



Arab Women
Parliamentarian
EVALUATION
REPORT . . .

UNIFEM

ARAB WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS PROJECT 41670 (2005-2009)

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

20 September 2009

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Acronyms

AIPU	Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union
ASRO	Arab States Regional Office
AWO	Arab Women Organization
AWP	Arab Women Parliamentarian
CAWTAR	Centre for Arab Women Training and Research
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FDF	Family Development Foundation (UAE)
FNC	Federal National Council (UAE)
GWU	General Women's Union (UAE)
IIDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
JNCW	Jordanian National Commission for Women
JNFW	Jordanian National Forum for Women
NCFUWI	National Committee for Follow-Up on Women's Issues (Lebanon)
NCLW	National Council for Lebanese Women (Lebanon)
NCW	National Council for Women (Egypt)
SCW	Supreme Council for Women (Bahrain)
SCFA	Syrian Commission for Family Affairs
SGUW	Syrian General Union for Women
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The UNIFEM Arab States Regional Office (ASRO) Arab Women's Parliamentarian (AWP) Project is one among various activities supporting women's political empowerment in the Arab Region. Funded by the Governments of Sweden and the United Kingdom, the Project originally covered the period January 2005-December 2007, and was then extended at no cost to 2009.

The AWP Project focused on three specific objectives:

- Establishment of Arab Women's Parliamentarian's Forum.
- Gender sensitization for Arab Parliamentarians.
- National incubators for prospective/future Arab women leaders.

Over time, there have been some changes in respect of participating countries and national partners. Currently there are eight Arab countries and 12 national partners participating in the AWP Project:

- *Bahrain*: The Supreme Council for Women (SCW)
- *Egypt*: National Council for Women (NCW)
- *Jordan*: Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW)
- *Kuwait*: Women's Cultural and Social Society (WCSS)
- *Lebanon*: Hariri Foundation, National Committee for Follow-Up of Women's Issues (NCFWI), National Council for Lebanese Women (NCLW).
- *Morocco*: Democratic Association of Moroccan Women (ADFM)
- *Syria*: Syrian General Union for Women (SGUW), Syrian Commission for Family Affairs (SCFA)
- *United Arab Emirates (UAE)*: General Women's Union (GWU), Family Development Foundation (FDF).

As per the Terms of Reference (see Annex 1), the aim of the final evaluation is to:

- Evaluate the extent to which the AWP Project has contributed to outcomes stated in the logical framework.
- Consolidate lessons from experience, identify good practices and make recommendations to guide future UNIFEM programming.
- Review project management and provide recommendations for the management of future projects, including a possible second phase of the AWP Project.

More specifically, the objective of the final evaluation of the AWP Project is to review and assess the overall project goals and activities including: institutional capacity to strengthen Arab women's political participation as well as capacity of individual women leaders; challenges faced by the project implementing partners in the eight countries; coordination structures and networks established through the project; mainstreaming of gender and human rights; involvement of men in the cause of women's political rights; and dissemination of knowledge and information. The evaluation will also draw lessons learnt from project implementation.

The evaluation process and methodology included the formulation of an Inception Report; telephone interviews with the two donors (Sweden and the U.K. in July 2009); development and implementation of a survey through questionnaires;¹ field visits to three AWP countries - Jordan (also location of UNIFEM/ASRO, 26-31 July 2009),

¹ Due to insufficient responses to the questionnaires distributed to stakeholders via UNIFEM/ASRO, it was not possible for the Evaluation Team to carry out a statistically valid analysis.

Lebanon (2-7 August 2009), and the UAE (1-5 August 2009) and three mission country reports (see Annexes 7, 8 and 9); telephone interviews with stakeholders in the five countries not included in field visits (last week July 2009 from Amman, see Annex 3); SWOT (strengths/weaknesses/ opportunities/threats) analysis via a tele-meeting in July 2009 from Amman with the AWP Project national coordinators; and the full report of the evaluation.

Desk Review

The preliminary desk review identified key issues affecting women's political participation and empowerment (a summary of findings is included in the Inception Report). The Evaluation Team's further reviews of UNIFEM and other sources of documentation amplified the information on challenges faced by women entering politics and running in elections, as well as the constraints they may face within political parties (see Annex 2). Media articles on Arab women's participation shed light on the various discourses on, and the increasing visibility of, women's presence in the political arena, including discussion of the women's quota, and of women participating in national and municipal elections.

Relevance of AWP Project

The AWP Project design is based on potentially mutually reinforcing inter-linkages conducive to promoting a holistic approach to women's political empowerment. The original timeline of the Project (2005-2007) coincided with elections in a number of countries (see Annex 6) and, as such, it was both relevant and timely.

The relevance of the AWP Project is also largely supported by the responses of stakeholders in the three country case studies. Overall, the Project is deemed to have been relevant since it coincided with political will at the highest level to promote women's political participation. It was also relevant in terms of providing funding support, as well as contributing to the mobilization of women through the training activities. Responses from stakeholders interviewed by telephone largely support the above conclusions. Moreover, AWP Project objectives were relevant in terms of contributing to women's political empowerment in general, and in some cases, to the success of female parliamentary candidates in recent elections.

Factors Affecting Implementation Process

Any discussion of the AWP Project's efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability needs to take into account that UNIFEM/ASRO does not have country-level offices and presence in six of the eight countries concerned. Where national coordinators are in place, they are either housed in the premises of the national partner or are afforded a work station in UNDP. These factors should have been taken into consideration in developing the AWP Project. Though the Project was commendable in terms of its holistic approach, in hindsight it was too ambitious in terms of planned outputs and expected achievements.

Efficiency

Efficiency has been affected by the UNIFEM/ASRO management of the AWP Project. From what could be ascertained from the review of various mission reports of the participating countries, as well as from discussions with national coordinators, the UNIFEM/ASRO senior management in place at the time appears to have 'micro-managed'

the Project.² In addition, over time the regional dimension appears to have become weaker, and in fact the Project came to be managed as a multi-country intervention rather than as a regional project *per se*.

A further systemic factor was the senior management decision that the Regional AWP Project Coordinator, who had the task of overseeing all eight participating countries, would also assume the role/function of national coordinator in Jordan and Lebanon, as well as eventually in Bahrain and Kuwait. Since the person concerned was only expected to accord 20 per cent of her time to the AWP Project, this not surprisingly affected the efficiency of project implementation. Furthermore, human resources constraints with implications for the time available for country visits were not counter-balanced by a system of cost-effective tele-conferences.

Limited efficiency in respect of project implementation was further compounded by the fact that UNIFEM/ASRO does not have an effective documentation and monitoring system in place, and indeed there is no monitoring & evaluation post in the regional office. Thus monitoring of the AWP Project is confined to the required UN ATLAS reporting on expenditure by activity, but not matched by systematic monitoring of project activities and outputs.

Moreover, neither UNIFEM Headquarters/NY nor the donors appear to have addressed the reality that, during project implementation, sight was lost of the first and second AWP Project objectives. Project activities in all eight countries became blurred with the third objective which was reduced to capacity-building. Nor does this appear to have been flagged by the Project Steering Committee.

Over time, there was 'slippage' in understanding of concepts. Terms took on meanings that were narrower than those included in the Project Document. 'Forum' came to be used interchangeably with 'symposium' which after 2006 was not held as a regular annual event or produced the planned website. With the apparent exception of Egypt, nor have national chapters been established in the participating countries which were to have been linked to the regional forum. In fact, by the fourth annual AWP Project report activities under this objective are listed by sub-region and by country rather than regionally and the term 'forum' began to be used to describe sub-regional or country-specific meetings. Furthermore, the planned AWP Project website - which was planned to be linked to the Arab Women Connect website created under an earlier UNIFEM/ASRO project funded by the Netherlands, the domain of which has since lapsed - was not established.

As far as the Evaluation Team could ascertain, no regional work plan was developed for the initial three years of project implementation that systematically listed the verification of indicators per project activity and linked to national work plans. The Project Logical Framework does not appear to have been subsequently used as a management tool to measure actual achievements against planned activities, and pinpoint gaps in implementation.

The less than optimal project efficiency at UNIFEM/ASRO level, as well as slippage in the

2- The term 'micro-management' implies that senior management in UNIFEM ASRO appears to have generally played a role in country-level project implementation; for example, by directly contracting studies, or indicating a timeline for activities then requesting partners to carry them out, rather than requesting partners to develop their own three-year AWP Project work plan. Micro-management was not surprisingly particularly evident where there was no National Coordinator in place, and instead the UNIFEM/ASRO Regional Coordinator also functioned/doubled up as national coordinator.

original project concepts and narrowing down of project activities mainly to capacity-building, had various implications at the national level. There are variations in respect of efficiency of project implementation at the country-level, to some extent linked to the absence of a National Coordinator. In effect, efficiency has also been affected by the technical capacity of UNIFEM/ASRO to provide appropriate guidance to national counterparts to produce baseline studies, interpret project objectives, develop coherent work plans and ensuring that a viable monitoring and reporting system is in place.

Effectiveness

Some positive results are discernible at the regional level, such as inclusion of non-AWP Project countries in some sub-regional and national-level activities. This has been effective in disseminating project activities to a wider network and audience in the Arab Region, and has also served to link the AWP Project with similar activities supporting Arab women's political participation and empowerment.

A positive aspect highlighted by various stakeholders interviewed by the Evaluation Team was the training of trainer activity implemented in 2005 in Amman/Jordan with participants from the countries concerned. This is deemed to have been an effective way of supporting the quality of training through skilled trainers and ensuring that the training materials developed by the AWP Project would be put to good use.

Measured in terms of media coverage - the Evaluation Team reviewed three bound volumes of media reports on UNIFEM/ASRO regional as well as national-level activities - the AWP Project can be said to have been effective in disseminating news on aims and activities.

Moreover, as the case of Jordan reveals, UNIFEM/ASRO responded to electoral events; for example, seizing the opportunity of municipal election reforms in Jordan. It cooperated with national partners in widening project activities to include training of women participating in the municipal elections. Training materials were adapted to take the municipal level context into account. Indeed, a number of women who participated in the AWP Project training won seats or were appointed in local councils.

But there are also drawbacks, such as the reality that effectiveness in terms of value added through regional networking has not been achieved in the way planned in the AWP Project. Though national partners in the eight countries concerned may be actively involved in other regional activities and networks, for example the Arab Women Organization (AWO) and the Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR), as well as the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), to date there is no functioning regional Arab Women Parliamentary Forum in place.

At the national level, the AWP Project has in some ways and to varying extent contributed to enhancing and strengthening women's capacities to actively participate in the political process. For some national partners such effectiveness is perceived to be part of the overall achievement of their organization in mobilizing public opinion to support women's political empowerment. For other national partners, effectiveness is measured by the clear links between training of potential women candidates and their success in achieving national or local level political positions. Partners also perceive training of women in leadership and decision-making skills as contributing to the effectiveness of the Project.

Effectiveness can also be discerned in terms of choice of national partners. Where such

partners play a leading role in promoting and supporting women's empowerment and are supported at the highest political level, this may contribute to project effectiveness in terms of their outreach conducive to targeting women beyond the capital city of their respective country, and thus including a more representative cross-section of society. But where more than one national partner is involved whose focus of activities is not complementary, competition may lead to discord.

Effectiveness is also more discernible where a national coordinator is in place. The overburdening of one UNIFEM/ASRO staff to assume the role of regional as well as national coordinator for a number of countries for a fifth of her time, not surprisingly had adverse implications for the monitoring process in an organizational structure where the monitoring and reporting system was inherently weak.

At the same time, the apparent absence of a three year regional work plan covering the original timeframe of AWP project implementation (2005-2007), as well as associated budgets, also diminished project effectiveness at the national level since, as some national partners indicated, they were not always able to plan in advance. Moreover, there appears to have been a blurring between the national partners annual programme activities and the work plan for AWP Project-related activities.

In addition, although the third annual report for 2007 mentions that 'the project has placed strong emphasis on building the institutional capacity of government structures, specifically those that are responsible for the protection and promotion of women's political rights and security', and that the 'capacity of commissions for women in Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria and the UAE were strengthened in the areas of gender mainstreaming and political participation', there is no discernible evidence made accessible to the Evaluation team that such training was carried out as part of the AWP Project.

Sustainability

The slippage in concepts and terminology, the narrowing of the project focus to capacity-building, as well as the UNIFEM/ASRO organizational structure and human resource and technical constraints with implications for 'micro-management' of the AWP Project as a multi-country rather than a regional project, have all had implications for regional sustainability.

Though there is some evidence of networking at the regional level, there have also been missed opportunities, such as the failure to build and strengthen a regional forum which could have functioned as a vibrant framework promoting gender equality in the Arab Region's political arena by strategically linking Arab women and men parliamentarians, as well as other relevant stakeholders. The fact that the planned AWP Project website did not materialize is another missed opportunity. Given the reliance on donor funding for project activities, this would have been a cost-effective opportunity to contribute to strengthening regional networking at minimal cost. There has also been insufficient use of virtual linkages; for example, linking national partners, other stakeholders and national coordinators through cost-effective tele-conferences.

Moreover, neither the pertinent section in UNIFEM/Headquarters, nor the donors appear to have questioned the omission of an exit strategy in the Project Document. Neither does the final annual AWP Project report (May 2009) explicitly mention an exit strategy. A clearly defined exit strategy with an explicitly spelt out post-project

strategy, process and activities would have drawn attention to changes in project focus and implementation, as well as the weak monitoring system.

The choice of national partners participating in the AWP Project was conducive to sustainability. In all the participating countries, the selected national partners have the leadership and the commitment to continue with activities contributing to women's political participation and empowerment. Respondents indicated that they would be continuing with similar activities, including organizing meetings, training workshops, commissioning research as well as preparing and disseminating advocacy materials and organizing media campaigns.

However, a major issue affecting post-project sustainability in the eight AWP Project countries is the reality that national partners need to fundraise to support the implementation of their project activities. Even where national partners receive government support - for example, free or subsidized accommodation, subsidizing costs of events and other in-kind support - they still need to fundraise to cover the cost of implementing project activities.

Some national partners are aware of the need to 'move on', i.e. to continue to widen the focus of their activities supporting women's political empowerment. But they also pointed out that this would be more strategic if there had been a final AWP Project workshop focusing on lessons learnt and good practice on which they could build. In this respect the reality that the AWP Project has ended without a functioning regional network in place is perceived to be a lost opportunity. For other national partners 'moving on' means focusing on local level politics where in their view mainstreaming gender is an urgent priority.

In the view of some national partners, the sustainability of the AWP Project in terms of promoting visibility of female political leadership at national and local levels requires an advocacy strategy that also targets potential male supporters as well as female and male youth.

For participants in the AWP Project training - be they successful candidates, or women who wished to enhance their leadership and decision-making skills - sustainability is perceived in terms of enabling them to solve the gender-based constraints they face. For women running in elections this includes financial constraints in view of the difficulty of fund-raising. For some respondents, supporting a system of 'mentoring', i.e. for potential women candidates to have the guidance and support of a mentor, is deemed a factor contributing to sustainability.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

The desk review, meetings with stakeholders during the country missions as well as the telephone interviews, enabled the Evaluation Team to identify numerous challenges regarding the political dynamics in the Arab Region as well as UNIFEM/ASRO's organizational challenges as well as technical capacity, and the challenges faced by Arab women who are participating, or aim to participate, in the political process in their respective countries.

These challenges were also reflected in the SWOT analysis facilitated by the Evaluation Team with the National Coordinators by way of a tele-conference organized in Amman/Jordan. These elements, combined with the Evaluation Team's analysis of the

implementation process, identified lessons learnt and enabled formulation of forward-looking recommendations.

Recommendations

UNIFEM/Headquarters

- Ensure that the UNIFEM regional offices have the appropriate human resources and technical capacity to support national counterparts in interpretation of programme objectives at the national level, development of annual work plans, as well as provision of guidance in respect of selection of relevant indicators, monitoring and reporting.
- Ensure that UNIFEM regional office have the technical capacity to establish and fully exploit linkages to global and regional initiatives.
- Ensure that the timeline for planning surveys is realistic and takes into account the necessity of piloting questionnaires.

UNIFEM/ASRO

Project Design

- Prior to designing a project document, carry out a thorough needs assessment and mapping of where/how the proposed project can complement other similar activities with the aim of identifying a niche not yet being addressed by other agencies and stakeholders.
- Tailor project objectives to the reality of UNIFEM/ASRO's organizational structure and human resources capacity. Such tailoring needs to be matched by strategic collaboration with similar interventions to support synergy and value added.
- Ensure that project documents include a work plan for the whole timeline of the project which clearly identifies responsibility for carrying out regional and national level activities and that the logical framework is effectively used as a management tool.

Implementation

- Strengthen the in-house monitoring and evaluation and reporting capacity by establishing a regional M&E post.
- Ensure that an efficient documentation system is in place as part of effective monitoring and reporting.
- Establish a cost-effective system of regular tele-conferences with national partners, national coordinators and other stakeholders as part of efficient monitoring of and reporting on the project's implementation process.
- Ensure that aims and objectives of regional projects do not lose sight of the regional dimension and avoid blurring with national-level objectives. This in turn implies ensuring that national partners assume ownership of the project and are supported rather than 'micro-managed' by UNIFEM/ASRO.
- National coordinators should be in place at country level to support national partners and counterparts in assuming ownership of the project, as well as facilitating cooperation and networking with similar in-country interventions to ensure synergy and value added.
- Where more than one national partner is selected for project implementation, ensure that the selection criteria include complementarity between their activities, including their outreach to wider cross-sections of society.

Training

- Further develop the generic training materials into user-friendly training modules.
- Continue investing in the training of trainer component as part of UNIFEM/ ASRO's contribution to establishing a pool of skilled regional and national trainers.
- In view of stakeholders' interest, further support training workshops on gender

responsive budgeting, to also include women involved in local level politics.

Advocacy and Networking

- Develop a coherent regional advocacy strategy that can be adapted by national partners to their specific country context. Link the advocacy strategy with an effective maintenance of the UNIFEM/ASRO website and as a means of promoting virtual networking.
- Consider supporting a separate website for Arab women in national and local politics to be regularly updated and to serve as a clearing house for networking and information-sharing in the Arab Region.

Donors

- Require project proposals to include clear indications of the managerial and human resources capacity of the executing agency and the link with the capacity to implement planned objectives and activities.
- Require project proposals to include an exit strategy detailing measures conducive to post-project sustainability.
- Support end-of project workshops with a clear agenda of sharing lessons learnt and good practice and with the expected output of a strategic framework for further support of Arab women's political participation and empowerment. Ensure that such meetings involve both women and men to avoid marginalizing the focus of the workshops as a 'women's issue'.
- Support training workshops on gender-responsive training that target women and men in political office at both the national and local/municipal levels.

National Counterparts

- While specific projects are included in the national counterpart organization's multi-year programme and annual work plans, ensure that there is also a separate project work plan to facilitate monitoring of the implementation process.
- With support from UNIFEM/ASRO Regional Coordinator and the National Coordinator collect relevant baseline data and develop indicators against which to measure progress in project implementation.
- Support the establishment of a network of politically active women as part of developing a coherent strategy promoting women's entry in national and local elections. Link this initiative with encouragement of a mentoring system in support of women candidates.
- Develop strategies to link actual and potential women candidates at national and local levels. Where pertinent, link with developing strategies to lobby for support to women's participation in decision-making in political parties.
- Actively support the proposed website for Arab women in national and local politics by sharing news and information, and linking the website to other in-country activities supporting women's political participation.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Background

Overall, the Arab Region is ranked relatively low in terms of women's political participation, reflected in the percentage of women at national (parliament) and local (municipal) levels holding elected or appointed political positions. Indeed, female members in Arab Parliaments average 9.1 per cent compared with the global average of 18.4 per cent.³ Increasing attention is being accorded to promoting women's political participation and representation in political decision-making positions in various countries of the Arab Region. Political will, reflected in government support, as well as activities by civil society organizations and funding support by donors, have led to concerted efforts to address gender-based gaps in political participation in various Arab countries.

The UNIFEM Arab States Regional Office (ASRO) supported Arab Women's Parliamentarian (AWP) Project is one among various activities supporting women's political empowerment. As stated in the AWP Project Document, a key justification is that in spite of 'the widespread movement towards democratization in most Arab countries, women have made little progress in attaining political power in legislative bodies'. Indeed, 'the existing political institutions have contributed to a selective political culture that negatively affects women, even those who win electoral seats'. Arab countries may differ in respect of gender sensitivity of electoral laws, but the overall trend largely points to women's marginalization in the political decision-making process. There is also the reality that 'engendering governance and leadership to increase women's participation in the decision-making process that shapes their lives' remains a challenge.⁴

As per the Project Document, UNIFEM/ASRO executes the AWP Project, which is funded by the Governments of Sweden and the United Kingdom. The Project originally covered the period January 2005-December 2007 and was then extended at no cost to 2009. Its objective was to increase Arab women's participation in the decision-making process, a priority in UNIFEM's *Multi-Year Funding Framework 2004-2007*, and in UNIFEM's *Strategic Plan 2007-2011*, specifically strategic objective 4 'Achieving Gender Equality in Democratic Governance'. Furthermore the AWP Project objectives are linked with the pertinent recommendations in the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action, as well as key articles in CEDAW. These underscore the principle that progress 'in integrating women into the political processes as informed citizens, educated voters, effective advocates, and elected and appointed leaders is fundamental to strengthening democratization'.⁵

The AWP Project focuses on three specific objectives:

- Establishment of Arab Women's Parliamentarian's Forum.
- Gender sensitization for Arab Parliamentarians.
- National incubators for prospective/future Arab women leaders.

Activities for each of the above mentioned objectives are listed in the Logical Framework. In respect of the *Arab Women Parliamentarian Forum* covering regional and national activities, this includes, for example, development of baseline studies, biannual consultations, and advocacy for legal reform.⁶ Activities listed under the second objective - *gender sensitization* - include, for example, orientation sessions with Arab parliamentarians, circulation of pertinent education pamphlets, and development of a

3- IPU, 2009.

4- UNIFEM/ASRO, 2005/a, p. 6.

5- UNIFEM/ASRO, 2006/a, p. 3.

