 weeks, 4 webinars: 8 hours, Group Work: and a final group work presentation: 3 weeks preparation)
(2) Engage in coalition buildin	Ig	
Disaggregated data by:		
Stage of country development	How many participants are from industrialized vs. developing countries? How many from LDCs/SIDS?	All 37 participants come from Developing countries
Urban vs Rural	How many from the capital vs. others	NA Mostly urban centralized in government institutions in the capital
(3) Build partnership		
Number of partnerships	How many partnerships?	3
Quality of partnership	Global, regional, or local organizations?	3 national
	To enhance substance or financial contribution	Substance and financial contribution
(4) Boost relevance		
Feedback from participants	Use relevant quotes from participants	In the report





(5) Enhance contextualization	ADDITIONAL EXPLANATION	RESULTS
Number and quality of coaches/mentors	How many coaches/mentors were engaged	2
	How many coaches/mentors were local or regional vs external?	All coaches and mentors were local/ regional
(6) Promote gender equality		
Number of female participants	How many and percentage	(81%) were female
Number of participants who completed the modules	How many and percentage	29 participants completed the modules.
Gender marking	Give a rating from 0 to 3 using the following criteria.	3
	Gender-markers 0 – Outputs/Projects that are not expected to contribute noticeably to gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW) 1 – Outputs/Projects that will contribute in some way to gender equality but not significantly 2 – Outputs/Projects that have gender equality as a significant objective 3 – Outputs/Projects that have gender equality as princip objective	
(7) Foster innovation		
Diversity of modes of delivery	Short description of what innovative modes were introduced	None
Adoption of innovative adult learning methodologies	Short description of what innovative adult	EdApp on cell phone and computers for the ease and





	ADDITIONAL EXPLANATION	RESULTS
Quality of partnerships with local stakeholders	Short description	Participants shared their experiences in their local contexts on the professional and personal level in integrating gender sensitivity and responsiveness. The participatingcountries have provided a comprehensive support for liaison and coordination to make sure that the project objectives and framework is being implemented in a timelyand efficient manner, while attending to the contextual challenges.
Quality of the action plans	Short description of final outputs produced by the participants if any such as action plans	Participants' groups drafted a gender mainstreaming intervention following the guidelines provided in the course and the mentorship provided from UNITAR and the national councils of women, which could hopefully be implemented in their respective public institutions.
(9) Stimulate sustainable dev	velopment	
Number of participants who successfully completed the SDG modules	Same as left	No SDG modules provided.