



Evaluation Summaries

Evaluation: Strengthening the National Machinery for Advancing Women's Employment in Yemen

Quick Facts

Country: Yemen

Final Evaluation: March 2006

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Employment Policy

Evaluation Management:

Evaluation Team: Nadia Taher, external evaluator

Project Start: March 2004

Project End: July 2006

Project Code: RAB/04/50/NET

Donor: The Netherlands (1,411,698 US\$)

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

“Strengthening the National Machinery for Advancing Women’s Employment in Yemen” is an ILO Technical Cooperation project funded by the Dutch Government with the aim of promoting women’s employment in Yemen by focusing on the creation of capacity in the Directorate of Women Workers (DGWW) in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MOSAL).

The project had the following four objectives:

1. Building the capacity of DGWW in MOSAL (at Central and Governorate levels).
2. Establishing coordination and networking mechanisms between DGWW and other related governmental and non-governmental organizations whose

mandate includes addressing women workers issues in Yemen.

3. Commission qualitative research that examines in depth, and from a gender perspective, the conditions of working women at work and outside it.
4. Developing and maintaining a databank and disseminating data and information on women workers in Yemen.

Present situation of project

In the project design and implementation, the project team took a holistic approach. It did not only focus on strengthening the DGWW, but also worked on the institutional building of other directorates of MOSAL, alongside organisations with the mandate to address employment issues in Yemen. This work was done through establishing dialogue, coordination and cooperation, in order to mainstream responsibility for gender issues in employment.

Purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation was primarily based on a well tested methodology that uses at its core a conceptual tool for the diagnosis and operationalisation of gender mainstreaming. In its application to diagnosis, the tool examines the extent to which gender has been institutionalised at the different levels of interaction between the state, the market and civil society: national, local or programmatic.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation was based on the following data collection techniques: a desk review of

project documents, interviews with key actors and representatives, meetings with DGWW staff, de-briefings with representatives of MOSAL and DGWW staff and discussion of ideas for a Phase II of the Project.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Despite its short life span, Phase I of the Project is a demonstration of ‘good practice’ for the following reason: there is a clear and realistic vision about the project focus; there is a clear and systematic methodology in the formulation and design of the project which has been implemented effectively and efficiently; it reflects understanding of the role of Women National machineries as catalysts as opposed to implementers of women projects; it is effective in building alliances and opening up venues for cooperation; and it works on the basis of cross-fertilisation between different interventions leading to the creation of synergies and value added.

Within the time frame and resources available in Phase I, the project has succeeded in laying down the necessary foundations to achieving institutional building. However, these foundations need consolidation before it is possible to say that the ultimate aim can be met: that is, that organisations involved with women’s issues in employment can truly address the huge challenge of meeting women’s demands for their rights and for gender equality.

In the view of the evaluator, in its approach, methodology and impact, the project could be seen as an example of ‘good practice’. This is reflected in the catalytic role played by the project team to mobilise the institutions responsible for employment in order to take ownership and responsibility for both women and men. However, given its short life span of one and an half years, the project will need to be consolidated in a second phase. “Many donor funded projects want to get away from the bureaucracy by creating their own space separate from government institutions. This Project has located itself firmly within the Ministry. It has maintained its uniqueness and flexibility while not being separate. The members of the team work truly like a unit.

There is no struggle and no negativity between them. They are efficient, effective and well organised”. This was an opinion expressed by a senior MOSAL staff member. Respect for and admiration of the project team and what it has achieved in 18 months were central to the comments of many interviewees.

In the view of the evaluator, very few women directorates/units have been able to achieve much success in their work because they lose the focus of their *raison d’être*. Women national machineries can only be effective if their mandate clearly remains as a catalyst not an implementer to mainstream gender in the sector in which they operate. This involves working towards strengthening the commitment to gender issues and providing the support for the translation of this commitment into action. This is what all the activities of the project are clearly pursuing and will need to consolidate and strengthen with additional strategies in Phase II.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

Following, 5 main recommendations will be presented. Many of these recommendations build on the work that has already started in Phase I. Before getting into this discussion it is important to emphasise here the reasons for the need for this project to continue its work.

Continue and consolidate the work that brings together DGWW with the different MOSAL Directorates and other partner organisations.

Consolidate and advance efforts towards gender mainstreaming in MOSAL and partner organisations.

Strengthen the media campaign focused on women’s work in Yemen from a gender perspective.

Commission qualitative research that examines in depth and from a gender perspective, the conditions of working women at work and beyond.

Advocate for gender issues in work at the policy and legislative levels.