6- UNIFEM/ASRO, 2005/a, pp. 20-23.

comprehensive 'strategy to remedy current gender imbalance'.⁷ Activities listed under the third objective - *national incubators* - include, for example, conducting research 'to map safe seats to increase the chances of women candidates in winning elections', developing an integrated gender sensitization programme with appropriate modules, organizing 'one-on-one mentoring', peer-group and small group empowerment training; preparation of popular political education materials especially for grassroots women, and generating a national incubator model for replication.⁸

The Project Document originally included Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Syria and the United Arab Emirates. Currently eight Arab countries are targeted; i.e. Iraq was not included since it had already embarked on similar activities, while Oman was eventually excluded following changes in political leadership.

The Project Document lists criteria for selection of national implementing partners which includes 'their previous collaboration with UNIFEM/ASRO, their capacity to implement the project activities, and their commitment to promoting women's political empowerment'.⁹ Currently the project partners include:

- *Bahrain*: The Supreme Council for Women (SCW)
- *Egypt*: National Council for Women (NCW)
- *Jordan*: Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW)
- *Kuwait*: Women's Cultural and Social Society (WCSS)
- *Lebanon*: Hariri Foundation, National Committee for Follow-Up of Women's Issues (NCFUWI), National Council for Lebanese Women (NCLW).
- *Morocco*: Democratic Association of Moroccan Women (ADFM)
- *Syria*: Syrian General Union for Women (SGUW), Syrian Commission for Family Affairs (SCFA)
- *United Arab Emirates (UAE)*: General Women's Union (GWU), Family Development Foundation (FDF).

2. Evaluation Process

2.1 Objectives and Methodology

As per the Terms of reference (see Annex 1), the aim of the final evaluation is to:

- Evaluate the extent to which the AWP Project has contributed to outcomes stated in the logical framework.
- Consolidate lessons from experience, identify good practices and make recommendations to guide future UNIFEM programming.
- Review project management and provide recommendations for the management of future projects, including a possible second phase of the AWP Project.

More specifically, the objective of the evaluation of the AWP Project is to review and assess the overall project goals and activities including: institutional capacity to strengthen Arab women's political participation; strengthening the capacity of individual women leaders; addressing the challenges faced by the project implementing partners in the eight countries; coordination structures and networks established through the

7- UNIFEM/ASRO, 2005/a, pp. 23-24.

8- UNIFEM/ASRO, 2005/a, pp. 24-26.

9- UNIFEM/ASRO, 2005/a, p. 27. During meetings with UNIFEM/ASRO and during the country missions, the Evaluation Team realized that the list of national partners listed in the AWP Evaluation Terms of Reference required updating. The second Kuwait Partner, the Women's Affairs Committee, withdrew from the AWP Project. In Lebanon, NCFWI was the main partner; UNIFEM ASRO also worked with other organizations in implementation of specific activities. One of the original UAE partners, The Diplomatic Institute, has since closed down; FDF was included as the second implementing partner in 2007.

project; mainstreaming of gender and human rights; involvement of men in the cause of women's political rights; and dissemination of knowledge and information. The evaluation also aimed to draw lessons learnt from project implementation.¹⁰

The evaluation methodology for the AWP Project has taken into account the quality criteria identified for UNIFEM evaluation reports.¹¹ In addition, the Evaluation Team applied the principle of triangulation, ensuring that data collected from one source can be validated by information collected through alternative sources, as follows:¹²

- desk review of available sources;
- views and insights of beneficiaries and stakeholders;
- perceptions of the Evaluation Team.

The evaluation design included formulation of an Inception Report;¹³ desk review of relevant studies and other documentation (see Annex 2 for References); telephone interviews with the two donors (Sweden and the U.K., carried out in July 2009 in advance of the field visits); development and implementation of a survey through questionnaires;¹⁴ field visits to three AWP countries – Jordan (also location of UNIFEM/ASRO, 26-31 July 2009), Lebanon (2-7 August 2009) and the UAE (1-5 August 2009), and three mission country reports (attached as Annex 7, 8 and 9); telephone interviews with stakeholders in the five countries not included in field visits (see Annex 3 for list of persons interviewed); SWOT (strengths/weaknesses/ opportunities/threats) analysis via a tele-meeting from Amman with the AWP Project national coordinators (see Annex 5); and the full report of the evaluation contained in this final report.

As indicated in the AWP Inception Report, a particular constraint noted by the Evaluation Team is the fact that the majority of AWP project activities were implemented during the period 2005-2007. There is therefore the risk of limited 'institutional memory' within UNIFEM/ASRO, among national coordinators and implementing partners, as well as among participants in AWP activities and donors. A further constraint is the timing of the evaluation mission in the three selected countries, i.e. the holiday season during July and August when stakeholders might not be available to attend meetings or participate in telephone interviews. The Evaluation Team was to a certain extent able to overcome these by applying the triangulation process.

2.2 The Survey

The Evaluation Team developed questionnaires for three target groups in the eight countries concerned: national partners; participants in AWP training activities (potential or actual women candidates, other trainees interested in up-grading their leadership and decision-making skills); and the AWP Project national coordinators.

Given the short time available to the Evaluation Team to undertake the survey, it was decided that the questionnaire should consist predominantly of questions with multiple choice answers, to facilitate both completion of self-administered questions and data-processing. Qualitative data would be collected through telephone interviews with national partners and participants, to be arranged by UNIFEM/ASRO during the Evaluation Team's in-country mission in Jordan. The questionnaires were translated into Arabic by UNIFEM/ASRO, and into French by the Evaluation Team Member.

10- See the separate document on the Evaluation Terms of Reference.

11- UNEG, 2005. See also Annex 1/TOR.

12- Discussed in detail in the Inception Report.

13- See Final AWP Inception Report, 8 August 2009.

14- See Annex 1 in AWP Inception Report.

However, the effective administration of the questionnaire would have required pre-testing of the questionnaires, the compilation of lists from each country of persons who had participated in AWP project activities to provide a sample frame, and individual approach to the selected respondents. The time frame of the evaluation did not allow for pre-testing the questionnaires. Furthermore, UNIFEM/ASRO was unable to provide lists of participants in regional activities, who could be requested to participate in the survey. Instead the questionnaires were channelled by UNIFEM/ASRO through the AWP Project national coordinators and counterpart organisations, with requests to identify 20 persons in each country who participated in AWP project activities.¹⁵

Moreover, while the previously mentioned constraints could be expected to have had some effect on responses to the questionnaires, regrettably the less than optimal handling of their timely distribution by UNIFEM/ASRO also had adverse implications for implementation of the survey. This involved delays in mailing to counterpart organisations, much of which took place after the Evaluation Team's arrival in Jordan; i.e. shortly before the deadline dates for return of completed questionnaires by end July 2009), has also had adverse implications for implementation of the survey.

In the event, and in spite of extending the deadline to mid-August, too few questionnaires were returned for any valid statistical analysis to be undertaken.¹⁶ Furthermore, most of the questionnaires that were returned came from only two countries (Jordan and Syria), with one each from Lebanon, and the UAE, and two from Kuwait. Many of these were only partially filled, and the patterns of responses strongly suggest that several questionnaires were completed either in consultation between respondents or by copying sets of answers.

The Evaluation Team therefore was forced to conclude that survey responses could not be included in the analysis in the full evaluation report. However, where relevant to the analysis, specific points from individual questionnaire responses are referred to in the discussion below.

2.3 Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews were arranged by UNIFEM/ASRO and carried out by the Evaluation Team from Amman with stakeholders from Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco and Syria, and from Abu Dhabi with the stakeholder from Bahrain. No interviews could be arranged by the National Coordinator in Egypt with stakeholders from Egypt, be it national partner staff, or candidates and other participants targeted through the AWP training. As the list in Annex 2 indicates, more stakeholders from Morocco and Syria were contacted by telephone, with only one person contacted from Bahrain and Kuwait respectively. Moreover, not all of the national partner staff interviewed had direct experience of the AWP Project, with some implication for the quality of information collected by the Evaluation Team.

15- Ideally this would have meant a total of 160 questionnaires, apart from the questionnaires to national partners and national coordinators.

16 - A total of 23 were received by 17 August 2009 (the deadline was extended for a further two days). A minimum of 30 would be necessary for valid statistical analysis. Moreover, not all National Coordinators filled in the pertinent questionnaire, i.e. Egypt.

B. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

1. Desk Review: Key Issues

The desk review of selected UNIFEM studies linked to the implementation of the AWP Project presented in the Inception Report reveals the following key issues, namely the importance of:

- Including women's participation –as voters as well as candidates - in local elections, rather than confining interventions to women's participation at the national, i.e. parliamentary, level.
- Promoting women's political participation as the 'solution' to achieving good governance; rather than couching support in language which assumes women are the 'problem'.
- Linking women's political participation to legal reform in all spheres that impact on women's role and status in Arab society.
- Establishing and updating a data bank on Arab women's political participation as a basis for exchanging relevant experiences and identifying good practice.
- Mobilizing the younger generation – both female and male – in support of women's political participation.
- Addressing the stereotyping of gender roles in the media and implications for Arab women's political right to vote and be elected.
- Linking electoral reform with women's civil and other rights.
- Supporting reform of legislation affecting civil society and the effective functioning of non-governmental organizations.

As part of AWP Project-related research, UNIFEM/ASRO commissioned via its national partners in the eight countries baseline studies which – as per the Project Document – were intended to provide information on women's political participation against which to measure project achievements.¹⁷ A review of these studies on Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria and the UAE concludes that they are not strictly speaking 'baseline' studies, i.e. providing comprehensive indicators and data against which to measure and monitor project implementation.¹⁸ In fact, while they contain some valuable information, the studies differ in content and quality and do not follow the same outline or format, which renders it difficult to make comparisons.

For example, the Bahrain study includes a questionnaire answered by 375 persons representing academia, physicians, lawyers, NGO members, female and male youth, as well as 'educated housewives, yet the responses are not sex-disaggregated.¹⁹ The Jordan study includes sex disaggregated analysis of a survey, sex disaggregated tables on voter turnout for the four elections that took place between 1989 and 2003, as well as the analysis of performance of women candidates.²⁰ The Kuwait study includes sex-disaggregated data from available sources, with specific focus on education indicators, and lists the type of obstacles facing Kuwaiti women's political participation.²¹ By contrast, the study on Lebanon does not include any data. Instead there is a listing of female candidates since 1992, as well as an overview of the type of obstacles Lebanese women

17- See Annex 2, documents listed by AWP Project country. The common title of most of the studies is 'Towards Political Empowerment of ... Women'. Surprisingly, no gender balance appears to have been taken into account in recruitment of researchers, the majority of whom are male. Given the topic of commissioned studies, and the reality in the Arab Region that 'gender experts' are more likely to be female, the Evaluation Team is surprised that such a gender balance was not achieved.

18- As far as the Evaluation Team could ascertain, no studies were commissioned for Egypt and Morocco.
19- SCW/UNIFEM/Bahrain, 2007.

20- UNIFEM/Jordan, 2006.

21- WCSS/UNIFEM/Kuwait, no date.

face in elections.²² The Syria study includes a chapter on ‘women MPs performance in the last term’, which includes female representation in Parliament Committees. The questionnaire administered to 30 female members of the Syrian Parliament elicited only 9 responses.²³ While the UAE study includes some sex disaggregated data on women’s educational and employment status, here again the information cannot be perceived as providing the type of baseline information required to measure and monitor implementation of the AWP Project.²⁴

A review of other UNIFEM AWP Project-related documents by the Evaluation Team during the in-country mission in Jordan revealed that - at first glance - some commissioned studies are not necessarily of direct relevance. For example, AWP Project funding was used by the Syrian national partners to commission a study on violence against women (VAW). It emerged that this was deemed to be an effective means for female members in the Syrian Parliament to lobby for legislation reform to combat VAW.²⁵ As such - and as Syrian stakeholders interviewed by the Evaluation Team pointed out - UNIFEM/ASRO was flexible in its approach to commissioning studies as part of the AWP Project. This may perhaps also explain why the above mentioned ‘baseline studies’ did not follow a similar format facilitating comparison between the AWP Project countries concerned.

However, as the Evaluation Team indicated in the Inception Report, it continues to remain unclear which studies have actually been generated by the AWP Project, and which are UNIFEM studies that were commissioned and funded through other projects and activities, then disseminated to AWP Project stakeholders. This is not facilitated by the fact that the UNIFEM/ASRO website lists all documents together rather than by project. Moreover, AWP Project partners may have commissioned their own studies which appear to be also disseminated via the AWP Project.²⁶

To further identify the key issues facing women parliamentarians, the Evaluation Team surfed the web in search of studies analyzing gender and political processes in the Arab Region, as well as media articles on women’s political participation in the eight AWP Project countries, including information linked to recent elections. The *2004 Arab Quota Report* includes discussion of the quota system in Egypt, Jordan and Morocco, and reveals the challenges facing female candidates in social contexts where women’s political empowerment may be contested by different power and social groupings.²⁷ The 2005 study on *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers* points to the importance of crucial interventions including capacity-building, ‘learning the rules’ and reform of electoral processes.²⁸ A particular challenge to Arab women’s political empowerment is the paradigm underlying ‘social norms and attitudes which have eulogized women’s role in the private sphere while creating barriers to their participation in the public one’. This paradigm has been reinforced by the re-emerging challenge which views attempts to empower women with suspicion and as part of the ‘western agenda’.²⁹

An issue receiving increasing attention is the role of women in political parties. Pertinent developments reflect some diversity in the Arab Region. In the Bahrain 2006 elections,

22- UNIFEM/Lebanon, 2006.

23- SCFA/UNIFEM/Syria, 2007.

24- UNIFEM/UAE, 2007.

25- SGWU/Syria, 2006.

26- For example, the study on Bahraini women’s legal status (BWU, 2008); or the study on women empowerment indicators in the UAE (GWU, 2008).

27- IIDEA, 2004.

28- IIDEA, 2005.

29- Sabbagh, pp. 55, 56.

for example, most of the women candidates ran as members of leftist parties, of associations, or as independents, while Islamist parties did not back any women to run for election. This disadvantaged women candidates, for example in terms of not being able to campaign through the network of mosques. In fact, as reported in the media, some of the 18 'women candidates received numerous threats from Islamic *salafist*³⁰ and other factions to prevent them taking part'.³¹ By contrast, the Islamic Action Front (IAF) in Jordan 'challenges the stereotype of the Arab world's Islamist parties as inherently "anti-women", but also reveals the party's ambivalence toward women's political participation'. Indeed, female membership constitutes around ten per cent of total membership. There is a 'women's sector' headed by a committee of ten women which recruits female members, but no woman serves in the party's highest policy-making level.³²

In Egypt, overall political parties accord limited support to women running in elections, and generally do not put them on party lists or back their campaigns. This is cited as an additional reason for enlarging the women's quota. Calls for political parties to field a minimum number of female candidates as part of their electoral slate have so far not been heeded or supported.³³

In Kuwait and the UAE, there are no official political parties though there are informal political, ideological and tribal groupings. However, the four women who won seats in the 2009 Kuwait parliamentary elections campaigned as independents, of whom one is considered to be 'conservative' and the rest 'liberal'.³⁴ Though eight of the nine women currently in the UAE Federal National Council (FNC) were appointed, they represent six of the seven Emirates that constitute the Federation. Similar to men, these women, as well as the one woman who was elected to the FCN, were initially appointed to the Electoral College by Emiri decree.³⁵

In Lebanon, where 18 political parties campaigned in the July 2009 elections, the four women who won seats in the Parliament are all affiliated with elite political families. Here also few political parties include women in their electoral list, and few women have reached high-level positions in the party hierarchy. However, similar to Jordan, women are becoming more active in local politics in Lebanon where some women have been elected to head municipal councils and are preparing for the forthcoming municipal elections in 2010.³⁶

In Morocco, for the first time in the country's history a woman was elected leader of a political party (Democratic Society Party), but she too voiced the concern that 'national parties do not do anything to support women or to nominate them in elections'.³⁷ In Syria, where the National Progressive Front – a coalition of the ruling Baath Party and nine other political parties are automatically allocated 60 per cent representation - women only won 319 out of the 9,687 municipal council seats in the 2007 local elections.³⁸ Here too political will supporting women's political empowerment has not been effectively

30- Salafists seek to revive the principal tenets of Islam as practised during the time of the Prophet and refute innovations.

31- WAPEDIA/Bahrain, 2006.

32- Arab Reform Bulletin/Jordan, 2004.

33- WLUM/L/Egypt, 2009.

34- Radio Netherlands Worldwide/Kuwait (2009).

35- DSG/MSFNC/UAE, 2009.

36- HRW/Lebanon, 2009.

37- Maghreb/Morocco, 2007.

38- MENA Election Guide/Syria, 2007.

translated into increased female representation in decision-making roles and functions in the political party hierarchy.

Media articles on Arab women's participation reveal various discourses on, and an increasing visibility of, women's presence in the political arena. For example, the first ever time (in 2005) that a Bahraini woman chaired a session in parliament received wide media coverage.³⁹ Similarly, media coverage was accorded to women entering the UAE FNC in 2006; to women's appointment in local municipalities in Jordan in 2003, and the four women who won seats in the 2007 local elections separate from the 20 per cent allocated to women in municipal councils;⁴⁰ to the Egyptian Parliament's decision in June 2009 to increase women's quota;⁴¹ to the first ever election of women to the Kuwait Parliament in May 2009;⁴² and to women candidates winning in the July 2009 election in Lebanon.⁴³ Though, relative to global trends, Arab women's political representation in national and local politics may be low, these and other media reports reflect that barriers are slowly being dismantled, even where women have been appointed, such as in Jordan's municipal councils, or in the UAE FNC.

Overall, these examples also reveal that women are gradually entering the political arena at local level, i.e. where socio-culturally conservative attitudes towards women's political participation and empowerment tends to be more entrenched. Indeed, as the recent local elections in Morocco reflect, women are starting to crack the proverbial glass ceiling; for example, in 2009 Marrakesh voted its first female mayor into office, and in the Province of Tata a woman became the youngest ever President of a Local Council in Morocco.⁴⁴

2. Relevance of the Project

2.1 Dynamics of Project Design

As the Diagram developed by the Evaluation Team (see following page) indicates, the AWP project design is based on potentially mutually reinforcing inter-linkages conducive to promoting a holistic approach to women's political empowerment. Each of the project objectives may be taken as an entry point.⁴⁵ Thus, women trained as part of the third objective (national incubators) and who win parliamentary seats may be linked to the second project objective (gender sensitizing parliamentarians), and to the first objective (the AWP Forum). These inter-linkages could be further strengthened by linkages to other regional and national networks and activities promoting and supporting women's political participation and empowerment.

The Evaluation Team assumes that the wording in particular of the second and third objectives was meant to be generic, and was expected to be adapted to the context and specificities of each country. As the AWP Project strategy indicates, 'lobbying tools and strategies will differ in each of the participating countries' given different political contexts, and 'strategies will be developed in cooperation with the national counterparts'. However, it is also noted that the wording of the first and third objectives left much room for subjective interpretation. As far as could be ascertained by the Evaluation Team, UNIFEM/ASRO does not appear to have provided explicit guidelines

39- BBC/Bahrain, 2005.

40- MENA Election Guide Review/Jordan, 2007; www.pogar.org.

41- GulfNews/Egypt, 2009.

42- Tran/Kuwait, 2009.

43- Lebanon:<http://www.theasiannews.co.uk>

44- Maghreb Arab Website/Morocco (2009).

45- The Evaluation Team notes that had such a diagram been included in the project design, it may have contributed to ensuring that the regional overview and inter-linkages remain at the forefront.

for translating and adapting generic objectives into national objectives and strategies.

2.2 Timeliness of Project Aims

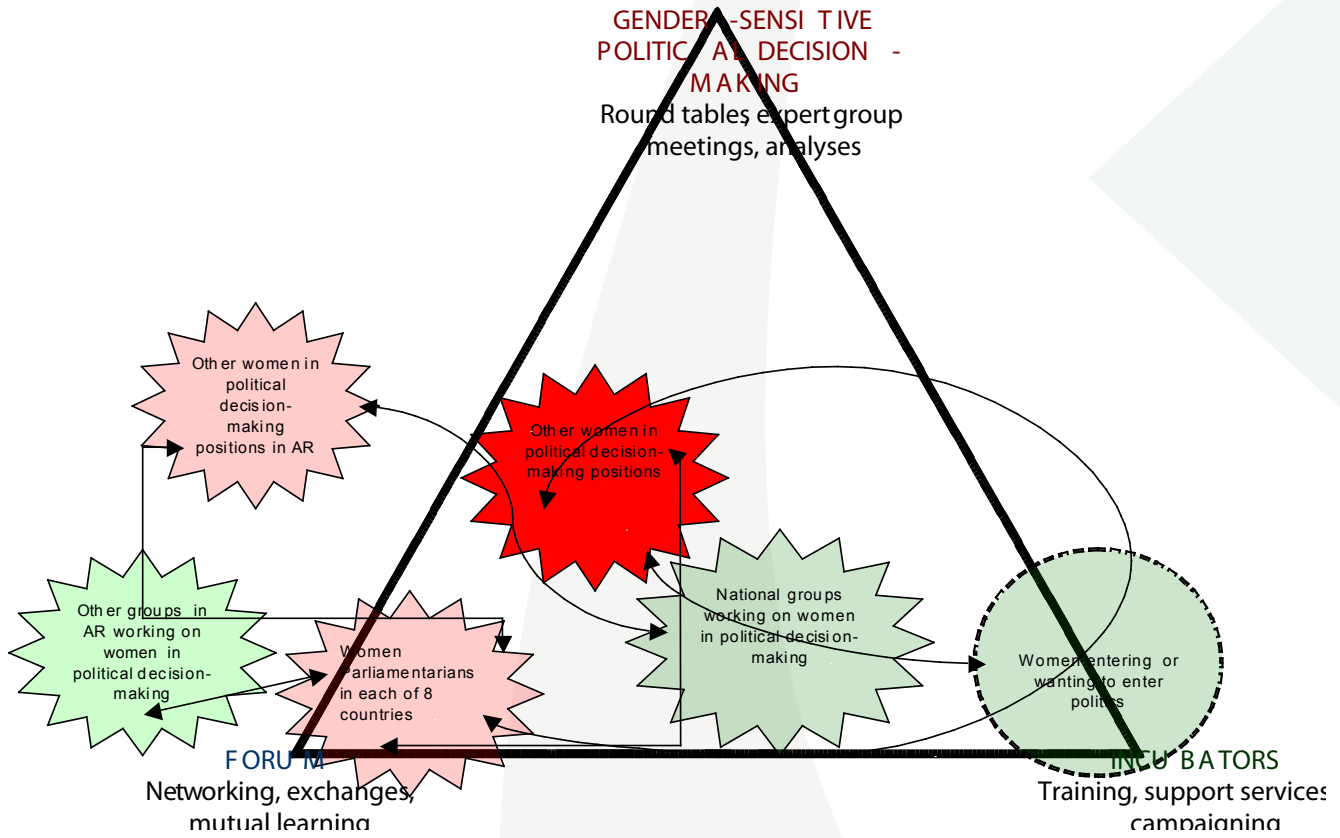
As Annex 6 reveals, the timeline of the Project, starting in 2005 and extended to 2009, coincided with elections in a number of countries.⁴⁶ As such the AWP Project was both relevant and timely, including seizing the opportunity of widening the Project to include training activities linked to local elections, such as in Jordan, Morocco and Syria. It may be the case that during 2005 elections (in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait and Lebanon), the Project was too new to contribute to supporting potential female candidates through training. However, the Project is deemed relevant and timely in respect of subsequent national and/or local-level elections in 2006 (Bahrain, Kuwait, Morocco and UAE) and in 2007 (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Syria).

2.3 Partners and Stakeholders

As reflected in responses of stakeholders in the three country case studies, overall the Project is deemed to have been relevant since it coincided with political will at the

⁴⁶- Though keeping in mind that at the starting date of AWP Project implementation in 2005, in some countries elections had not yet been announced.

Diagram: Dynamics of AWP Project Design



higher level to promote women's political participation (women's quota in Jordan, appointment of women in the UAE Electoral College and the FNC). It was also relevant in terms of providing funding support, as well as in contributing to the mobilization of women through the training activities (all three countries). But it was also pointed out that the training component was not specifically aligned with the national context, and some tailoring was required; for example, 'emiratizing' the training materials in the UAE, or taking into account the complex specificities of the political arena in Lebanon.

Responses from stakeholders interviewed by telephone largely support the above conclusions. In Morocco, for example, the Project is deemed to have been relevant and timely since it coincided with the introduction of the women's quota and contributed to capacity-building, though here too training materials required adaptation to the national context. While the funding aspect appears to have been less relevant (given support from various donors to Moroccan women's political empowerment), the prospect of strengthening regional networks with the *mashreq* (i.e. Near East countries) is deemed to have been particularly relevant.

Similarly, telephone interviews with national counterparts in Bahrain, Kuwait and Syria reveal that the AWP Project was relevant and timely in providing technical support through training activities, though here again the issue of tailoring training materials to the national context was raised. In the case of Syria, apart from the importance of funding support, the Project is deemed to have been relevant in terms of mobilizing potential women candidates through widening their knowledge of campaigning strategies. It also enabled the national partners to use the Project as a means of highlighting the social problem of violence against women (commissioned study used by women Parliamentarians). Though none of the women who in 2009 won seats in the Kuwait Parliament had participated in the AWP Project training activities, the national partner pointed out that overall women who sought such training to acquire leadership and decision-making skills were mobilized to actively participate as voters in the election. Moreover, a cursory review of some questionnaire responses received by the Evaluation Team largely confirms the above, i.e. the timeliness of the AWP Project but also its complementarity with national partners' ongoing projects and activities.

2.4 Contribution to National and Regional Gender Equality Priorities

The AWP Project design was intended to contribute to Arab women's political participation as part of their overall empowerment. Key issues highlighted in the above presented desk review indicate that, given regional and national interventions in support of Arab women's political participation, Project objectives were relevant in terms of contributing to women's political empowerment in general, and in some cases, such as in Syria and the UAE, contributing to the success of some female parliamentary candidates in the elections.

Some respondents noted:

'There is increased discussion of gender and women's issues on television, in newspapers and journals as well as on the internet ... and also more interest in women's role in politics'.

3. Implementation Process

Discussion of the implementation process requires focusing on two distinct though inter-linked levels, namely expected achievements at the regional level specifically linked to the first objective - establishment of the AWP Forum including the regional

website; and expected outputs at the national level in the eight participating countries specifically linked to the second and third objectives, i.e. gender sensitization of Arab Parliamentarians and national incubators for prospective Arab women leaders.

Discussion of AWP Project efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability also needs to take into account that UNIFEM/ASRO does not have country-level offices and presence in six of the eight countries concerned.⁴⁷ Where national coordinators are in place, they are either housed in the premises of the national partner (as in Egypt, for example); or are afforded a work station in UNDP (as in the UAE, for example). These factors should have been taken into consideration in developing the AWP Project. Though – as discussed earlier in terms of project design – the Project was commendable in terms of its holistic approach, in hindsight it was too ambitious in terms of planned outputs and expected achievements given realities on the ground, i.e. within UNIFEM/ASRO as well as at national level.

3.1 Efficiency

a) UNIFEM ASRO

The Evaluation Team concludes that several crucial factors impacted on overall efficiency including UNIFEM's limited presence at national level in several AWP Project countries and human resource constraints in UNIFEM/ASRO.

Organizational Considerations

Efficiency has been affected by the UNIFEM/ASRO management of the AWP Project. From what could be ascertained from review of available mission reports to the participating countries, as well as from discussions with national coordinators, the UNIFEM/ASRO senior management in place at the time appears to have played a decisive role in 'micro-managing' the Project in some of the participating countries.⁴⁸ Moreover, over time the regional dimension appears to have become weaker, and in fact the Project came to be managed as a multi-country intervention rather than as a regional project *per se*.⁴⁹ In the case of Jordan, for example, where UNIFEM/ASRO is based, this reality has been further compounded by the apparent blurring of the distinction between the regional and the national (Jordanian) AWP Project components. Other issues include the multitude of activities in Jordan and the number of missions to Syria, compared, for example, to Lebanon,⁵⁰ where there was no national coordinator in place.

A further systemic factor was the senior management decision that the Regional AWP Project Coordinator who had the task of overseeing all eight participating countries would also assume the role/function of national coordinator in Jordan and Lebanon, as well as eventually in Bahrain and Kuwait. Since the person concerned was expected to accord only 20 per cent of her time to the AWP Project, this not surprisingly resulted in a situation where human resources constraints led to senior management micro-

47- UNIFEM/ASRO is based in Amman/Jordan; UNIFEM/North Africa is based in Rabat/Morocco. At the time the AWP Project was formulated, UNIFEM/Amman also covered North Africa.

48- The term 'micro-management' implies that senior management in UNIFEM/ASRO appears to have generally tended to play a role in country-level implementation; for example, by directly contracting studies, or by indicating activities then requesting partners to carry them out, rather than requesting partners to develop their own three-year AWP Project work plan. Micro-management was not surprisingly particularly evident where there was no National Coordinator in place, and instead the UNIFEM/ASRO Regional Coordinator also functioned as national coordinator.

49- It should be noted that job performance appraisal of individual UNIFEM/ASRO staff or of national coordinators is not part of the Evaluation Team's terms of reference. Discussion of systemic issues refers to the post and its function.

50- Though it should be noted that the 2006 war with Israel had implications in terms of postponing some activities.

managing the Project. Furthermore, human resources constraints limited the number of country visits possible, yet this was not counter-balanced by a system of cost-effective tele-conferences. The latter could also have been an efficient means of linking national coordinators in Egypt, Jordan, Syria and the UAE and might have strengthened the regional dimension of the Project.

Monitoring System

As per the AWP Project Document, monitoring was supposed to take the commissioned baseline studies as starting point.⁵¹ However, as discussed previously, these studies have not provided comparable baseline information and data against which to measure progress in project implementation. Furthermore, the Evaluation Team was not provided with copies of the six-monthly monitoring reports that national counterparts were expected to produce, as stipulated in the Project Document. It appears – from the final AWP Project Report (May 2009) – that missions to the participating countries were conceived by UNIFEM/ASRO to be part of the monitoring process.⁵²

The less than optimal efficiency of project implementation was further compounded by the fact that UNIFEM/ASRO does not have an effective monitoring system in place, and indeed there is no monitoring & evaluation post. Thus monitoring of the AWP Project is confined to the required UN ATLAS reporting on expenditure by activity, but not matched by systematic monitoring of project activities and outputs, with implications for institutional memory. Moreover, the less than optimal filing system meant that the Evaluation Team could not get a sense of how UNIFEM/ASRO actually kept track of AWP project activities in the eight countries.⁵³

Surprisingly, where such reporting could be reviewed by the Evaluation Team, pertinent data were found not to be sex disaggregated. As previously flagged, some of the studies commissioned by UNIFEM/ASRO, either directly or via its national partners, also omit sex-disaggregated data even when both women and men were targeted in surveys.

Role of UNIFEM/Headquarters, Donors and the Steering Committee

A further contributing factor is the apparent reality that UNIFEM Headquarters in New York do not appear to have flagged what are essentially management and human resource constraints.⁵⁴ Rather, it appears that the focus was more on ‘deliverables’ and less on the project implementation process and an efficient monitoring system that should have been in place.

Furthermore, while the two donors – Sweden and the U.K. – received the annual reports, and, from what the Evaluation Team could ascertain from written notes and the telephone interviews with the stakeholders concerned, did raise various issues and concerns, there does not appear to have been any effective follow-up.

More specifically, neither UNIFEM NY nor the donors appear to have addressed the reality that during project implementation, sight was lost of the first and second AWP Project objectives. As discussed in a following section, project activities in all eight countries became blurred with the third objective which was reduced to capacity-building.

51- UNIFEM/ASRO, 2005/a, pp. 33-34.

52- UNIFEM/ASRO, 2009.

53- Indeed, a particular challenge for the Evaluation Team was obtaining an accurate overview of the timeline of regional and national AWP Project activities, as well as securing hard copies of the pertinent activity.

54- The Evaluation Team uses the term UNIFEM HQ to refer to the corporate level, where the pertinent division is responsible for oversight of and technical backstopping provided to regional offices.

The final AWP Project report (May 2009) mentions that the Steering Committee, ‘comprising regional unit staff, national unit staff in Syria, UAE and Egypt and Donor Representatives’ from Britain and Sweden was established and strengthened ‘to maintain close coordination with the main actors in each participating country’.⁵⁵ However, here again the Evaluation Team concludes that there appears to have been no flagging of the reality that the AWP Project was proceeding with an implementation process that had narrowed project activities.⁵⁶

‘Slippage’ in Project Concepts

In hindsight, and given the management structure and human resource constraints of UNIFEM/ASRO, expected outputs and indicators presented in the AWP Project Document raise the following crucial questions: How, and under whose ownership, was the AWP Forum and its website meant to function as an ongoing regional activity to ‘disseminate news about best practices and achievements, plan concerted responses to emerging and continuing challenges, and develop shared visions’? How could national groups of Arab women parliamentarians be mobilized into ‘national legislatures’ in Arab countries?

Similarly, while the aim of the incubators is to function as a ‘catalyst’ to raise awareness of women’s political participation, to ‘provide women candidates with the necessary tools’, to help women ‘gain knowledge on the use of parliamentary procedures’, and produce and disseminate ‘awareness-raising materials on women’s political rights’, the generic wording of this objective does not indicate whether the focus is on activities to be housed in an existing organization (for example in the institutions of the national partners), or whether incubator refers to establishing a new physical entity to carry out the indicated activities.⁵⁷

In effect, though stakeholders interviewed by the Evaluation Team generally confirm that the original concepts underlying the AWP Project were shared by UNIFEM/ ASRO with national partners, these were not explicitly spelt out in writing. Indeed, few stakeholders interviewed by the Evaluation Team – even those who were directly involved – could offhand list the three AWP Project objectives. This may also explain why stakeholder responses to the question regarding relevance of the AWP Project generally focused on capacity-building.

Over time, there was ‘slippage’ in understanding of concepts. Terms took on meanings that were narrower than those included in the Project Document. ‘Forum’ came to be used interchangeably with ‘symposium’ which in turn did not develop into regular annual events or produce the planned website as indicated for the first project objective. Nor have national chapters been established in the participating countries that were planned to be linked to the regional forum.⁵⁸ The exception appears to be in Egypt, where according to the National Coordinator, a women member of parliament ‘forum’ was established that functioned as ‘a policy dialogue platform with women MPs, civil society, governmental representation and related research institutes’, and which focused on ‘the new social contract, decentralization and the role of gender issues at the local level etc.’⁵⁹ In fact, by the fourth annual AWP Project report activities under

55- UNIFEM/ASRO, 2009.

56- The Evaluation Team was not accorded access to minutes and recommendations of the AWP Project Steering Committee.

57- UNIFEM/ASRO, 2005/a, pp. 16-17

58- UNIFEM/ASRO, 2005/a, p. 21.

59- Email communication from the Egypt National Coordinator commenting on the AWP draft evaluation report.

this objective are listed by sub-region and by country rather than regionally and the term 'forum' came to be used to describe sub-regional or country-specific meetings.⁶⁰

The term 'incubator' (third objective) virtually dropped from the discussion and was replaced by 'capacity-building' carried out by the national partners in the eight countries concerned. According to the Egypt National Coordinator, the project partner, i.e. the National Council for Women, launched a Civic and Political Participation Training Centre.⁶¹ In any case, there would appear to be a link between, on the one hand, such 'slippage', and in particular the fact that after 2006 no further regional meetings were organized,⁶² and, on the other hand, the above mentioned reality that the AWP Project came to be managed as a multi-country rather than as a regional project per se.

Such 'slippage' and the narrowing of the AWP Project to focusing mainly on capacity building are reflected in Annex 3 presenting an overview of implementation of project activities by country.⁶³ Apart from some regional and sub-regional forum/symposium meetings, and gender budgeting workshops, the focus has mainly been on the regional training of trainers (2005) and national training of targeted women (2006-2007). Discussion of the various annual AWP Project reports in the Inception Report also reveals such 'slippage' and narrowing of the original project concepts and implementation focus.

Project Work Plans

The AWP Project Document spells out the requirement of guidelines, logical frameworks and annual forecasts to 'be prepared in coordination with national counterparts to ensure that all project activities and best practices are being documented'.⁶⁴ Though the Evaluation Team reviewed some work plans of national coordinators, and annual plans and budgets of some national partners (for example, Morocco), it did not get access to national partners' logical frameworks or annual forecasts.

Obtaining a detailed and accurate overview was therefore hampered by the non-availability of pertinent documentation, as well as the uneven quality of annual reports. The Evaluation Team had concluded in the Inception Report that annual reports did not follow a clearly structured outline facilitating comparison. Indeed, the variable quality of these reports makes it difficult to systematically trace and compare project activities, outputs and outcomes. Apart from the 2005 annual report, none of the other reports appear to have had a work plan attached.⁶⁵ As far as the Evaluation Team could ascertain, no regional work plan was developed for each year of project implementation that systematically listed the verification of indicators per project activity and linked to national work plans. The Logical Framework included in the Project Document does not appear to have been subsequently used as a management tool against which to measure actual achievements against planned activities, and pinpoint gaps in implementation.

Planned Project Website

Another efficiency factor linked to, and affected by, the inadequate UNIFEM/ASRO monitoring system is the AWP Project website. This was to be established as a specialized

60- UNIFEM/ASRO, 2008/e, pp. 8-9.

61- Since no interviews were organized with the Egypt national partners and other stakeholders, the Evaluation Team does not have information on the current functioning of this Center.

62- The 2007 ESCWA regional meeting was hosted by UNIFEM/ASRO in Amman and as such was not strictly speaking part of the AWP Project.

63- Compiled by the Evaluation Team following discussion with the UNIFEM/ASRO regional Project Coordinator.

64- UNIFEM/ASRO, 2005/a, p. 33.

65- Although UNIFEM/ASRO indicated that subsequent annual report also had a work plan, the Evaluation Team was not provided with copies.

linked to the Arab Women Connect Website, created in 2000 under an earlier UNIFEM/ASRO project funded by the Netherlands.⁶⁶ This has not materialized for reasons which remain unclear to the Evaluation Team. Few respondents appeared to be aware of the planned AWP Project website or that it had not been established, which some flagged as a missed opportunity for strengthening virtual regional networks. Instead the AWP Project is included on the UNIFEM/ASRO website, but which has not been updated to reflect the actual number of participating countries or changes in involvement of some national partners. The reader may also be confused by the listing of strategic objectives which are in some aspects different to those listed in the Project Document. Moreover, commissioned AWP project studies and research are included in the overall UNIFEM/ASRO publication list, rendering it difficult to obtain an accurate overview of project outputs in terms of funded publications.

Limited Follow-Up

Another efficiency aspect mentioned by several respondents at country level is the disappointingly limited follow-up by UNIFEM/ASRO of AWP Project activities. This includes the forum meetings (referred to as symposium) in 2005 in Beirut/Lebanon and 2006 in Amman/Jordan. As the Moroccan National Coordinator pointed out, such regional meetings are particularly important to maghreb (North African) countries given the geographical distance between them and the mashreq Arab countries. None of the respondents could explain why these regional meetings were discontinued.

Strategic Overview of Complementary Activities

A further efficiency factor is the apparent absence of a systematic and regularly up-dated overview of other activities supporting and promoting women's political participation and empowerment in the eight countries concerned, be they by UN agencies, or by international or non-governmental organizations that are mainly donor funded. This is already apparent in the formulation of the second objective in the Project Document, i.e. 'mainstreaming gender in Arab Parliaments and generating greater support for Arab women parliamentarians', and the activities linked to implementation of this objective. Though there is mention in the Project Document of global (Inter-Parliamentary Union) and regional (Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union; Arab Women Organization) initiatives, there is no explicit mention of other interventions, for example by ESCWA and UNDP, or of sub-regional activities in the Gulf.⁶⁷ Where joint activities are mentioned, for example in the second annual AWP Project report referring to UNIFEM/ASRO's aim to work with and complement national level activities by other agencies, and initiation of several capacity-building workshops with UNDP in Kuwait, Lebanon and the UAE, the Evaluation Team was not afforded access to pertinent reports.⁶⁸

Either way, while UNIFEM/ASRO has by all accounts striven to be linked with ongoing events relevant to Arab women's empowerment in general, and political empowerment in particular, there appears to have been some duplication of efforts in respect of focusing on Arab Parliaments, notably in respect of UNDP. Moreover, several stakeholders remain unclear regarding UNIFEM/ASRO's actual role in organizing and funding events, and the extent to which the organization has contributed to Arab women's political empowerment, keeping in mind the difficulty of measuring such contribution.

66- It should be noted that the domain of www.arabwomenconnect website has apparently been allowed to lapse, with the effect that – as ascertained by the Evaluation Team – the domain is open to others. The attention of UNIFEM/ASRO has been drawn to this development.

67- UNIFEM/ASRO, 2005/a, pp. 11-12, 16-17.

68- UNIFEM/ASRO, 2006/b, p. 4.

As one Syrian respondent put it:

'There are many activities supporting Arab women ... some we are involved in... others we may hear of after events have taken place ... it is not always easy to be up-to-date'.

b) AWP Project Countries

The various annual AWP Project reports describe various national-level activities in the eight countries concerned. Some of these activities are explicitly linked to the AWP Project and others appear to be part of UNIFEM's overall programme in the country concerned. There are also national-level activities listed where UNIFEM/ ASRO appears to have been a participant. While the UNIFEM-supported activities listed in the various annual reports reveals the active involvement of UNIFEM/ASRO, this also reflects the above mentioned point that the AWP Project was micro-managed as a multi-country rather than as a regional intervention.

The less than optimal project efficiency at UNIFEM/ASRO level, as well as 'slippage' in the original project concepts and narrowing down of project activities mainly to capacity-building, had various implications for project implementation at the national level. In the case of Jordan, for example, blurring of role/function of the regional and national project coordinators. The 'micro-management' of the AWP Project meant that UNIFEM/ASRO set dates for training activities without consulting national partners, who in turn were apparently unclear regarding their role in mobilizing potential trainees.⁶⁹ The case of Jordan also provides an example where due to the ineffective UNIFEM/ASRO communication system, national partners do not appear to make a clear distinction between the AWP Project and other UNIFEM/ASRO supported projects in the country.

In Lebanon, project efficiency was affected by UNIFEM ASRO's direct involvement in implementation of activities, as well as working directly with other partners. Even though the NGO Committee for Follow-Up on Women's Issues (NCFUWI) was identified as the main implementing partner, apparently it was not involved in the 2005 regional launch of the AWP Project in Beirut/Lebanon. Moreover, no monitoring system was put in place by the main implementing partner, with the result that it is difficult to ascertain whether and to what extent AWP Project implementation contributed to women's political empowerment in Lebanon.

In the UAE, blurring of the three AWP Project objectives meant that project implementation was largely confined to training activities implemented by the national partners. The folders put together by the national partners reveal a level of efficiency in terms of detailed lists of training activities by date, location, topic and number/names of participants. But here too it appears that training was instigated by the National Coordinator, who also took the initiative to 'emiratize' the training materials.

Telephone interviews with stakeholders in Bahrain, Kuwait, Morocco and Syria indicate a pattern more or less similar to that revealed during the country missions in Jordan, Lebanon and the UAE. None of the respondents who had been directly involved in AWP Project activities could remember seeing annual UNIFEM/ASRO AWP Project work plans. As far as the Evaluation Team could ascertain, it appears that AWP Project activities were included in the overall activities of national partners, rather than developing a separate AWP Project logical framework and work plan.

⁶⁹- This had cost implications since postponement of the training in 2007 to a later date the same year meant that UNIFEM/ASRO forfeited the down-payment. Although the training took place prior to the election, it left less time for preparing and supporting women candidates.

In effect, efficiency has also been affected by the technical capacity of UNIFEM/ASRO to provide appropriate guidance to national counterparts to produce baseline studies, interpret project objectives, and ensuring that viable monitoring and reporting system is in place.

However, a positive aspect highlighted by some stakeholders interviewed by the Evaluation Team is that overall targeting of women for the training activities appears to have reached a relatively wide cross-section of women. This was to some extent due to the advertising of the planned AWP Project training events. In some cases, such as in Bahrain and Syria, national partners had an established network to draw on. In the case of the UAE, widening the network was initiated by the National Coordinator who used her social links to reach women in smaller Emirates. In Morocco, the outreach of the national partner (ADFM) meant that a reasonably wide cross-section of women interested in the training that the AWP Project was offering was targeted.

3.2 Effectiveness

As indicated in the discussion so far, the relatively weak monitoring system in place, human resource constraints and senior management style in UNIFEM/ASRO had far-reaching implications for the extent to which the AWP Project was able to implement planned activities. Notwithstanding this observation, some positive elements of effectiveness are discernible alongside various drawbacks.

a) Regional Level

Some Positive Results

One measure of effectiveness has been UNIFEM/ASRO responding to electoral events, for example, seizing the opportunity of municipal election reforms in Jordan. UNIFEM/ASRO cooperated with national partners in widening project activities to include training women participating in the municipal elections. Training materials were adapted to take the municipal level context into account. Indeed, a number of women who participated in the AWP Project training won seats or were appointed in local councils.

Another measure of effectiveness has been the inclusion of non-AWP project countries in some sub-regional events, with funding covered by other sources. Such inclusion has been effective in disseminating project activities to a wider network and audience in the Arab Region, and has also served to link the AWP Project with similar activities supporting Arab women's political participation and empowerment. However, such inclusion may have also inadvertently led to further blurring of the distinction between UNIFEM/ASRO regional and national level activities, as well as interventions by other agencies actively supporting women's political participation.

A positive aspect highlighted by various stakeholders interviewed by the Evaluation Team was the training of trainer (TOT) activity implemented in 2005 in Amman/Jordan with participants from the countries concerned. This is deemed to have been an effective way of supporting the quality of training through skilled trainers and ensuring that the training materials developed by the AWP Project would be put to good use. Various stakeholders interviewed in the three mission countries and by telephone in the other participating countries indicated that the TOT training was an effective contribution by the AWP Project.

As a participant in the TOT explained to the Evaluation Team:

'A network of trained trainers not only in methodology but also in content such as gender and political participation is very much needed ... the training we received was valuable... and I have been able to use it when recruited to carry out training for UNIFEM... but we need to invest more in adapting training materials not only to the country but also to the type of participant and what they expect from the training ...it is also important to have both a male and female trainer working together... this helps training on gender issues'.

Measured in terms of media coverage, overall the AWP Project can be said to have been effective. The Evaluation Team reviewed three bound volumes of media reports on UNIFEM/ASRO regional as well as national-level activities. Coverage of the two regional forums in 2005 and 2006 in Beirut and Amman are included, as are AWP Project activities in the participating countries. National-level media reports include activities specific to the AWP Project, as well as other UNIFEM country-level activities. Some articles report on activities by other agencies in which UNIFEM/ASRO participated. The three volumes provide a more or less detailed overview of what has been happening over the past few years in support of Arab women's political participation and empowerment, thus confirming the Evaluation Team's conclusions from the desk review. However, although UNIFEM/ASRO collaborated with CAWTAR in producing a volume on Arab Women and the Media,⁷⁰ the Evaluation Team does not have a sense of any strategic communication and advocacy strategy in place in respect of the AWP Project.

But Also Drawbacks

Given that the AWP Project was essentially managed as a multi-country rather than as a regional project, and that furthermore few regional meetings were held during the project implementation period, pinpointing to what extent effectiveness has been achieved regionally remains difficult. Moreover, although UNIFEM/ASRO carried out regional meetings in cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Arab Women Organization, as well as with UNDP in the case of the first regional (2005) meeting, no concrete information on aspects of such collaboration is discernible in the annual AWP Project reports. Nor could the Evaluation Team elicit information from the UNIFEM/ASRO Regional Project Coordinator other than general comments to the effect that such collaboration was 'fruitful'.

Effectiveness in terms of value added through regional networking has not been achieved in the way planned in the AWP Project. The regional forum linked to national chapters, and networking through a functioning website, have not materialized. Though national partners in the eight countries concerned may be actively involved in other regional activities and networks, for example AWO and CAWTAR, as well as the AIPU, to date there is no functioning Arab Women Parliamentary Forum in place.

b) National Level

Effective Contribution to Women's Capacities

Overall, the AWP Project effectively contributed to the wave of ongoing interventions in the eight countries concerned, aimed at mobilizing target groups in support of women's active political participation and in translating political will into concrete efforts that promote women's political empowerment. As indicated earlier, political will at the highest level, as well as donor supported civil society activities, were conducive in further

⁷⁰- UNIFEM/ASRO & CAWTAR, 2005.

promoting this wave of activities, to which the AWP Project effectively contributed in varying ways and to different extents in the eight countries concerned.

Stakeholders interviewed personally or by telephone by the Evaluation Team generally agreed that the AWP Project had been effective in terms of contributing to the enhancement and strengthening of women's capacities to actively participate in the political process.⁷¹ For some national partners such effectiveness is perceived to be part and parcel of the overall effectiveness of their organization in mobilizing public opinion in support of women's political empowerment, even where they cannot maintain that the women who won seats in recent national or local elections had been trained by the AWP Project (for example, in Kuwait and Lebanon). For other national partners, such as in Jordan, Morocco, Syria and the UAE, effectiveness is measured by the clear links between training of potential women candidates and their success in achieving elected or appointed national or local level political positions.

Planning Strategically

However, effectiveness at the national level was also affected by the reality that national partners were apparently unable to plan strategically in advance. More specifically the apparent absence of a three year regional work plan covering the original timeframe of AWP project implementation (2005-2007), as well as associated budgets, contributed to diminishing project effectiveness at the national level since, as some national partners indicated, they were not always able to plan in advance. Moreover, the previously mentioned apparent blurring between the national partners' annual programme activities and the work plan for AWP Project-related activities, as well as the micro-management of the Project by UNIFEM/ASRO are examples that lead the Evaluation Team to conclude that in some cases there appears to have been an ad hoc approach to project implementation.

For some respondents effectiveness is measured by the national partner's ability to implement or further develop strategies conducive to supporting women in Parliament and at the local/municipal level. For example, in Bahrain, while there does not appear to be a consensus regarding the women's quota, there is awareness that establishing a women's committee in Parliament may be counterproductive and actually marginalize gender equality concerns as 'women's issues' linked to their reproductive role. This also appears to be an issue taken into consideration in the UAE, where women head or are active members in various FNC committees. In this respect the importance of training in gender responsive budgeting was highlighted by various respondents.

As explained by one Syrian respondent:

'Knowing more about gender budgeting not only enables women parliamentarians to be active in what has traditionally been perceived to be men's business ... it also ensures that both female and male parliamentarians know more about gender issues... and this is important when we campaign for legal reform'.

National Institutions

However, there are no indications of effectiveness in terms of capacity-building of national institutions, as mentioned in various annual AWP Project reports. For example,

⁷¹- Many respondents pointed out that the literal translation of the English language term 'capacity-building' was not advisable, as this was perceived to be 'patronizing'. Women who participated in AWP Project training activities already had professional capacities which however required 'enhancement' and 'strengthening'. The Arabic translation of these terms is perceived to be more respectful when targeting women for training.

the third annual report for 2007 mentions that ‘the project has placed strong emphasis on building the institutional capacity of government structures, specifically those that are responsible for the protection and promotion of women’s political rights and security’, and that ‘capacity of commissions for women in Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria and the UAE were strengthened in the areas of gender mainstreaming and political participation’.⁷² But there is no discernible evidence that such training was carried out as part of the AWP Project, again pointing to a blurring of boundaries between UNIFEM/ASRO regional activities, and country-specific activities, be they AWP Project-related or otherwise. Indeed, capacity-building was mainly confined to women participating in the training workshops as well as participants in the training of trainer activities.

Adaptation to the National Context

Indications of effectiveness at the national level need to take account of the earlier observation that although there is mention of country specificities in the AWP ProDoc, with the exception of adaptation of training materials, project objectives were generally not tailored to the national context reflected in country-specific logical frameworks and work plans.

Moreover, as pointed out by several respondents, more attention needs to be accorded to the political process in the countries concerned, thus avoiding the assumption that the discourses on Arab women’s political participation will necessarily be similar. For example, in some countries, women may believe in and lobby for a women’s quota and even for increasing the latter, though the point would also be raised that quotas should be ‘a temporary matter’.

However, as respondents from the Gulf Region indicated to the Evaluation Team:

Bahrain: ‘Women do not want the quota system ... this only marginalizes women’s issues which are part of wider social and political issues’.

Kuwait: Women have shown that they can enter Parliament in their own right without a quota... this means those who vote for them choose them for what they can deliver... it makes them look more credible... this is why there should also not be a separate women’s committee in the Parliament’.

Choice of National Partners

Effectiveness can also be discerned in terms of choice of national partners. Where such partners play a leading role in promoting and supporting women’s empowerment and are supported at the highest political level, for example, in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Syria and the UAE, this may contribute to project effectiveness in terms of their outreach conducive to targeting women beyond the capital city of their respective country, and thus including a more representative cross-section of society. However, in such cases, and specifically where national partners are in effect quasi NGOs due to government funding support of their institutions, this will tend to leave less space for other civil society organizations active in this sphere.

Choice of more than one implementing partner may be positive when counterparts are selected for their complementarity; for example, in Jordan, the JNCW is more focused on the national level, while the JNFW has a wider outreach down to the local level. But choice of more than one national partner, particularly where it remains unclear what specific function they will have in project implementation, may also further entrench competition and lead to discord. This appears to have been the case in Kuwait where

72- UNIFEM/ASRO, 2007, p. 7.

one of the original partners withdrew from the AWP Project. By contrast, in the case of the UAE, inclusion of another counterpart to implement training activities remained unquestioned given that both national partners are headed by the same high-level patron.

National Coordinators

Effectiveness is also more discernible where a National Coordinator is in place, as is the case, for example, in Egypt, Morocco, Syria and the UAE. By contrast, in Lebanon where no National Coordinator was appointed for the AWP Project, and instead the Regional Project Manager based in Amman/Jordan assumed this function, there are clear implications for project effectiveness. This meant that coordination between organizations involved in project implementation was not optimal, since, for example, they generally did not recognize the complementarity between their own and other activities supporting women's political participation. As indicated previously, the overburdening of one UNIFEM/ASRO staff member to assume the role of regional coordinator, as well as national coordinator for a number of countries, not surprisingly had adverse implications for effectiveness in an organizational structure where the moreover monitoring and reporting system was inherently weak.

3.3 Sustainability

a) Regional Level

The slippage in concepts and terminology, the narrowing of the project focus mainly on capacity-building, as well as the UNIFEM/ASRO organizational structure and human resource constraints and 'micro-management' of the AWP Project as a multi-country rather than a regional project *per se*, have all had implications for regional sustainability.

UNIFEM/ASRO carried out some activities in coordination with other international and regional institutions such as, for example, UNDP and ESCWA, as well as AWO, AIPU and IPU. However, the Evaluation Team does not have a sense that such cooperation is based on a strategic approach that aims to achieve synergy and value added, as well as being cost-effective. Certainly working towards the goal of 'One UN' is not readily apparent here. There have been many missed opportunities to build and strengthen a regional forum which could have functioned as a vibrant framework promoting gender equality in the Arab Region's political arena, through strategically linking Arab women and men parliamentarians, as well as through linking the AWP project with other regional networks promoting and supporting women's political empowerment.

Another missed opportunity is the fact that the planned AWP Project website did not materialize; indeed, as indicated earlier, the ownership of the Arab Women Connect website to which the AWP Project was supposed to be linked was allowed to lapse. Given the reliance on donor funding for project activities, this could have been a cost-effective opportunity to contribute to strengthening regional networking, though it would require staffing to manage the domain and the network. There has also been insufficient use of virtual linkages; for example, linking national partners, other stakeholders and national coordinators through cost-effective tele-conferences. To some extent this would not only have been a cost-effective way of maintaining contacts, but would have also served to mitigate human resources constraints in UNIFEM/ASRO.

Moreover, neither UNIFEM/NY nor the donors appear to have questioned the omission of an exit strategy in the Project Document. Neither does the final annual AWP Project

report (May 2009) explicitly mention an exit strategy. A clearly defined exit strategy with an explicitly spelt out post-project process and activities might have contributed to drawing attention to changes in project focus and implementation.

b) National Level

The choice of national partners participating in the AWP Project is deemed conducive to sustainability. In all the participating countries, the selected national partners have the leadership and the commitment to continue with activities conducive to contributing to women's political participation and empowerment. However, project replication is also contingent on outreach and credibility beyond the organization's physical location. In this respect, some national partners may be better placed than others. For example, the outreach of the NCFUWI in Lebanon and the GWU in the UAE does not cover all parts of their respective countries. Similarly, as the Syrian respondent interviewed by the Evaluation Team indicated, the SGUW needs to exert more effort to reach the grassroots. By contrast, the ADFM in Morocco appears to have a wider outreach and, as maintained by the National Coordinator interviewed by the Evaluation Team, 'the capacity to adapt and introduce new initiatives'.

As national partners interviewed by the Evaluation Team pointed out, promoting and supporting women's political participation and empowerment 'is part of our strategy and is an issue we would be focusing on anyway'. UNIFEM/ASRO technical support through the training of trainers component, development of training materials and funding training workshops enabled these national partners to go ahead with such activities at a crucial time; i.e. when political will, changes in electoral legislation and forthcoming elections were on the horizon and opportunities could be seized to support women's political empowerment. As such, national partners believe they have the 'know-how' to further support women's political participation and promote their political empowerment.

Most of the respondents to the survey indicated that they would be continuing with similar activities, including organizing meetings, training workshops, commissioning research, as well as preparing and disseminating advocacy materials and organizing media campaigns.

However, a major issue affecting post-project sustainability in the eight AWP Project countries is the reality that national partners need to fundraise to support implementation of their project activities. Even where national partners receive government support - for example, free or subsidized accommodation, subsidizing costs of events and other in-kind support - they still need to fundraise to cover the cost of implementing project activities.

Some national partners are aware of the need to 'move on', i.e. to continue to widen the focus of their activities supporting women's political empowerment. But they also pointed out that this would be more strategic if they had had the opportunity to end the AWP Project with a workshop focusing on lessons learnt and good practice on which they could build. In this respect the reality that the AWP Project has ended without a functioning regional network in place is perceived to be a lost opportunity. While some respondents are aware or have direct links with the AIPU, 'this is not the same as having a specialized network of Arab women parliamentarians'.

As one respondent from Syria pointed out:

'The choice of title of the project was good since it gave visibility to women's participation in the parliamentary process ... these women would have the necessary skills to carry out their responsibilities as members of parliament... this way the resistance against women's quota would be addressed'.

For other national partners 'moving on' is in terms of focusing on local level politics where in their view mainstreaming gender is an urgent priority. For example, the 'success' of Jordanian women in municipal elections is perceived to be a vindication of women's ability to break the glass ceiling at the community level, i.e. where it is generally even more difficult for women to be politically active than it is at national/parliamentary level. Similarly more attention is being paid in Morocco to seizing opportunities for women's participation in local politics. Even where women have been appointed, such as to the FNC in the UAE, involvement of women from the smaller and less affluent Emirates is perceived to be relevant to local politics.

In the view of some respondents interviewed by the Evaluation Team, sustainability of the AWP Project in terms of promoting visibility of female political leadership at national and local levels requires an advocacy strategy that also targets potential male supporters as well as female and male youth.

As explained by a Jordanian respondent:

'We in the Arab Region tend to talk about advocacy and communication and the need to mobilize the media in support of women's empowerment when there are conferences and meetings ... then we generally forget all about it until the next event ... or there is a specific news item that highlights gender inequality'.

Without exception stakeholders indicated to the Evaluation Team that they would continue to use the AWP Project training materials, some of which has been adapted to the national/local context. But it was also pointed out that training need to be less abstract and more pragmatic. For example, less emphasis on the 'historical' (i.e. the women's movement, CEDAW etc. 'which we already know about' as one respondent pointed out), and more 'hands-on training', i.e. attending sessions in Parliament and its committees, as well as in the municipal councils. Respondents who hold political positions either at national or local level were generally aware of gender responsive budgeting and perceived this to be part of 'hands-on training'. Such training was perceived to be crucial for women to gain entry and leave their mark in committees generally perceived to be men's domain.

Sustainability was also perceived by some respondents to be linked to more investment in training of trainer workshops to ensure the widening of a pool of gender sensitized female as well as male trainers. National partners should have their own trained trainers which would also be supportive of post-project sustainability.

For participants in the AWP Project training – be they successful candidates, or women who wished to enhance their leadership and decision-making skills – sustainability is perceived in terms of enabling them to solve the gender-based constraints they face. For women running in elections this includes financial constraints in view of the difficulty of fund-raising, which has all too often meant that either women had their own capital or savings to draw on, or they had to take a loan.

There is also the challenge of campaigning in culturally acceptable ways ‘yet also needing to be visible to get votes’, as one Jordanian respondent put it. For women whose aim is to be more active professionally and in public life which does not necessarily include running for political office, constraints are generally perceived in terms of balancing their economic and reproductive roles, but also being taken seriously in what has hitherto been a ‘man’s world’.

Relevant to sustainability is a point gleaned from the questionnaire responses which was not mentioned by stakeholders interviewed by the Evaluation Team; namely the importance of ‘mentoring’, i.e. the importance of potential women candidates having the guidance and support of a mentor. A related point is the need to improve cooperation between women participating in the political process.

C. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conclusions and Key Results

1.1 Challenges

Discussion of the challenges identified through the evaluation of the AWP Project needs to draw a distinction between political dynamics and organizational challenges on the one hand, and, on the other hand, challenges faced by Arab women who are participating, or aim to participate, in the political process in their respective countries.

Political Dynamics and Organizational Challenges

Executing agencies such as UNIFEM/ASRO inevitably face the challenge of implementing a regional project affected by the ebb and flow of political dynamics in the Arab Region. While there may be increasing support to, and visibility of, women’s political participation, there are also conflicting agendas and competition in securing a share of the financial resources, all of which have implications for project implementation.

These external challenges may be further compounded by internal organizational challenges where human resources and other systemic constraints affect the efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation. In the case of UNIFEM/ASRO, the vision and aim to fulfil the organization’s mandate to contribute to Arab women’s empowerment was not matched by reality on the ground. It has thus resulted in the organization taking on an over-ambitious project which over time had to be necessarily narrowed down to a more manageable focus. The weak monitoring and reporting system in place, as well as the fact that the overburdening of the Regional Project Coordinator appears to have further encouraged the senior management’s ‘micro-management’ of the Project, further contributing to what essentially became a multi-country rather than a regional project *per se*.

Challenges to Arab Women in Politics

The three country reports identify various challenges faced by women in politics in Jordan, Lebanon and the UAE. Telephone interviews with stakeholders in some of the other participating countries also reveal various challenges. Some are common challenges, such as socio-cultural and financial constraints faced by women entering politics. Others may be country specific, such as, for example, the impact of the confessional and electoral system; or the extent of the political will at highest level to support translation of gender-sensitive policies into strategic interventions that contribute to dismantling barriers to women’s political participation.

Though the desk review (presented in Section B/1) indicated that the commissioned 'baseline' studies varied in quality, there is nevertheless more or less a common trend in the type of obstacles to women's political participation listed. The challenges faced by potential women candidates and leaders were in many cases echoed by the stakeholders interviewed by the Evaluation Team, as well as during the SWOT analysis undertaken with the national project coordinators. Specifically:

- Women's relatively low economic participation and empowerment is a factor contributing to their low political participation and empowerment (Syria).
- Women's political empowerment is linked to legal reform enabling them to be recognized and to function as full and equal citizens in society and the economy (Lebanon, Syria).
- Political parties and associations, even those with a secular or liberal agenda, do not generally perceive women's political empowerment as a priority (Kuwait, Syria).
- Civil society organizations promoting women's empowerment may not have the prerequisite strong links with the popular base at grassroots level (Syria).
- While women's educational level is an important prerequisite to participating in elections, it may be an insufficient factor in face of entrenched attitudes against women's political empowerment (Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait).
- Effective strategies are required to combat adverse stereotyping of women in the media (Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon).
- Effects of the prevailing patriarchal system are further compounded by women's own attitudes towards their political empowerment (Jordan, Kuwait).
- Women's access to, and control over, financial resources has implications for their financial ability to cover the costs of campaigning (Bahrain, Kuwait).
- Women's gender-based responsibilities for the household and child care limits the time available for political participation, even where house help is available, all the more if they are in paid employment (Bahrain, Kuwait).
- Confessional- and/or tribal-based political processes tend to exclude women from political decision-making posts, with community leaders generally tending to support male politicians; to which may be added the link with patriarchal norms and traditions affecting women's status in society (Jordan, Lebanon).
- Women's lack of knowledge of the political process and their legal illiteracy are factors affecting their attitudes towards supporting women's political empowerment (Bahrain, Lebanon).
- Municipal and local council regulations discourage women from participation in local elections (Bahrain).
- Limited democratic practices in student and other elections affect attitudes towards participation in the national and local election processes (Bahrain).

1.2 Lessons Learnt

The SWOT analysis facilitated by the Evaluation Team via a tele-conference from Amman/Jordan with the AWP Project National Coordinators was the first time that they had held a meeting to brainstorm on the project implementation process, achievements and challenges.⁷³

National coordinators drew on their experiences of the countries which they covered to address the SWOT components. They highlighted various lessons learnt from efforts to promote women's political participation and empowerment and suggested how this could be applied to future projects in this area.

In respect of strengths of the AWP Project, *resources* were perceived to have been a

⁷³- See Annex 5.

positive factor in all participating countries. The term is perceived to cover the high level political commitment to women's political empowerment in the respective countries; the calibre of national partners and their knowledge of the national/local political process (Egypt, Morocco); development of relevant training materials (Jordan); and the pool of experience on which the project could rely on (Kuwait). There were also *external circumstances* conducive to project implementation, including timeliness in view of forthcoming elections (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Syria); openings where gender-based rivalries were perceived as less important than other political or ideological rival (Bahrain); and overall growing public awareness of political issues (Bahrain, Kuwait, Syria). Further strengths pertain to *key level support* in terms of the project's participatory approach (Morocco), interest in networking (Morocco, Syria) and dynamics of civil society and the NGO sector (Morocco).

However, various *weaknesses* were also flagged, including *resource shortages* both in terms of available funding for project activities (Egypt, Syria) as well as in terms of human resources to reach target groups in urban as well as rural areas (Jordan). Another weakness of the AWP Project is the *insufficient tailoring of resources to national/local situation and needs*. This pertains not only to the generic training materials requiring time to be adapted to the national context (UAE), but also to criteria for selection of trainees (Egypt). *Insufficient understanding of election processes* on the part of trainees and insufficient networking and information exchange were perceived to be further weaknesses (UAE). There is also the *problem of competition* which may undermine results for women candidates (Bahrain). In Syria, *choice of partners* with whom to cooperate should have included the Parliament, while in Lebanon and Bahrain, sectarian concerns are among *the external factors* influencing project implementation.

Three areas specific areas of potential *opportunities* were flagged by the National Coordinators. Firstly, *communication* in terms of opening up dialogue between diverse stakeholders (Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria), a generally responsive media (Syria) and dialogue with youth (Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Syria). Secondly, *new systems and legislative structures* in place, leading to constitutional amendments (Egypt, Morocco, UAE), and the women's quota (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Syria). Thirdly, *growing solidarity and cooperation* between agencies (Jordan, Syria), evolving networks (Egypt, Morocco), and political will and commitment (Morocco, Syria, UAE).

But various *threats/potential risks* were also flagged by the National Coordinators. Specifically in terms of the *political environment* where new regimes may not have a similar political will to support women's empowerment (Egypt); where sectarian differences can block reform (Bahrain, Kuwait); discrepancies between universal and national legislation, including reservations to CEDAW (Syria); legal restrictions/age limit when running for office (Egypt); disenchantment with the political process and political parties (Morocco); short-time frame for identifying potential candidates (Kuwait, Morocco). Effect of *socio-cultural factors* may also be a threat (Bahrain, Kuwait, Syria, UAE). Increased *number of women candidates* may not necessarily ensure quality (Egypt, Syria, UAE). There may also be negative impacts of the current economic crisis (Jordan, Lebanon).

2. Recommendations

2.1 UNIFEM/Headquarters

- Ensure that the UNIFEM regional offices have the appropriate human resources and technical capacity to support national counterparts in interpretation of programme

objectives at the national level, development of annual work plans, as well as provision of guidance in respect of selection of relevant indicators, monitoring and reporting.

- Ensure that the UNIFEM regional office has the technical capacity to establish and fully exploit linkages to global and regional initiatives.
- Ensure that the timeline for planning surveys is realistic and takes into account the necessity of piloting questionnaires.

UNIFEM/ASRO

Project Design

- Prior to designing a project document, carry out a thorough needs assessment and mapping of where/how the proposed project can complement other similar activities with the aim of identifying a niche not yet being addressed by other agencies and stakeholders.
- Tailor project objectives to the reality of UNIFEM/ASRO's organizational structure and human resources capacity. Such tailoring needs to be matched by strategic collaboration with similar interventions to support synergy and value added.
- Ensure that project documents include a work plan for the whole timeline of the project which clearly identifies responsibility for carrying out regional and national level activities.

Implementation

- Strengthen the in-house monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and reporting capacity by establishing a regional M&E post.
- Ensure that an efficient documentation system is in place as part of effective monitoring and reporting.
- Establish a cost-effective system of regular tele-conferences with national partners, national coordinators and other stakeholders as part of efficient monitoring of and reporting on the project's implementation process.
- Ensure that aims and objectives of regional projects do not lose sight of the regional dimension and avoid blurring with national-level objectives. This in turn implies ensuring that national partners assume ownership of the project and are supported rather than 'micro-managed' by UNIFEM/ASRO.
- National coordinators should be in place at country level to support national partners and counterparts in assuming ownership of the project, as well as facilitating cooperation and networking with similar in-country interventions to ensure synergy and value added.
- Where more than one national partner is selected for project implementation, ensure that the selection criteria include complementarity between their activities, including their outreach to wider cross-sections of society.

Training

- Further develop the generic training materials into user-friendly training modules.
- Continue investing in the training of trainer component as part of UNIFEM/ ASRO's contribution to establishing a pool of skilled regional and national trainers.
- In view of stakeholders' interest, further support training workshops on gender responsive budgeting, to also include women involved in local level politics.

Advocacy and Networking

- Develop a coherent regional advocacy strategy that can be adapted by national partners to their specific country context. Link the advocacy strategy with an effective maintenance of the UNIFEM/ASRO website and as a means of promoting virtual networking.
- Consider supporting a separate website for Arab women in national and local politics to be regularly updated and to serve as a clearing house for networking and

information-sharing in the Arab Region.

2.3 Donors

The Evaluation Team suggests that donor support to similar projects may take the following into account:

- Require project proposals to include clear indications of the managerial and human resource capacity of the executing agency and the link with the capacity to implement planned objectives and activities.
- Require project proposals to include an exit strategy detailing measures conducive to post-project sustainability.
- Support end-of project workshops with a clear agenda of sharing lessons learnt and good practice and with the expected output of a strategic framework for further support of Arab women's political participation and empowerment. Ensure that such meetings involve both women and men to avoid marginalizing the focus of the workshops as a 'women's issue'.
- Support training workshops on gender-responsive budgeting that target women and men in political office at both the national and local/municipal levels.

2.4 National Counterparts

Key recommendations for national partners include:

- While specific projects are included in the organization's multi-year programme and annual work plans, ensure that there is also a separate project work plan to facilitate monitoring of the implementation process.
- With support from UNIFEM/ASRO Regional Coordinator and the National Coordinator collect relevant baseline data and develop indicators against which to measure progress in project implementation.
- Where pertinent, link the experience of the AWP Project with strategies aiming to address political dynamics at the local/municipal level.
- Support the establishment of a network of politically active women as part of developing a coherent strategy promoting women's entry in national and local elections. Link this initiative with encouragement of a mentoring system in support of women candidates.
- Adhere to guidelines and deadlines for reporting on project implementation to the National Coordinator.
- Actively support the proposed website for Arab women in national and local politics by sharing news and information, and linking the website to other in-country activities supporting women's political participation.
- Develop strategies to link actual and potential women candidates at national and local levels. Where pertinent, link with developing strategies to lobby for support to women's participation in decision-making in political parties.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Terms of Reference for AWP Final Evaluation

1. Project Title: UNIFEM Arab Women Parliamentarian Project 41670 (2005 – 2009)

2. Background and Purpose of the Evaluation

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Arab States Regional Office (ASRO) is commissioning a final evaluation of the governance project Arab Women Parliamentarians 41670 (AWP). The AWP aimed to empower Arab women parliamentarians as well as potential women leaders to act as agents of change through their participation in political processes, and to foster a political climate to achieve gender equality in the political sphere, so that this can in turn lead to gender equality in all aspects of national development. It contributes to DRF Outcomes 5 and 6 of UNIFEM's Strategic Plan (2008 – 2011).

This final evaluation is mandatory. Its purpose is to provide an independent, in-depth assessment of the results of this project over its entire period. Specifically, this final evaluation aims to:

- a. Evaluate the extent to which the project has contributed to the outcomes stated in the log frame.
- b. Consolidate lessons from experience, identify good practices, and make recommendations to guide future UNIFEM programming.
- c. Review project management and provide recommendations for the management of future projects, including a planned second phase of the AWP project.

The evaluation process, findings, and recommendations will provide good practices and lessons learned to enrich new programmes in the field of women and governance for UNIFEM at both the global and sub-regional levels, as well as for regional and national project counterparts and governmental and non-governmental agencies in the region and internationally. UNIFEM will also use the evaluation findings as an advocacy tool to strengthen and enhance the capacity of Arab women parliamentarians and potential candidates to parliament.

3. Context of the Project

The status of women in the Arab region varies greatly across and within countries. Over the past decade, most Arab countries have implemented reforms to advance women's rights and have shown an increasing sensitivity towards gender issues. Currently 13 out of 22 of countries in the region have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). There is a new generation of leaders in several Arab countries that have shown a commitment to women's rights and reform of social codes as an integral part of national economic and social development. For example, a quota system was introduced in Jordan during the 2007 parliamentary and municipality elections and there are discussions about introducing quotas in the upcoming Lebanese and Egyptian elections.

Women are striving to reach decision-making levels and are working to address and advocate for women rights. Some Arab parliamentarians show commitment to women's rights in their election campaigns. International donor organizations in the Arab countries give priority to women's empowerment programs, and governments are committed to working with the international community and national groups on improving women's position. However, despite the recognition of the need for gender balance in decision-making bodies and the efforts of the national women's movement, gender equality in Arab political life is far from being achieved and Arab women's participation in decision-making processes is still very limited.

Indeed, major challenges face Arab women in the governance sphere. Not only are their numbers in parliament and other decision-making positions very small; they also need support to shoulder their responsibilities as lawmakers and to legislate measures that will positively transform their countries. In addition, there is need to build capacity among potential women candidates to parliament, as well as to strengthen the willingness of men to share power and to demonstrate gender-sensitive attitudes to women in society. These steps would, in turn, lead to a wider societal awareness of the value of balanced participation of men and women in decision-making.

4. Subject of the Evaluation

There are both challenges and opportunities in advancing women's human rights and gender equality by furthering their participation in decision-making in parliament and local councils. The AWP governance project was formulated to address these challenges. UNIFEM is particularly well placed to support this work in the region. It is a recognized leader in women's human rights, and it has previously supported work in governance in the region, including strengthening government and civil society capacities to reform legislation to eliminate discriminatory provisions, capacity development for women leaders, and human rights education.

UNIFEM launched the AWP project in Syria, Jordan, Bahrain, Lebanon, Egypt, Kuwait, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 2005. The project was designed within the framework of the 2004 - 2007 Multi-Year Funding Framework (MYFF) and contributes to outcomes 5 and 6 of the UNIFEM Strategy Plan 2007 - 2011, which gives priority to increasing women's participation in the decision making processes that shape their lives. Women's political participation is one of the three key focuses of the Arab States SRS.

Engendering governance facilitates women's access to political and economic decision-making positions and supports their development as accountable and transformational leaders who can effectively advance a pro-poor and pro-women agenda. The project builds on and takes forward several UNIFEM areas of focus, including gender budgeting and violence against women.

The AWP project is grounded in international law and human rights, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), in particular Article 7. It responds directly to Paragraph 181 of the Beijing Platform for Action, "...without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goal of equality, development, and peace cannot be achieved." It also focuses on conflict management and resolution, with particular attention paid to Resolution 1325. It is closely linked with the national development strategies of Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Morocco, among others, which provide for enhancing the capacity of women leaders to participate in decision-making process.

The AWP project started in January 2005 and concludes in June 2009. It has been implemented in eight Arab countries - Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, and the UAE. Its overall goals are to facilitate the empowerment of women parliamentarians and future women leaders to act as transformative agents of change through their participation in political processes, and to engender political processes so as to contribute to gender equality in national development.

National partners in all eight countries are working with UNIFEM to implement the project. In addition, the UNIFEM ASRO has linked with ongoing programmes at the UNDP Amman Office as well as at ESCWA in Lebanon to enhance the capacity of parliamentarians and national leaders participating in municipality elections.

The underlying assumption of the AWP project has been that empowering women leaders within a framework of gender equality and human rights will contribute positively to the transformation of political as well as national development processes. Thus, the AWP project strategy, which has been sustained through the period of the project, has been to:

- Develop the capacity of key national institutions in the eight countries to strengthen governance structures, particularly national women's machineries, so as to support women's political roles, including through direct support to women parliamentarians and to candidates for national and local political office;
- Strengthen the capacity of these institutions to support forums and networks for women and men parliamentarians as well as candidates and potential leaders, so that they might broaden their understanding of the issues, exchange lessons learned and best practices, and evolve new approaches in overcoming obstacles;
- Disseminate information and support outreach to wider audiences, including the media, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and other opinion leaders.
- Emphasize co-operation between government authorities, research institutions at NGOs.

In line with the above strategy, the key partners of the project are the following:⁷⁴

- Jordanian National Forum for Women.
- National Council for Women in Egypt.
- National Committee for the Follow-up on Women's Issues in Lebanon.
- Syrian General Women Union.
- Association Democratique des Femmes du Maroc.
- General Women Union in the UAE.
- Supreme Council for Women in Bahrain.
- Social Cultural Society in Kuwait

The project strategy was implemented through three objectives and activities:

- a. An Arab women parliamentarians' Forum (AWPF)**, to offer opportunities for all Arab women parliamentarians to learn more about the status of women in their region, exchange views, disseminate information about best practices and achievements, plan concerted responses to emerging and continuing challenges, and develop shared visions. The Forum was to be composed of national groups of Arab women parliamentarians and to focus on governance issues, political participation and peace building.
- b. Gender sensitization for the Arab Parliamentarians** by mainstreaming gender in Arab parliaments and generating greater support for Arab women parliamentarians and potential candidates as well as for male candidates and politicians. Activities included orientation about the Beijing Platform for Action, gender equality, the significance of Arab women's participation in public life, and the value of democratic values in public and private life. This component also targeted the community, providing for participation in orientation sessions and dialogue with parliamentarians.

74- The list in the TOR has been updated/corrected by the Evaluation Team.

c. National Incubators for Arab Women Leadership Development The incubators aim to be catalysts to increase the awareness of women about the value of their participation in decision-making as well as to enhance the number and impact of potential women leaders at the national and local levels through training and workshops. The incubators aimed to provide women candidates with tools to increase their ability to run for election and to garner logistical support from the political parties and informal support networks and by winning the voter trust. The incubators also aimed to help women gain knowledge on the use of parliamentary procedures so as to be able to fulfill their electoral commitments. This component also targets constituents and other audiences through the production and dissemination of awareness raising materials on women’s political rights stressing the importance of women’s participation in the decision-making process at all levels.

The project outputs include: strengthening the capacity of Arab women parliamentarians and candidates for office; developing the capacity of the commissions for women in the project countries in areas such as gender mainstreaming; political participation; and gender budgeting; documenting best practices and lessons learnt regarding approaches to women’s issues, legislation impacting on women, advocacy for the Beijing Platform for Action and relevant international conventions; enhanced awareness of gender issues and international agreements among Arab women parliamentarians; workshops and training manuals to foster leadership growth, women’s role and decision-making in crisis management organizations and operations, and gender roles in peace processes and conflict resolution, among other issues; support structures and networking opportunities; educational opportunities; and the involvement of men in furthering a human rights agenda that fully includes women.

The AWP project unit worked under the overall supervision of the Regional Program Director of UNIFEM Amman and was responsible for the implementation of the regional components of the project. National activities were conducted by national counterparts who were sub-contracted for their implementation. The Project Manager provided technical support to the partners, and monitored project implementation at the country level.

Two major donors invested resources in this project:

Foreign Common Wealth (FCO)	\$ 1,316,703
Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)	\$ 1,631,841
Total:	\$ 2,948,544

5. Scope of the Evaluation

The final evaluation is intended to cover the entire period of the project (January 2005 – June 2009), and all eight countries of operation. It will cover the overall project goals as well as the activities in the three main areas: Arab women parliamentarians’ forum, gender sensitization for Arab parliamentarians, and national incubators for prospective Arab women leaders. It will identify the challenges faced by the project teams in, among other things: developing national capacity to strengthen Arab women’s participation in the political sphere as well as the capacity of individual women leaders; establishing coordination structures and networks; gender mainstreaming; enhancing knowledge of human rights and international conventions; engaging men and other allies in the cause of women’s political rights; documenting and disseminating lessons learned; and management approaches.

Although there are no other evaluations planned that could help to inform this evaluation, the evaluation team will be able to draw on the findings of the mid-term review conducted in 2007. The mid-term review examined the project's performance in terms of its strategies, goals, outputs, activities, and partnerships in the eight countries, as well as the project management structure, coordination and work methods.

6. Evaluation Questions

The evaluation should address questions relating to the project's effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, and sustainability. Some of the key questions in each area are set out below. These questions should be reviewed and finalized in the evaluation team's inception report, making them more specific to the AWP project, in collaboration with the evaluation task manager and the UNIFEM ASRO reference group.

Effectiveness

- 1) To what extent has the project achieved its expected results and why, or why not? Have there been any unintended results?
- 2) Were the indicators and monitoring framework adequate to assess the project's achievement of outputs and contribution to outcomes?
- 3) What programme strategies contributed to the achievement of results, including capacity development? Were they cost effective?
- 4) What partnerships were effective in achieving the project's objectives and what other types partnerships are needed?
- 5) What was the value added of the project's regional approach?

Relevance

- 1) How relevant was the programme design?
- 2) Did the project objectives and activities address the identified rights of the target groups?
- 3) To what extent have partners and beneficiaries been satisfied with the results? How do they consider that their capacity to promote the human rights of women has been strengthened?
- 4) To what extent has the project contributed to the achievement of national and regional gender equality priorities? Was it coherent with national and regional development plans?

Efficiency

- 1) Have the outputs been delivered in a timely manner?
- 2) Have resources been used to best effect?
- 3) Have UNIFEM's organizational structures, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the project?
- 4) Have project resources targeted groups of women with sensitivity to race, ethnicity, economic status, disability, and other potential sources of discrimination?

Sustainability

- 1) What is the likelihood that networks, initiatives and other achieved results will be maintained by the partners if the project were to cease?
- 2) What learning, leadership, process and project management capacities have been strengthened through the project?
- 3) Do the partners demonstrate leadership, commitment and technical and other capacity (financial resources, staffing) to continue to work with the project or replicate it?

7. Elements of an Approach to the Evaluation

The evaluation consultants will produce a detailed methodology for the evaluation that adheres to UNEG Norms and Standards and that is responsive to human rights and gender equality. The methodology will be set out in the consultants' inception report. The elements below will inform the methodology.

- a. Desk review of all relevant documents on the project, e.g., those relating to the project context at the regional and country levels, the project document, any baseline data available, logframe, implementation plan, monitoring reports, assessment and learning mission reports, donor reports, expenditure reports, the mid-term review, etc. This will be done prior to the inception report, and any field visit, focus group discussion, or individual interviews.
- b. A survey of stakeholders based on a short, simple questionnaire that assess stakeholder responses to the project's key activities, processes, and results. It will be sent to the following stakeholders in each country: beneficiaries, including women parliamentarians and local council members as well as candidates for parliament and local councils; male members of parliament and local councils; the women's groups that partnered the project; and the project coordinators at the national and regional level.
- c. Phone interviews with selected stakeholders and partners in all eight countries. The range of stakeholders and partners is set out in 7(b) above and will be selected based on desk review and consultation with project team.
- d. Field visits to gather in-depth information on the project's contribution to human rights and gender equality and on capacity development of beneficiaries. Three of the eight project countries have been selected for field visits based on agreed criteria. They are Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and Morocco. The criteria for country selection included: population size and geographic location; stage of national development regarding women's political participation; extent of pre-project capacity of national institutions engaged in women's human rights; extent of project success in developing institutional and individual capacity; and extent of national engagement in regional activities.

8. Expected Products

The evaluation will be expected to produce the following products:

- An inception report in which the consultant team will finalize the methodology, general evaluation questions, specific questions for different groups (beneficiaries, coordinators, management), and work plan, and address any outstanding issues. The inception plan should include an outline for the overall evaluation report as well as for the country studies. This will be produced at the end of the desk review.
- Three country reports and a brief summary on survey results and findings. The country reports will flesh out the project's process, activities, results, and lessons learned, and illustrate these with the feedback from the beneficiaries. The country reports will be no more than 10 pages long, and include an analysis of the project in the field, as well as examples, illustrations, and feedback from counterparts and beneficiaries. A short note on preliminary findings will also be produced, not to exceed five pages.

- Draft evaluation report that addresses the evaluation questions, analyzes and synthesizes the findings and lessons learned, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations. The main body should not exceed 30 pages, excluding the executive summary and annexes, and should follow UNEG norms and standards and UNIFEM quality criteria for reports.
- A final integrated evaluation report, based on comments received on the draft, that addresses the evaluation questions, analyzes and synthesizes the findings and lessons learned, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations. The main body should not exceed 30 pages, excluding the executive summary and annexes, and should follow UNEG norms and standards and UNIFEM quality criteria for reports.

The key evaluation products are set out below. All documents will be delivered in English.

Product	Responsible Party	Time Frame
Work plan with specific dates	Evaluation Team	July 2009
Inception report	Evaluation Team	July 2009
Tabulated survey results	Evaluation Team	August 2009
Submission of country reports and preliminary findings with tabulated survey results	Evaluation Team	By end-August 2009
Draft Report of the Evaluation	Evaluation Team	Early September 2009
Final Report and Executive Summary	Evaluation Team	By end-September 2009

The team leader will have a debriefing meeting with UNIFEM Regional Office staff either in person or by teleconference.

9. The Evaluation Team

Two international consultants will conduct the evaluation. They will not have had any direct involvement in the formulation and implementation of the project.

The team leader will have the following qualifications:

- At least a master's degree in the social sciences.
- At least 10 years of evaluation experience, at least four years of which in evaluating development projects.
- Thorough understanding of gender equality, human rights and development issues.
- Knowledge and experience around the thematic area under review (governance and women's political participation.)
- Previous experience in leading an evaluation and managing an evaluation team.
- Excellent communication skills and demonstrated ability to facilitate group discussions.
- Demonstrated ability to produce high quality evaluation reports, including recommendations for future work.
- Experience and understanding of the regional and sub regional context essential.
- Fluent in English with at least good working knowledge of Arabic.
- Ability to work with the Evaluation Manager to ensure that a high quality evaluation report is produced.

The Team member will have:

- At least a master's degree in the social sciences.
- At least 5 years of evaluation experience.
- Thorough understanding of gender equality, human rights and development issues.

- Knowledge and experience around the thematic area under review (governance and women's political participation).
- Excellent communication skills and demonstrated ability to facilitate group discussions.
- Demonstrated ability to contribute to high quality evaluation reports, including recommendations for future work.
- Experience and understanding of the regional and sub regional context essential.
- Fluent in English with at least good working knowledge of Arabic.
- Ability to work with the team leader to ensure that a high quality evaluation report is produced

The team leader will have overall responsibility for the quality and timeliness of the products including and up to the final integrated report. S/he will be the point person for ASRO and the Evaluation task manager. S/he will divide the tasks so that each member of the team carries a fair load and produces a quality product. The team member will have primary responsibility, in collaboration with the team leader, for designing and administering the survey, and for tabulating the results. S/he will undertake other tasks as agreed with the team leader, including phone interviews, analysis of results, and drafting of sections of country reports and the draft and final integrated report.

10. Management of the Evaluation Process

The evaluation will be conducted between July 2009 and September 2009. UNIFEM ASRO will manage the evaluation and will designate an Evaluation Task Manager to directly manage the evaluation process. UNIFEM ASRO will establish a Reference Group for internal validation of the process and to enlarge the circle of learning. The Reference Group will include a representative of ASRO as well as the regional and national project coordinators. It will review the evaluation TOR, the inception report, and the first draft of the evaluation report and provide feedback.

UNIFEM ASRO will also engage the project's counterparts in the three countries (Jordanian National Forum for Women, the Association Democratique des Femmes du Maroc, and the General Women's Union in the UAE). They will serve as an external reference group, and the evaluation TOR will be shared with them; they will be invited to provide feedback on the inception report as well as on the preliminary draft of the evaluation.

The UNIFEM AWP project team in Jordan will:

- Organize and make available the set of documents to be reviewed by the Evaluation consultant;
- Provide a list of project partners, beneficiaries and stakeholders in order to enable the Evaluation consultant to select particular individuals for interviews/ meetings;
- Arrange the interviews with selected partners, stakeholders, beneficiaries;
- Organize any necessary logistics for the evaluation consultants;
- Develop a dissemination strategy to ensure that the final evaluation report reaches its target audiences.

A management response to the evaluation recommendations will be issued within one month of finalizing the evaluation.

The evaluation budget is expected to cover:

Consultant fees. It is estimated that the consultants will require 20 days each. This will cover:

- Desk review; induction briefings by the evaluation task manager and ASRO management and project team; survey design and administration; phone interviews with selected stakeholders and counterparts; and inception report (**5 days** – 2 at home base and 3 in Amman);

- Field visits to three countries (**8 days** – 3 full days in Jordan for the evaluation team; 3 days for team leader in UAE simultaneously with 3 days for team member in Morocco; 2 days travel)
- Draft evaluation report, including country reports and tabulation and analysis of survey results; and final evaluation report based on comments received (**7 days**).
- Travel and per diem to cover the missions to Jordan, the UAE and Morocco, with attention paid to organizing the field visits in a cluster to keep expenses reasonable.

The total amount of the evaluation budget will not exceed \$44,000, including evaluation task manager.

11. Ethical Code of Conduct

It is expected that the evaluators will respect the ethical code of conduct of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). These are:

- **Independence:** Evaluators shall ensure that independence of judgment is maintained and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.
- **Impartiality:** Evaluators shall operate in an impartial and unbiased manner and give a balanced presentation of strengths and weaknesses of the policy, program, project or organisational unit being evaluated.
- **Conflict of Interest:** Evaluators are required to disclose in writing any past experience, which may give rise to a potential conflict of interest, and to deal honestly in resolving any conflict of interest which may arise.
- **Honesty and Integrity:** Evaluators shall show honesty and integrity in their own behaviour, negotiating honestly the evaluation costs, tasks, limitations, scope of results likely to be obtained, while accurately presenting their procedures, data and findings and highlighting any limitations or uncertainties of interpretation within the evaluation.
- **Competence:** Evaluators shall accurately represent their level of skills and knowledge and work only within the limits of their professional training and abilities in evaluation, declining assignments for which they do not have the skills and experience to complete successfully.
- **Accountability:** Evaluators are accountable for the completion of the agreed evaluation deliverables within the timeframe and budget agreed, while operating in a cost effective manner.
- **Obligations to Participants:** Evaluators shall respect and protect the rights and welfare of human subjects and communities, in accordance with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights conventions. Evaluators shall respect differences in culture, local customs, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction, gender roles, disability, age and ethnicity, while using evaluation instruments appropriate to the cultural setting. Evaluators shall ensure prospective participants are treated as autonomous agents, free to choose whether to participate in the evaluation, while ensuring that the relatively powerless are represented.
- **Confidentiality:** Evaluators shall respect people's right to provide information in confidence and make participants aware of the scope and limits of confidentiality, while ensuring that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source.
- **Avoidance of Harm:** Evaluators shall act to minimize risks and harms to, and burdens on, those participating in the evaluation, without compromising the integrity of the evaluation findings.
- **Accuracy, Completeness and Reliability:** Evaluators have an obligation to ensure that evaluation reports and presentations are accurate, complete and reliable. Evaluators shall explicitly justify judgments, findings and conclusions and show their underlying rationale, so that stakeholders are in a position to assess them.

- **Transparency:** Evaluators shall clearly communicate to stakeholders the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria applied and the intended use of findings. Evaluators shall ensure that stakeholders have a say in shaping the evaluation and shall ensure that all documentation is readily available to and understood by stakeholders.
- **Omissions and wrongdoing:** Where evaluators find evidence of wrong-doing or unethical conduct, they are obliged to report it to the proper oversight authority.

Annexes:

1. UN Evaluation Norms and Standards
(http://www.unevaluation.org/normsandstandards/index.jsp?doc_cat_source_id=4)
2. Quality Criteria for UNIFEM Evaluation Reports (Annex 1)

Annex 2: References

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Annex 3: List of Persons Met and Interviewed

3.1 Persons Met During the AWP Mission in Jordan 26-30 July, 2009

Jordanian National Commission for Women

*Asma Khader, Secretary General

Senate

*Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, Senator, Former Regional Director UNIFEM ASRO, Secretary General of National Council of Family Affairs

UNDP/Jordan

*Janette Shurdoum, Project Manager, UNDP Parliament Project

AWP Participants

*Iman Al-Hiyari (candidate, member of Municipal Council, Salt)

*Rajai'i Al-Naffah (candidate, member of Municipal Council, Salt)

*Nisreen Tarawneh (trainee)

*Taroub Al-Bdour (trainee)

AWP TOT

*Ahmad Al-Zoubi, Trainer

UNIFEM ASRO

*Dina Assaf, Regional Director

*Ensherah Ahmed, Deputy Director

Shirin Shukri, AWP Jordan National Coordinator

2.2 Persons Met During the AWP Mission in Lebanon 2-7 August 2009

National Committee for Follow Up on Women's Issues

Dr Aman Kabbara Chaarani - President (also President of Lebanese Council for Women)

Dr Fahmia Charaffeddine - Vice President

Ms Mona Ibrahim - Treasurer

Ms Hind Masri - Executive Committee Member

Ms Naziha El Sayed - Executive Committee Member

Ms Carmen Boustani - Executive Committee Member

Ms Thouraya Hachem - Executive Committee Member & researcher

Ms Rola Zoayter - Coordinator for Bekaa

Ms Latifa Nasreddine- Secretary

National Council for Lebanese Women

Ms Joumana Abourousse Moufarege - Director

Parliamentarians

Mme Nayla Moawad, Former Deputy for Zghorta, (elected 1992, 1996, 2000, 2005) Former Minister for Social Affairs

Municipal Council members

Ms Zainab Chamis - twice candidate for Hermel, 1998, 2004 (not elected), teacher

Ms Roula Ajouz Sidani - Municipal Council member, Beirut II, elected in 1998, 2004; Editor "Cedar Wings"

Dr Noha Ghoussainy – elected to Municipal Council of Baaqline, 1998, 2004; Mayor of Baaqline, President of the Federation of Municipalities of Chouf-es-Souayjani since 2004.

Other

Dr Julinda Abu Nasr, Founder of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World

Dr. Fatima Sbaity Kassem, Former Director, Centre for Women, UN-ESCWA, Beirut, Lebanon
Visiting Scholar, Institute for Research on Women and Gender (IRWaG),
Columbia University, New York

UNIFEM ASRO Amman –

Shirin Shukri, National Coordinator for Lebanon

2.3 Persons Met During the Evaluation Mission in UAE 2-5 August 200975

UAE General Women's Union/Abu Dhabi

- *Abdallah, Nour, GWU member
- *Al-Amiri, Fatima Salem, GWU member
- *Al-Mazrou'i, Khairiyah Jaber Salem, Department of Administration
- *Al Mehrazi, Fatima Abdallah Khamees, Assistant to Director of Finance and Administration

Family Development Foundation/Abu Dhabi

- *Al-Kilani, Amneh Fathi Zaid, Manager, Strategic Planning & Performance Management Department
- *Al-Romaithi, Noora Hamad, Head of Purchasing Section & Contracts
- *Khanji, Jamila Suliman, Manager, Health Development Department

UAE/ Fujairah

- *Alali, Fatima Ahmad Obaid, Deputy Head of Education Council,
- *Al-Awad, Widad Mohamad, Head of Procurement, Ministry of Health
- *Al Dhanhani, Sheikha Saeed, Emiri Court, President of Social Affairs Department
- *AL-Hadiri, Fatima Mohamad Suheil, Director of School, Deputy Director of Fujairah Cultural Association
- *Al-Ghoul, Wafa Khalfan Obaid, Head of Media and Communication
- *Al-Madi, Aisha Ahmad Mohamad, Deputy Head, Fujairah Education Council, Director of School
- *Al-Naqbi, Fatima Ahmad Obaid, Director, Social Development Centre
- *Al-Samahi, Rouwaya, Female Member of FCN Representing Fujairah
- *Al-Yamahi, Aisha Ahmed Mohammed, Deputy Chairman, Council for Education and Academic Affairs
- *Al-Yamahi, Maryam Rashed, Assistant Head of Nursing, Fujairah Hospital

UAE/Sharjah

- *Al Megani, Alya Ahmad, Department of Culture & Information, Supervisor of Cultural Activities, Eastern District

UNIFEM

- *Moza Saeed AL Otaiba, UNIFEM National Coordinator

UNDP

- *Aloush, Khaled, Resident Representative
- *El-Dewary, Ayat, Programme Analyst

75- In English language alphabetical order

Lawyer

*Al-Haithami, Abdel Qader, Al-Haithami Advocates and Legal Consultants, Abu Dhabi

2.4 Persons Interviewed by Telephone

Bahrain

Bahija Al-Dlaimi, Supreme Council for Women

Jordan

*Taroub Al-Boudour , AWP training participant

Kuwait

*Ibtihaj Al-Duwairi, Women Social and Cultural Society

*Fatma Al-Ayad, Women Social and Cultural Society

Morocco:

*Touria Cherqui, Administrator of hospital in Rabat; candidate in 1997 Parliament elections (not elected); won seat in 2007 elections

*Khadija Errebah, Head of ADFM

*Fatima Ferhate, Maths Professor, won seat in 2003 municipal elections, not elected in 2009.

*Leila Rwihi, National Coordinator

Syria

*In'am Abbas, AWP training participant; ex-Parliament Member

*Suad Bakour, Syrian General Women Union

*Hana Qadoura, Syrian General Women Union

*Majida Qteit, current President of Syrian General Women Union

Annex 4: Timeline of AWP Project Implementation⁷⁶

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	
REGIONAL ACTIVITY							
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> = participants in Regional event <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> participant in sub-regional event Joint with other UN agency Studies AWP training input G Local elections A National elections		1st Regional Symposium, Beirut (with IPU, AWO) (=> Beirut Declaration) Abu Dhabi Symposium	2nd Regional Symposium (Amman) (with IPU, AWO, UNDP)	Regional Workshop on Local Governance (Amman) ESCWA Regional Forum hosted (Amman) Regional Workshop on Gender Budgeting & building relationships (Amman)	3 rd Regional Forum (Abu Dhabi) - cancelled last moment (AWO, ALS, Cawthar)		
		Production & printing training materials kits		2nd printing (revised format) training materials			
SUB-REGIONAL MENA/ SIDA	Preparatory discussions with						
Egypt	WNC Preparing training materials- 2 kit: women & management/ administration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ToT &	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> national training	p A p <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Media study			

76- Compiled by the Evaluation Team. Extracted from various sources: questionnaires returned by National Coordinators, Annual Progress Reports, UNIFEM ASRO Mission Reports, files, discussions with UNIFEM staff

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Jordan	<i>Parliament; JNFW JNCW Preparing training materials – Political & election processes</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Round Tables Civil Society	þ A G		
		ToT		þ Gender Budgeting Workshop		
			national training	Extensive pre- election training		
			“Baseline” Study published	Media study		
Lebanon	FUCAW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Round Tables (Regional)	þ		G
		ToT		þ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		Capacity building Workshops (with UNDP)	national training			
		“Baseline” Study published				
Morocco	UNIFEM ADFM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		þ A		G
		ToT		þ		
			national training			
		Study commissioned				
Syria	SGWU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Round Tables (Regional)	þ A G		
		ToT		þ		
			national training			
		“Baseline” Study published				
SUB- REGIONAL GULF/ FCO		<i>Preparatory discussions with partners</i>			Gulf Forum	

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Bahrain		SCW <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A G	b	b	
		ToT		b		
		Capacity building Workshops (with UNDP)	national training			
		Studies with UNDP				
Kuwait		SCS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> G		b	b	
		ToT		b		
		Capacity building Workshops (with UNDP)	national training			
		Studies with UNDP				
United Arab Emirates		FUW <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		b	b	
		ToT		b		
		Capacity building Workshops (with UNDP)	national training			
		Studies with UNDP				

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
(Oman)		MoSA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		A G		
		ToT				
OTHER COUNTRIES		ToT Iraq	<i>Algeria, Tunisia, Yemen, OPT, Sudan</i>	<i>Yemen, OPT, Sudan Iraq</i>		

Annex 5: Summary SWOT Analysis

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <p>* RESOURCES (including improved through project) L, E, S, UAE, B, K, M <i>(calibre of partners-E, M; knowledge on political participation L, E; local resources - including consultants/expertise, national capacity- L, E, UAE, S; training materials J - & adapted materials for GCC-UAE, quality training - S, awareness & advocacy skills- J, E; political/ high level commitment - UAE, B, M, leadership in place B; pool of experience to build on K; UNIFEM back-up - M)</i></p> <p>* OPPORTUNITIES/ EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES J, E, B, K, M, S <i>(Timing of elections - J, M, E, S; interest of partners - E, M; openings with Parliament - E; opening because other rivalries stronger than gender issues - B; growing political awareness - B, K, S.)</i></p> <p>* SOLIDARITY & KEY LEVEL SUPPORT DEVELOPING - B, K, M, S, UAE <i>(Interest in networking - S, M; Participatory approach adopted from the start - M; strong national NGO dynamics - M)</i></p>	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <p>* RESOURCE SHORTAGES E, J, K, S <i>(Insufficient human and technical resources to cover urban & rural areas - J; small budgets - S, E; shortage of time pre-election - K;</i></p> <p>* INSUFFICIENT TAILORING OF RESOURCES TO LOCAL/ NATIONAL SITUATIONS & NEEDS B, E, <i>(criteria for participant selection too generic - E; training materials not always fitting national context UAE;)</i></p> <p>* INSUFFICIENT UNDERSTANDING OF ELECTION PROCESSES UAE <i>(expectations of results of capacity building participation as passport to selection);</i></p> <p>* COMPETITION RATHER THAN SUPPORT BETWEEN POTENTIAL CANDIDATES UNDERMINING RESULTS B</p> <p>* LOW SELF-CONFIDENCE OF WOMEN</p> <p>* INSUFFICIENT NETWORKING AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE M, S, UAE <i>(Regional exchanges didn't develop - M)</i></p> <p>* PARTNERSHIP CHOICE S -(Parliament should have been a key partner)</p> <p>* EXTERNAL FACTORS L, B (Security - L; Sunni-Shia conflicts - B)</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>* COMMUNICATIONS L, E, B, S, M <i>(Opening up of dialogue between diverse communities, different levels, parliaments - L, B, K, S; Responsive media - S; youth interest & dialogue - B, E, J, S;)</i></p> <p>* NEW SYSTEMS & LEGISLATIVE STRUCTURES E, J, M, S, UAE <i>(Legal & /or constitutional amendments - E, M, UAE; quota system introduced/ adopted - J, E, M, S;</i></p> <p>* GROWING SOLIDARITY AND COOPERATION E, J, L, M, S, UAE <i>(Opening up collaboration with other agencies -J, S; networks evolving -E, M; political will & commitment - UAE, M, S)</i></p>	<p>THREATS/ POTENTIAL RISKS</p> <p>* POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT FACTORS B, E, K, S, M <i>(New regimes may be more closed - E; Sectarian differences might block reforms - B, K; discrepancies between laws, linking to reservations &/or non-ratification of international instruments e.g. CEDAW - S; legal restrictions e.g. age limits, can discourage political participation - E; Availability of parliamentarians - M; Disenchantment with political processes & parties - M; competitiveness may be stronger than solidarity - M; resistance by political parties & political party agendas - M; short timeframe for identifying candidates - K, M)</i></p> <p>* SOCIO-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT FACTORS B, K, S, UAE <i>(Culture - UAE; Segregation - UAE, gaps in understanding between old & new MPs - S ;)</i></p> <p>* QUANTITY OF REPRESENTATIVES MAY NOT ENSURE NECESSARY CAPACITY/ QUALITY E, S, UAE</p> <p>* SECURITY SITUATION L</p> <p>* NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF ECONOMIC CRISIS J, L</p>

B=Bahrain; E=Egypt; J=Jordan; K=Kuwait; L=Lebanon; M=Morocco; S=Syria; UAE

Annex 6: Parliamentary Elections in AWP Countries⁷⁷

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Bahrain			Parliamentary Nov				Parliamentary C of R Nov-Dec Shura Dec Local Elections Nov			
Egypt	Local Elections April		Parliamentary Shura Nov PA Nov		Local Elections April	Referendum March Parliamentary Shura June		Referendum May Presidential Sept Parliamentary PA Nov-Dec		
Jordan		Parliamentary				Local Elections July Parliamentary NA Nov		Parliamentary Senate Nov		Parliamentary NA June
Kuwait	Parliamentary			Parliamentary NA May Local Elections June	Parliamentary NA May Local Elections MC by- elections June-July		Parliamentary NA June	Local Elections June		Parliamentary NA July
Lebanon				Parliamentary NA June	Presidential May	Parliamentary NA by- elections Aug		Parliamentary NA May-June	Local Elections May	
Morocco	Parliamentary Sept			Local Elections June		Parliamentary H of Reprs Sept	Parliamentary H of Councillors Sept			Local Elections Sept
Syria		Parliamentary				Parliamentary PA April Referendum May Local Elections Aug				Parliamentary PA March Local Elections June
UAE							Parliamentary Fed Nat C Nov			

77- Compiled by the Evaluation Team.

Annex 7: AWP Country Report Jordan

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A. Background

The Arab Women Parliamentarian Project development objective is 'to facilitate the empowerment of Arab women parliamentarians to act as agents of change through their transformative participation in political processes and to foster an appropriate political climate needed to achieve gender equality in all aspects of national development'.

The immediate objectives as set out in the Project Document are:

- Establishment and functioning of an Arab Women Parliamentarians' Forum (AWPF).
- Gender sensitization of Arab Parliamentarians.
- Establishment and functioning of national incubators for prospective Arab women leaders.⁷⁸

Jordan is one of eight countries selected to participate in the AWP project. The objectives were defined for the Region as a whole.⁷⁹ No country-specific adjustments or details were added to guide adjustment to the national context and define specific targets and objectives to be achieved in Jordan.

1. National Context

Jordan has a bi-cameral Parliament, with a House of Representatives (*majlis al-nuwwab*) composed of 110 members elected by the population, and a Senate (*majlis al-'ayan*) with 55 members appointed by the Crown. Although there are some 30 political parties in Jordan, family and tribal affiliations often carry more weight in election processes. Furthermore, Jordan's election laws have included quota systems to ensure representation. Since the 1980s there have been three seats allocated to Circassians, nine seats to Christian minorities, and three districts (nine seats) to the Bedouins of Jordan.

According to the Jordanian Constitution, all citizens are equal under the law.⁸⁰ However, as is the case in various countries of the Arab Region, the wording of some articles may leave room for conflicting interpretation or have not been amended in line with CEDAW articles.⁸¹ Jordan's essentially patriarchal society is particularly reflected in rural and tribal communities. In practice there are many spheres, including political participation, where women do not benefit from equality under the law. However, there is a political will and commitment at the highest levels to improving the status of women in Jordan.

Women secured the right to vote in national elections in 1974, and in municipal elections since 1982.⁸² Women's participation as candidates in elections dates from 1993, when three women stood, and one won a seat (under the Circassian quota). Disappointment with election results in 1997, when no female candidate was elected, led to active calls for a women's quota. An amendment to the 2001 Election Law prior to Parliamentary elections in 2003 included a clause introducing a quota of six of the 110 seats for

78- UNIFEM ASRO AWP Project Document, pp. 16-17, p. 20.

79- The other countries are Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria and the United Arab Emirates. A ninth country - Oman - eventually dropped out due to political developments.

80- Jordan Constitution 1952, various amendments.

81- For example, the 2007 UNCEDAW Committee reviewing Jordan's 3rd and 4th reports noted that Article 6 in the Jordanian Constitution has not been amended to explicitly incorporate equality; nor has legislation on polygamy and safe abortion for victims of rape been reconsidered.

82- Since Parliament was suspended 1968-1984, Jordanian women voted for the first time during the 1989 Parliamentary elections.

women.⁸³ The increased opportunity to be more politically active has been encouraging participation of women as candidates. Of the 54 women participating in the 2003 elections, six were elected under the quota system. By 2007, the number of women standing for election to the House of

Table 1: Women in Jordanian national government, 1993-2007

Year	# women candidates	# women elected outside of quota	# women elected under quota	# women appointed to <i>Majlis al-Ayan</i>
1993	3	1		2
1997	7	0		3
2003	54		6	7
2007	199	1	6	7

Representatives were almost fourfold the number in 2003 (199 women out of 885 candidates). Not only did they win the six seats under the quota system; one woman was also elected directly outside the quota system.

The Government has demonstrated political will to support women's political participation. In 1979 the first female Minister of Social Affairs was appointed, followed by appointment of the first female Minister of Information in 1984. Since 1995, a number of women have been appointed to Cabinet posts, and in 1997 a woman was appointed Deputy Prime Minister. Portfolios assigned to women have included not only traditional ones such as Social Affairs, but more recently also Trade and Industry, and Planning and International Cooperation. For the first time, a woman was appointed to the Senate in 1989. A growing number of women have since been appointed by the King, where they now hold seven of the 55 Senate seats.⁸⁴

Calls to increase the quota for women to 30 per cent of seats in the Parliament – as stipulated in CEDAW – have so far not been successful. During the 14th Session of Parliament (2007), proposed amendments were rejected, even by some women Parliamentarians.

Table 2: Women in Jordanian Municipal elections 2003-2007

Year	# women candidates	# women elected outside of quota	# women elected under quota	# women appointed
2003	46	5	-	97
2007	355	20	195	-

83- Temporary Law No. 11/2003, amending the Election Law for Parliament.

84- Husein Abu Rumman (2004). 'The Women's Quota in Jordan: Crowning Three Decades of Support for Female Political Participation', in IDEA/UNDP/UNIFEM ASRO/NCW (2004). 'The Arab Quota Report: Selected Case Studies'.

In 2003, relatively few women stood for municipal elections, and only five women won seats on Municipal Councils. As a result, 97 women were appointed in an effort by the government to increase women's participation in local government. Under the 2007 Municipalities Law endorsed by Parliament, the Government allocated 20 per cent of Municipal Council seats for women, which came into effect for the 2007 municipal elections. As a result, the number of women standing for local elections rose more than eightfold, reaching 355, of whom 195 were elected under the quota system. Twenty female candidates were directly elected, a development perceived as a milestone in local Jordanian politics. One Municipal Council in the South elected a woman as Municipal Council Head.

According to the National Democratic Institute (NDI), not only did some of the tribes choose women candidates to represent them in the 2007 elections; for the first time they also included women on the tribal committees that selected candidates.⁸⁵

2. Key Gender-Specific Challenges

The following reasons were cited why women candidates in Jordan did not win any seats in the 1997 elections:⁸⁶

- *Male political culture militates against women's political participation.
- *Lack of political party and media support.
- *Lack of confidence in women candidates' capabilities.
- *Lack of networking and cooperation between women's organizations and female members of parliament.

While the 2007 elections may also have been affected by the above cited attitudes, they are overall deemed to have been 'the first non-partisan election observation in Jordan's history ... (as well as) ...a breakdown of traditional tribal politics and active participation on the part of youth'. But it was also pointed out that there was 'a weak showing by political parties and rise in the role of money in elections'.⁸⁷ Indeed, overall in Jordan, political parties have not been active in promoting and supporting female members to run in elections; though keeping in mind the previous observation regarding the extent to which tribal and other affiliations may override party membership.

The debate on the quota system in Jordan points out some positive aspects, namely that the women's quota is independent of other closed quotas. Thus not only does the women's quota deal equally with all women candidates irrespective of their affiliations; women's quota seats can be in addition to other seats that women may win in open competition with male candidates. However, the women's quota system is perceived to also have its downside since it is 'not fair to women in densely populated areas ... (and the) ... system produces weak women candidates from less populated areas who are not well-experienced'. Moreover, a number of women's and human rights organizations expressed disappointment that female Deputies did not do more to support women's rights while in office, including support of calls for increasing women's quota in the Parliament.⁸⁸

85- <http://www.ndi.org/jordan>

86- Abu-Zayd, Gehan (no date). 'In Search of Political Power - Women in Parliament in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon'. <http://archive.idea.int/women/parl/studies>

87- <http://www.ndi.org/jordan>

88- <http://www.mena-electionguide.org>

Interestingly, a survey of the 2007 elections reveals that respondents from lower income groups tended to be more positive about the quota system relative to higher income groups.⁸⁹ Newspaper reports following the municipal elections and an exit poll undertaken in six municipalities suggest that women tended to vote for male family members, while a number of men interviewed actually voted for women.⁹⁰ As several male voters interviewed by the media indicated, they voted for a female candidate because they 'were looking for merits and honesty', perhaps influenced by slogans such as 'You (men) trusted women to raise your children, wouldn't you trust them to serve your country?'⁹¹

In any case, the quota for women may eventually influence attitudes towards women participating in politics in Jordan in various ways. Women themselves are encouraged to stand for election as they know there are seats allocated for them. Concurrently, the leaders of different groups seeking to win representation sometimes see the quota for women as a means of winning extra seats for their tribe, family or ethnic group, rather than recognition of women's capacity to stand in their own right. In such cases, women candidates may be supported in the expectation that if they win a seat they will align their influence as Deputy with the directives of their interest group rather than serve the interest of the general population and more specifically issues that affect the status of women. As such, the extent of empowerment can be restricted by the pressures from the group that support women's candidature.

However, as the Evaluation Mission's interviews with female municipal council members revealed,⁹² female candidates face serious financial constraints in running for election. All too often they may have to use their own savings or secure a loan to finance their campaign. Although male kin and members of their tribal or other community-based groups may be supportive, this generally tends to stop short of the required funding support. On the other hand, women running for political office at local level may have an advantage over those running for national elections. As one respondent put it, 'people at the local level know us and our families, and this can add to our visibility just as much as campaign posters'. Yet respondents also pointed out that they would not have considered running for election if male kin, in particular fathers and husbands, had not been supportive, including accompanying them on the campaign trail.

Obviously, key gender challenges in the political sphere in Jordan cannot be addressed in isolation from women's social and economic empowerment. The need for such a holistic approach is reflected in various advocacy programmes and messages by civil society organizations, including the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) and the Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW), both of whom were the selected partners of the AWP Project.

89- IPSOS Marketing Research (2007). 'Final Analysis & Research Results. Opinion & Social Research: Parliamentary Elections'.

90- Jordan Center for Social Research, <http://jcsr-jordan.org/Registrationforms/633246675648146428.PDF>

91- "Family ties dominate women voters' choices" by Rana Hussein, Jordan Times, Wednesday, August 1, 2007.

92- During the Evaluation Mission's field visit to Jordan 26-31 July 2009.

B. Main Findings of the Country Evaluation

1. Relevance of the Project

The AWP project was relevant in relation to national concern about women's political participation, reflected in revisions of electoral laws and Crown appointments of women to the Senate, as well as appointment of women to Municipal Council seats.

The choice of partners in Jordan allowed for building on existing networks (through the JNFW, which has membership down to grass root levels), and contributing to both gender equality advocacy work at national levels and networking between government bodies through JNCW's work with Gender Focal Points in Ministries.

The timing of the AWP project came at a critical point in time given the 2007 national elections, and for the first municipal elections with a women's quota. The chosen AWP partners, JNCW and JNFW, were already engaged in similar activities in their own organisation's work plans, with funding from a range of national and foreign donors.⁹³ The AWP project was implemented at a time where many organizations were actively involved in preparing the way for women's participation in the up-coming 2007 local and national elections.

The first objective of the AWP project, *establishment of an Arab Women Parliamentarian's Forum*, in the sense of dynamic processes of networking and information sharing between women decision-makers and leaders, requires tailoring to fit the Jordan context. Logically, tailoring this objective to national level would also imply contributing to networking between Jordanian Women Parliamentarians (a small group) and women concerned with and/or running in local elections. JNFW's networks have provided a basis for this. A number of other organisations have also invested efforts in this direction, for example the Women Helping Women (WHW) Political Action Committee created in 2006, an initiative of the NDI. Specific contributions of the AWP project would be difficult to pinpoint, but there has been movement in this direction in which the AWP project has been involved. Yet, enhancing links between Jordanian Women Parliamentarians (or potential Parliamentarians and decision-makers) with other women and groups across the Arab Region has received little attention.

To address the second objective, *gender sensitization of Parliamentarians*, a number of Round Tables were organised within the context of the AWP project, covering issues such as gender-responsive budgeting, gender mainstreaming and advocacy for mechanisms to increase women's participation in political life. Here also, the AWP project has been implemented in a context where UNIFEM's partners have been involved in other activities addressing very similar objectives.

UNIFEM ASRO commissioned a study 'Towards Political Empowerment of Jordanian Women', published jointly with the Jordanian National Council for Women (JNCW). Although referred to by ASRO as a 'baseline study' it has served more as an information tool to sensitize civil society, the media and politicians as to the realities and barriers faced by women entering politics. As such it has contributed towards addressing the second immediate objective.

93 - For example, the JNCW formed an Election Committee in 2002 which drew up a work plan focusing on training, awareness-raising and operational measures aimed at mobilizing female voters and candidates. <http://www.jncw.jo/programmes>

There has been a narrowing of the concept concerning the *establishment and functioning of national incubators for prospective Arab women leaders*. As originally designed, such ‘incubators’ were conceived as a pool of training skills and other resources that can be called upon to help potential women candidates prepare themselves for effective campaigning, and to assist newly elected decision-makers fulfil the tasks and responsibilities linked to their decision-maker roles. Indeed, the capacity building aspect of the concept has been developed. Training of Trainers (TOT) has contributed to a pool of trainers able to support training for political participation. A series of training courses organized under the AWP Project, especially for women involved in the municipal elections in 2007, reached women across the country. This took place through the JNFW and its network of grass root organizations. However, structures to facilitate access to other resources (such as information bases) that can strengthen capacity of candidates and elected women to fulfil their roles more effectively, do not appear to have been developed specifically under the AWP Project.

An opportunity was seized with the application of quotas for women in the 2007 Municipal Elections. Extension of objectives to include not only women Parliamentarians but also women Municipal Councillors in the target groups for training and local level round tables was very relevant to achieving the overall objective of the Project. By providing support to women to declare candidature at this level, develop campaign strategies and then, for those elected, equipping them with some of the knowledge and skills required to fulfil their roles effectively, ground is being prepared for strengthening women’s credibility in politics and hence, at a later stage, in their candidature for the House of Representatives.

2. Implementation Process

2.1 Efficiency

A decision was made to assign national coordinator responsibilities to the overall UNIFEM ASRO Regional AWP project coordination, reducing efficiency in two ways. On the one hand, the role of national coordinator for Jordan was only one of many responsibilities assigned to the Programme Manager responsible for the AWP project, resulting in stretching human resources available for coordination and technical backstopping of the Jordan component of the AWP project.

On the other hand, the shared responsibility for Regional and Jordanian project coordination created a situation conducive to blurring lines of responsibility between what was part of national implementation, and what was UNIFEM’s implementation of the overall regional level of the AWP Project. As a result, the two national counterparts did not integrate and manage ‘their’ parts of the AWP Project in Jordan within their own overall programmes and annual work plans. Indeed, they did not have a clear picture of the AWP project as a whole, immediate objectives of which had not been tailored to their own contexts. In practice, they undertook implementation of activities in response to invitations by UNIFEM.

This resulted, for example, in a situation where UNIFEM Arab States Regional Office (ASRO) planned a series of training courses for potential candidates for the municipal elections within the relatively tight timeframe prior to elections, only to find that JNFW had not given priority to mobilizing training participants as per the schedule established by UNIFEM. At the last minute, training course plans had to be rescheduled in order to bring together sufficient participants, which had cost implications. Retrospectively, the

National Coordinator (NC) recognizes that greater participation of JNFW and of its network of branches in the planning of training would have increased the effectiveness of resources allocated to an activity that certainly corresponded to felt needs. Furthermore, sharing responsibility for such planning would have increased enhancement of the 'incubator' capacity of the counterpart organization - JNFW - and its members involved in supporting women at grass root levels.

Although the national coordinator and UNIFEM ASRO are based in Amman, and is therefore well placed to track implementation of the AWP Project in Jordan, there is little indication of UNIFEM having undertaken systematic monitoring of project activities in this country. No clear indicators for measuring achievement were defined, against which changes and results could be compared.

Indeed, given the complementarity of many of UNIFEM's activities in Jordan, which match areas of concern of national partners, both the latter and the NC appear to have some difficulty in distinguishing which activities came under the regional AWP Project, and which under other projects implemented in Jordan. Nevertheless, it can be said that there has been some multiplier effect as a result of the complementarity existing between projects and as a result of extensive resources committed by many organizations (including donors) to enhancing women's participation in political decision-making, both nationally and at municipal levels in Jordan.

Technical support in the form of expertise brought in, for example, in relation to preparation of training manuals for use in building capacity of women to participate in elections, and in contributing to the pool of training expertise available in the country, has been overall positive. It must be noted, however, that an opportunity to promote female researchers was foregone when a male researcher was appointed to implement the so-called 'baseline study' mentioned earlier.

2.2 Effectiveness

As far as could be ascertained, there has not been any systematic compilation of similar activities nor a strategic approach in respect of cooperating with such activities within Jordan. For example, Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Centre (UJRC) has since the late 1990s been active in supporting women's political empowerment, including through training workshops and dissemination of relevant publications;⁹⁴ yet reporting on implementation of the AWP Project in Jordan does not include such information. Similarly, the Greater Amman Municipality, supported by the International Women Networking (IWN), has been involved in organizing various activities relevant to women's political empowerment in Jordan,⁹⁵ yet such information is not explicitly reflected in AWP annual reports.

Nor is there information explicitly included in AWP documentation on activities by UNDP's support to Parliament in Jordan, even though this includes mainstreaming of gender.⁹⁶

Notwithstanding the above observations, the Evaluation Mission concludes that overall the AWP Project has been one among many that generated a wave of activities in Jordan in the period building up to the 2007 local and national elections. There have

94- http://www.ujrc-jordan.org/women_studies

95- For example, the 2005 Seminar on 'Women in Local Councils and the Development Goals of the Third Millennium' hosted by the Greater Amman Municipality. <http://www.ammcancity.gov.jo>

96- <http://www.arabparliaments.org/activities>. For example, the UNDP Parliamentary Development Initiative in the Arab Region organized a Regional Seminar in Beirut (9-10 July 2008) entitled 'Women in Arab Parliaments: Progress, Stagnation or Regression?'

been significant changes in women's political participation in Jordan, to which the project can be said to have made a contribution, including at local levels, during the project lifetime.

Effectiveness in terms of achieving immediate objectives is less clearly identified. As previously mentioned, not only were the objectives not tailored to the Jordanian context for implementation by national counterparts. In addition, there has been blurring of concepts since the original formulation of this regional UNIFEM project document.

There is little indication of the AWP Project contributing to enhanced networking and exchange between Jordanian Women Parliamentarians and their peers in the Arab Region, although some participated in regional symposia and other regional meetings, both under AWP and organized by others. Similarly, it would be difficult to assess to what extent implementation of the AWP project in Jordan has contributed to strengthening links between networks either within Jordan, or with similar groups elsewhere in the Arab Region.

The AWP Project, together with many others being implemented concurrently in Jordan, has contributed to capacity building of women in relation to political participation. However, narrowing of the concept of 'incubators' to the capacity building aspect has reduced the effectiveness of efforts that could have contributed to providing a wider range of support to women engaged in political decision-making, be this through Parliament, municipal councils or in support of candidates during election campaigns.

Both JNCW and JNFW were chosen as implementing partners for their specific strengths and complementary levels of activities. This has been effective in that the AWP Project could then feed in to their larger programmes. However, effectiveness could have been greater had the national partners been more in a position to plan ahead how they would integrate the Jordan AWP Project into their main medium term work plans, including links with their other projects, rather than responding to opportunities offered from year to year, or even activity by activity.⁹⁷

As indicated earlier, with the impetus of the new Municipal Elections Law, JNFW and UNIFEM convened meetings and training to increase awareness of women and equip them with skills to enable them to stand for the Municipal elections. The training manuals developed by UNIFEM ASRO proved valuable for such training, and the TOT was effective in providing a pool of trainers. Through JNFW's network, training of potential candidates for local elections reached many of the candidates. Reportedly, more than half the successful candidates had attended training organized under the AWP project.⁹⁸ Furthermore, women's participation in the voting process increased considerably in the 2007 elections compared to previous elections.

In 2007, under the AWP Project, UNIFEM ASRO also collaborated directly with the High Council for Youth and the Women's Studies Centre in developing greater understanding of human rights-based approaches, integration of gender equality perspectives in national policy-making and women's greater participation in political life (including elections). This collaboration included training workshops in three governorates, and elicited not only candidates but campaign support teams for the Parliamentary elections and even

97- As with the training for potential candidates, discussed earlier.

98- AWP Project Third Progress Report and http://www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=609

assistance from Irbid governorate for women candidates.⁹⁹ The direct interventions were effective; however, the question arises as to whether UNIFEM ASRO should have ensured that responsibility for such actions is assumed by the AWP Project implementing partners in Jordan, in order to strengthen linkage with their on-going efforts.

Clear indicators for assessing impact of activities undertaken within the context of the AWP Project were not defined. Furthermore, such assessments would also require systematic monitoring and follow up at country level, which have not been put in place by UNIFEM.

2.3 Sustainability

There has been little added-value in terms of the regional dimension of the AWP Project. The counterpart organizations already have opportunities for the kind of exchanges with colleagues working in other Arab countries that occurred during the AWP Project, as do women Parliamentarians. The enhanced networking and exchanges with other countries anticipated in the project design have not really developed; the regional meetings organized under AWP paralleled other such conferences and meetings without triggering new and richer exchange systems.

Since the AWP Project activities coincided with key areas of work of JNCW and JNFW, it can be expected that the initiatives it supported will be maintained within the larger programmes of these organizations. The scale of AWP Project inputs was minor within the larger picture, and the level of technical and managerial support; thus there does not appear be dependence on the project for sustainability.

The capacity of women candidates trained to prepare for elections is likely to serve them again in future elections. It is to be hoped that there will also be some transfer and knock-on effects from this aspect of work undertaken through the AWP Project. This can be expected to occur in two mutually reinforcing ways: First, the idea that women cannot participate effectively in political positions is weakened by the increased presence of women in political decision-making positions, especially at local levels. Secondly, willingness of women to present their candidature in future elections is therefore likely to increase, while both women and men are more likely to consider voting for female candidates when they see women fulfilling such roles effectively. However, for sustainability of this impact to be maximised, there will need to be support to elected officials, especially but not only to women, to strengthen their capacity to fulfil their roles effectively.

Trainers trained under the AWP Project have already integrated their learning into on-going work and are using the skills in similar contexts. Sustainability would nevertheless be enhanced by further development of the 'incubator' concept as originally designed, linking access to training skills with access to other resources required by potential candidates, such as information databases to support development of campaign themes and links to possible funding support.

The national partners in Jordan are well placed in terms of leadership and commitment to providing such follow up as required. They have credibility among donors that can facilitate their accessing financial support as needed when formulating projects that build on the AWP project experience.

99- AWP Project Third Progress Report.

C. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Key Results

1.1 Challenges

The AWP Project came at a time of challenge and opportunities arising through the political will of the Government and with Jordanian society working on different aspects of gender equality and women's political participation. As such the Project in Jordan was responsive to new opportunities – such as the Municipal Election Law, passed only months before the municipal elections in 2007 which created openings for women in local decision-making positions that called for urgent strategic action and response.

With two counterpart organisations addressing complementary aspects of the AWP project in Jordan, systematic overall monitoring of the project in Jordan needed to be undertaken by the NC, based in UNIFEM ASRO. However, UNIFEM does not have a programme monitoring and evaluation expert in ASRO, and at present relies on the ATLAS system. This provides monitoring from a financial perspective but is not designed to feed in automatically to project or programme monitoring. It is therefore difficult to get a clear overview of the AWP project in Jordan and of how much follow up on action has been undertaken.

Assignment of responsibilities as NC has fallen on the same person who served as AWP Regional Programme Coordinator, creating a major challenge in terms of distinguishing between AWP Jordan and AWP Regional levels. Neither UNIFEM ASRO nor the counterpart organizations can clearly distinguish between AWP project components, and activities that come under other projects and programmes.

1.2 Lessons Learnt

Entry points for women's political participation

While the introduction of a quota for women at national levels has certainly encouraged more women to stand for election, the real opportunity to mobilize women, as candidates and as voters, came with the introduction of the quota at municipal level. Providing adequate support reaches the women now serving on Municipal Councils, to encourage them and enable them to serve their communities effectively, they could well develop the credibility in their communities to be able to seek election in the next national elections – and not necessarily through the quota system but in their own right.

Partnerships and national coordination

It is important that UNIFEM ASRO distinguish clearly between national projects (or, as with AWP, national components of a regional project) and regional projects *per se*. Failure to do so can lead to sub-optimal support to, and coordination with, efforts of national implementing partners. A good choice of partners should provide an opportunity for both UNIFEM – in relation to the regional perspective – and the national counterparts to benefit in terms of on-going capacity development.

Closely linked to this is the importance of ensuring full participation of the counterpart organization in undertaking forward planning for project activities. This would ensure that these are integrated smoothly in the organization's work programme.

2. Recommendations

Overall, and irrespective of less than optimal efficiency-related aspects of project implementation, the AWP Project Jordan component was timely not only for Jordanian

Women Parliamentarians but even more so for enhancing women's political participation at the community level. As such, it has contributed to processes of change both in how women can participate, and how they can be seen to participate, in political decision-making.

It would be valuable to link the women serving in municipal councils and other local level positions of authority to exchange views and experiences as part of good practice to be disseminated ahead of the next local elections.

Given the ongoing interest at both national and regional level in the Arab World in women's political empowerment as part of their overall empowerment, there is an urgent need to compile and regularly update information on pertinent country-level activities. This would serve to contribute to a more strategic approach aiming to achieve value added and avoid duplication, particularly between UN agencies and in view of the overall aim to promote a joint UN vision.

In future projects of this kind, UNIFEM ASRO would do well to address the following factors which have affected implementation:

- Ensure that the national component is clearly defined, in terms of national objectives, and is clearly reflected in annual work plans developed with national partners.
- Assign national coordination responsibilities in such a way as to facilitate keeping the 'Jordan' component distinct from the overall 'regional' project, as well as to avoid overloading one person with too many responsibilities.
- Ensure that systematic monitoring and follow up of the Jordan component is undertaken by the NC if more than one implementing partner is involved.

Annex 8: AWP Country Report Lebanon

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A. Background

The Arab Women Parliamentarian Project had as its development objective: “To facilitate the empowerment of Arab women parliamentarians to act as agents of change through their transformative participation in political processes and to foster an appropriate political climate needed to achieve gender equality in all aspects of national development.”

The immediate objectives as set out in the Project Document were :

- Establishment and functioning of an Arab Women Parliamentarians’ Forum (AWPF).
- Gender sensitization of Arab Parliamentarians.
- Establishment and functioning of national incubators for prospective Arab women leaders

Lebanon was one of eight countries selected to participate in the AWP project.¹⁰⁰ The objectives were defined for the Region as a whole; no country-specific adjustments or details were added to guide adjustment to the national context and define specific targets and objectives to achieve in Lebanon.

Officially, the national counterpart organisation was identified as being the National Committee for the Follow Up on Women’s Issues (NCFUWI). In practice, UNIFEM used at least two implementing partners for different activities under AWP.

1. The National Context

Women in national elections, Lebanon 1992-2009		
Year	# women standing	# women elected
1992	5	3
2000	16	3
2005	10	6
2009	12	4

The Lebanese political context is particularly complex, combining the traditional patriarchal values common to the Region with strong familial links to leadership, confessional systems and a consociational political structure. Each of the 26 electoral districts has numbers of seats in Parliament¹⁰¹ determined by confessional affiliation.

2. Key Gender-Specific Challenges

There are neither legal nor constitutional gender-based barriers to political participation in Lebanon. Indeed, in 1952 Lebanon became the first country in the Arab Region to accord equal rights to women in this context.

Political party affiliations often cut across confessional affiliations as indicated earlier. In this context, access to political participation – at both national and local levels – involves

100- The other countries are Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Syria and the United Arab Emirates. A ninth country - Oman - eventually dropped out due to political developments.

101- Various sources use different English translation of the Arabic term for the Lebanese Parliament, such as National Assembly. For consistency this report will use the term parliament.

complicated systems of alliances for both men and women, somewhat reduced when they come from, and have the support of, the leading families. In the patriarchal context, opportunities for women to take their place in political decision-making have been even more limited. A few women have been elected to Parliament, usually due to deaths of the male family members who would normally have been elected rather than in real recognition of their own capacity to take a lead role in decision-making.¹⁰² This does not mean that such women are not competent, far from it – but they enter politics through a narrow entry point, and face greater difficulties in introducing new perspectives while having to perform to far higher standards in order to prove themselves to their electorate group. Once elected for a first time, they are often re-elected in subsequent elections if they stand again. Only four women have ever reached Ministerial level,¹⁰³ all since 2004. One of these (Nayla Moawad) even registered her candidacy for the Presidency in 2004.

It appears that the biggest barriers lie in mobilising women to stand and mustering the support necessary for them to stand for election: the proportion of women candidates who win seats is markedly higher than the proportion of male candidates who are elected. Only 2 per cent of candidates in 2009 were women; they won three per cent of the 128 seats. Only seven out of 930 Municipalities in Lebanon are headed by women.

The national context has not facilitated implementation of the Lebanon component of the AWP project. The Regional Conference that represented the launch of the project was only days before the assassination of Rafiq Hariri and the period of instability and uncertainty that followed this event. Further destabilising events punctuated the entire project lifetime, restricting follow up visits by UNIFEM ASRO to partner organisations.

B. Main Findings of the Country Evaluation

1. Overview of Achievement of AWP Objectives in the National Context

In a small way, some activities have been undertaken in Lebanon that contribute to a process of fostering an appropriate political climate needed to achieve gender equality in all aspects of national development.

However, the AWP project in Lebanon has apparently contributed little to *the establishment of an Arab Women Parliamentarian's Forum*, in the sense originally intended in the project document – i.e. as a “place” of exchange, be it through networking, meetings or document sharing - either within Lebanon or at a regional level. Extension of target groups to women concerned with Municipal Councils and local elections should also have enlarged the scope for networking among potential candidates and women in Municipal Councils since 2004, but such networking does not appear to have evolved much beyond, possibly, NCFUWI members around the country.

To address the second immediate objective, *gender sensitization of Parliamentarians*, four Round Tables were reportedly organised by the National Committee for the Follow Up on Women's Issues (NCFUWI) within the context of the AWP project. Two involved lawyers, judges and civil society and focussed on proposed electoral law revisions, in the context of the Boutros Commission's work on drafting a new electoral law which included a clause on a gender quota (refused by Parliament). Two others brought

102- The first woman elected to the Parliament was Mirna Sabbagh, who was elected in bye-elections in the 1960s and held office for 6 months.

103- Leila Solh Hamadeh, Ministry of Industry 2004-05; Wafaa Hamza, Minister of State for Health 2004-05 ; Nayla Moawad, Minister of Social Affairs 2005-08; Bahia Hariri, Minister of Education 2008-9,

together male and female parliamentarians, covering issues such as gender-responsive budgeting, gender mainstreaming and advocacy for mechanisms to increase women's participation in political life.

UNIFEM/ASRO commissioned a study "Towards Political Empowerment of Lebanese Women", which provides historic perspectives on women in Parliament and analysis of political parties' official and effective positions concerning support to women in political decision-making. Published jointly with the National Council for Lebanese Women (NCLW), although referred to by ASRO as a "baseline study" this has served more as a tool to sensitise civil society, the media and politicians as to the realities and barriers faced by women entering politics despite the fact that there are no formal barriers under law, the constitution or political party official positions. As such it has contributed towards addressing the second immediate objective. More recently, NCFUWI undertook a study on "Women and Politics"

There has been slippage in concept concerning the *establishment and functioning of national incubators for prospective Arab women leaders*. As originally designed, such "incubators" were conceived as a pool of training skills and resources that can be called upon to help potential (women) candidates prepare themselves for effective campaigning and to assist newly elected decision-makers fulfil the tasks and responsibilities linked to their decision-maker roles. Some capacity building has been done through Training of Trainers and through some training courses under AWP, but it would seem that these have been seen more by NCFUWI as a series of training events (referred to by them as "projects") than as part of a process within the AWP project of creating a support base for women participating in elections and/or in public decision-making roles.

2. Relevance of the Project

In a general sense, the objectives and activities in the project design correspond to real needs. However, tailoring of the project's objectives to the national context and formulation of a specific national component of the Regional project would have considerably enhanced the project, given the complexity of the political structure in Lebanon.

Given the challenges that Lebanon has faced due to security issues, the destruction during the Israeli war in 2006, and the severe problems of reconstruction at a time of wider economic crisis and upwards-spiralling prices, gender-mainstreaming and women's political empowerment are not recognised by many as of top priority at present, although they are widely seen as important issues. Furthermore, there is widespread disillusion with political processes as experienced in Lebanon, which further lowers the immediate interest in women's political empowerment especially at national levels. The Municipal Elections in 2010 are nevertheless seen as an opportunity to enhance women's participation as candidates and as voters at a level where there is greater confidence in political decision-making.

The official partner, NCFUWI, has been involved in addressing certain aspects of election laws, notably efforts to introduce a quota for women, but in the consociational structure in Lebanon, this additional quota aspect requires further careful reflection as to how it could be integrated effectively in practice, in order for proposed legislative revisions to be considered seriously. It was commented by some supporters of the idea of a quota for women that "provisional" arrangements tend to become permanent in Lebanon, and that probably it would be more effective to aim at quotas at Municipal levels rather than

national at this point in time. If women could demonstrate their competence at local levels, possibilities of achieving party and confessional group support for their selection as candidates for national elections would be considerably increased.

As was stressed by several persons met, women represent over 52% of the voting population in Lebanon. They pointed out that if women are so little represented in Parliament (and in Municipal Councils), it is not due to any legal or constitutional barriers but to weaknesses in mobilising competent women to stand for election and in mobilising at least women voters to use their votes to support such women. While this may be a simplistic way of summarising the situation – since standing for any elections requires also mobilising the support of political parties and/or the influential families who play a major role in political leadership – it does highlight the fact that empowerment of women for political participation is of great relevance in Lebanon.

Unlike most countries covered by the project, the only major elections during the project lifetime were too early in 2005 for a concerted effort to be made under the project in support of women candidates. Parliamentary by-elections took place in 2008, and national elections took place in June 2009 – both outside the original timeframe of the project, and the latter just outside the no-cost extension period.

3. Implementation Process

3.1 Efficiency

As indicated earlier, UNIFEM ASRO identified the National Committee for the Follow Up on Women's Issues (NCFUWI) as their counterpart/ implementing partner organisation for the AWP project. However, UNIFEM ASRO also worked directly with other organisations for some components of the project. NCFUWI was not involved in the Regional launch of the project, held in Lebanon, except as participants in the Symposium; UNIFEM ASRO organised the meeting in conjunction with the Inter Parliamentary Union, the League of Arab States and UNDP, together with representatives of the Lebanese Parliament.

Neither was NCFUWI involved in the study "Towards Political Empowerment of Lebanese Women", designated as "baseline study" for the project. UNIFEM asked the National Council for Lebanese Women to provide a list of names, then commissioned three researchers directly to undertake the study, which was published jointly by NCLW and UNIFEM. It must be noted that the three researchers selected were all men, which does not contribute to promoting the image of gender equality; there is no shortage of competent female researchers in Lebanon, and a mixed team would have been more appropriate in a context concerned with gender equality.

NCFUWI's involvement appears to have been largely limited to the capacity building component of the AWP project, and organisation of a few Round Tables for Parliamentarians. They perceive the AWP as a series of projects that they implemented, according to request on a year-to-year basis. They never saw their "projects" as part of a planned three-year project. Indeed, despite Parliamentary bye-elections in 2008 and elections in 2009, almost all activities identified by NCFUWI as being implemented under AWP took place in 2006.¹⁰⁴ The Executive Committee stresses that it would have been useful for their own planning had they worked to a three year plan.

The coherency of the AWP project in Lebanon, therefore, would have been considerably

¹⁰⁴- See "Support women participation.pdf", submitted after the mission by NCFUWI in response to the Evaluation Team's request to complete information on AWP project activities.

strengthened had there been a national coordinator to bring components together and ensure that synergy and complementarity were generated. However, UNIFEM decided that there were insufficient UNIFEM activities in Lebanon to justify appointment of a staff member at national level, and that the coordinator role could be carried by the ASRO AWP Project Manager from Amman.

The limited follow-up by UNIFEM ASRO was attributed to the security situation, due to which UNIFEM staff were not able to visit Lebanon for much of the project lifetime. It does not appear that alternatives, such as teleconferences, were much used to provide coordination, monitoring and support. Feedback from UNIFEM ASRO was clearly minimal.

NCFUWI and NCLW see the project as one source of inputs among many others to their efforts to achieve greater political empowerment of women in Lebanon. But, there is little evidence of significant direct input of the AWP project per se in women's political empowerment in Lebanon.

The "baseline study" has served as an information document distributed by NCLW, mainly on demand, to civil society, researchers and journalists. Little indication has been found of any monitoring framework at all. Only one non-member of NCFUWI met had attended any NCFUWI meetings, and she commented on the lack of any follow up contacts of any activities addressing women in decision-making positions – whether NCFUWI's or other organisations'. This respondent expressed surprise that no organisation has made an effort to pull together the experiences – successes and failures – of women who have reached high positions in Municipal Councils, in order to learn from these¹⁰⁵. In 2007, NCFUWI undertook a study of women and politics, with funding from the AWP project, but this apparently did not cover the experiences of women heading Municipal Councils. .

The training manuals have been used by NCFUWI, with some adaptations to the national and local contexts. An evaluation of the training of trainers was undertaken. Training was organised in various places in the country, for trainees from the South, Beka'a, North and Mount Lebanon & the Shouf. Unfortunately, the team met no beneficiaries of such training outside of NCFUWI senior membership. According to reports provided after the mission, almost all such events took place in 2006; none were reported during preparations for the 2009 elections.

3.2 Effectiveness

Outputs appear to have been delivered on time as per specific activities. However, the perception of each activity as a "project" by NCFUWI reflects sub-optimal over view and strategic planning of the inputs from UNIFEM. As mentioned earlier, NCFUWI pointed out that they would have been better placed to plan their interventions strategically had they had a three year work frame and associated budget to plan with.

With activities being implemented with different partners, there was a real need for a national coordinator; coordination and collaboration between organisations on an ongoing way tends to be sub-optimal in Lebanon, and those involved did not recognise other inputs as being complementary to theirs within AWP.

¹⁰⁵- As 2 of the 7 female Mayors in Lebanon are in the Federation of Municipal Councils to which she belongs, she would normally be aware had such a study been undertaken.

Enhancing women's participation at grassroots level

The present Mayor of Baaqline has triggered formation of “neighbourhood committees” in her Municipality, which have now been formalised by a Municipal decree. These committees address day-to-day concerns such as environmental conditions, water supply, garbage collection, as well as community events, and are composed of both women and men. One neighbourhood has created a community garden with a play area for children and a low-cost café where women can meet, drink coffee and talk while their children play safely. The small costs of such community actions are paid for directly by the Municipality. Active involvement in such committees could well serve as a trampoline for potential candidates for the Municipal elections. The Mayor would be very interested in providing training for such committee members, especially the women. Having proved their ability to work for the community, they might well gather support for more formal representation by women of their communities.

Human resources were therefore insufficient, and effectiveness of efforts was diminished by inadequate building on complementarity.

A question arises in relation to the decision to divide activities between partners, and the formal identification of NCFUWI as the “implementing partner”, or counterpart. At the time of the preparations for the 2009 elections, the NGO which was selected by the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities (MOIM) to participate in voter education efforts was the Lebanese Council of Women, with their network of around 170 women's NGOs around the country¹⁰⁶. Despite the fact that in the past the two organisations have worked together – most recently concerning quotas (in 2008¹⁰⁷), and the same person is currently President of both organisations, it was clearly stated to the evaluator that the two organisations are kept well apart at present, and do not currently work together¹⁰⁸.

As a result, NCFUWI's experiences under the AWP project were not brought to bear to enhance LCW's efforts in reaching the voters – and candidates. NCFUWI was unable to arrange meetings for the team with any beneficiaries of their training or Round Tables, other than members of the Executive Committee and the coordinator for the Beka'a. The timing of the mission certainly contributed to this situation. It was therefore not possible to get feedback from those who have participated in any such meetings organised under AWP.

The Team was able to meet with a few persons from the AWP target population, namely, with women who have stood for election (at national or local levels). These respondents reflected no awareness of any form of training offered by NCFUWI. While relevant elections were held prior to the AWP project lifetime, part of the content of training designed does address issues of concern after elections. It is therefore disappointing that elected women have not had the opportunity to access the training modules that would have been valuable to them in order to fill their roles more effectively, especially at local level.

Timely action for next year's Municipal Elections could well include preparing appropriate case studies to complement the AWP training manuals, and scheduling of training for potential candidates well in advance of the coming elections, spread over time at local levels in order to facilitate attendance by women who might well have difficulty in allocating a block of time to a residential training course. Such action could go a long

106- Carter Center report, page 10 <http://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/democracy/lebanon-final-060809.pdf>

107- NCFUWI comments on this report

108- The new President of LCW stated to the Team that she intends to upgrade standards in LCW before developing more joint efforts.

way towards increasing the contribution of the AWP project in Lebanon to enhanced political participation of women.

While the security situation certainly inhibited direct coordination efforts by UNIFEM ASRO, in their role as coordinator for Lebanon, there have been insufficient efforts to provide the managerial and technical coordination support to the AWP project in Lebanon. Alternatives to visits could have included, for example, teleconferences bringing together the partners involved in different components of the project and ensuring a shared global vision of AWP project within Lebanon. Closer attention should also have been paid to regular reporting and monitoring of activities, providing feedback to the partners in Lebanon.

On the basis of information available, it is impossible to tell how far the many different sub-sectors of the Lebanese population have been reached by the project. It would seem that representatives of most, if not all, the 18 confessional groupings have been touched in some way by NCFUWI's activities, and NCLW has disseminated the report fairly widely across such groupings. Some targeting of geographically defined groups has occurred for training events, but involving small numbers from each region of the country.

Round Tables have targeted Parliamentarians of all backgrounds. Targeting of different socio-economic sub-sectors of the population would not appear to have occurred, but with relatively few events taking place this is not surprising. Attention of project partners has been on women standing for election; at present the electoral law includes clauses that inevitably cause partial exclusion of sectors of the population. For example, a requirement that both candidates and voters are tied to their place of family origin rather than place of residence inhibits active participation of those who are unable to travel to their family home locality, which affects those with limited means, and especially disabled persons or the elderly and sick. The project partners have not attempted to stretch their limited resources to address the exclusion of such other disadvantaged groups.

No form of "incubator" for potential women decision-makers has been stimulated at this point in time, and the project has not contributed to facilitating links between groups concerned about women's political participation in Lebanon with groups in other parts of the Arab World tackling similar problems. Given the potential of Internet for supporting virtual networks between like-minded people, this is an opportunity unfortunately not developed under the project at a time when Lebanon's own problems inhibited direct exchanges.

Several respondents have stressed the difficulty of mobilising coordination and cooperation between civil society groups addressing women's issues in Lebanon, without being able to suggest what kinds of different approaches could be tried within the Lebanese context that could improve constructive and supportive networking.

3.3 Sustainability

Inputs under the AWP project to activities of NCFUWI and of NCLW have been minor contributions to ongoing activities of these organisations. As such, the organisations will continue their activities. The materials provided for training will continue to be used as a resource when appropriate, with adaptation to the national context.

The study undertaken under the guise of “baseline” will continue to be used as a reference document for NCLW activities when appropriate, as it draws attention to a reality about women’s roles and status within the different political parties in a way that people concerned have not necessarily considered before.

However, the project has not been perceived as one project until now, but as a series of minor projects rather than as a concerted set of activities designed to move towards clearly perceived and accepted objectives. Such “projects” will be replicated or adapted as occasions arise, within the context of other projects of the concerned organisations and according to available funding.

The limited cooperation and coordination of efforts by different organisations addressing women’s political participation restricts the potential for maximising impact of the AWP contribution to such efforts. It is open to question whether indeed NCFUWI has the effective networking links across relevant Civil Society and local organisations to ensure ongoing sharing and use of the experiences accumulated through the AWP project. Neither comments by women met who have stood for election (at national or local levels) nor the choice by MOIM of a partner to focus attention on mobilising women for the recent national elections indicate that NCFUWI is perceived by others as holding a strategic position for effective on-going support to women’s political participation.

C. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Key Results

1.1 *Challenges*

Entry points for women’s political participation at national level in Lebanon are among the key challenges. Entry to politics is tightly tied to family and confessional identity, with a total of only 128 seats in Parliament and existing district-specific quotas of seats allocated according to confessional affiliation.

A second entry point that holds potential for women is at the level of the 930 Municipal Councils. Political party affiliations and traditional family leadership considerations certainly also carry weight at this level, but the opportunities for women to gain local support and stand for local elections are certainly far greater. Women met during the mission stressed that they had benefited from significant support from men – especially but not only in their families – when deciding to stand for Municipal elections. They also identified the difficulties they had with women doubting that a woman could be effective in political decision-making.

1.2 *Lessons Learnt*

Partnerships and national coordination

While it is important to choose implementing partners with a strong central position in the country, effective and sustainable implementation of projects such as the AWP project also needs good outreach into the different communities all through the country.

For a national implementing partner to function effectively, it should be fully aware of all aspects of the project and should prepare a work plan for the full project lifetime, in the light of the specific objectives of the project as it applies within the country. Such a perspective cannot be achieved simply through preparation of an Annual Work Plan for implementation of specific components assigned to a partner by UNIFEM, however much the activities fit in well with the direction of work being undertaken by the partner

organisation. Furthermore, farming out activities to different partners, on an annual basis, is not conducive to forming clear vision and strategic planning for implementation of the project as a whole. If multiple partners are to be involved, in view of their specific competencies that could enhance the project, the presence of a national coordinator to ensure that the components are linked in a complementary way becomes essential.

Building a regional dimension

The concept of a “forum” was very valid, but in order for this to have the regional dimension desired, it is necessary to invest in developing more exchanges between the projects and the project partners in the different countries, as well as establishing networks in-country that can be linked to like-minded groups abroad to their mutual benefit.

An annual meeting of Arab Women Parliamentarians, and sub-regional round table meetings on selected themes are only some of a number of possible ways of triggering useful exchanges regionally and in-country that can enrich the national level of such a project. In order to link the national experience with other experiences within the Regional project, other mechanisms could include regular tele-conferences¹⁰⁹ between national coordinators, and between national counterpart / implementing partners that face similar challenges or difficulties. Critical themes could be identified on the basis of closer monitoring of progress of the national level implementation.

Potential for effective action at municipal levels

The “neighbourhood committees” formed in Baaqline (see the box, earlier) have brought women into decision-making positions for their neighbourhoods, giving them some credibility among the local population. There is great potential to be built upon in such experiences, not least in the forthcoming Municipal elections.

One woman who has stood twice in Hermel (a very traditional area), but failed to be elected, stressed that the fact that she had stood has already had an impact on young women’s seeing that they could stand for election. She is working with them to encourage such ideas.

The training materials produced for the AWP project could prove valuable if adapted for use among women considering political participation in the 2010 Municipal Elections. By strengthening the capacity of women to stand for Municipal elections and then to fulfil their roles there effectively, it would be possible to build a pool of women who will have proven their capacity to participate in political decision-making by the time of the next Parliamentary elections.

2. Recommendations

UNIFEM/ASRO needs to seek ways to link the experiences of the AWP Project with concerted efforts to support enhancement of women’s participation at local levels.

In order to ensure a place for women in local politics, it is essential to choose a strong theme that is not directly linked to the conflictual questions relating to gender and gender equality. Gender awareness and sensitivity can be built up indirectly through discussions of priorities and needs that highlight gender differences; the barriers can then also be identified and means of overcoming them explored. Environment was cited as one such entry theme: of concern to all, but with practical examples highlighting gender differences that can be enlarged on when implementing programmes. Campaign

¹⁰⁹- Skype also offers potential for tele- and video-conferencing.

themes built directly on gender equality issues are liable to undermine potential support, thus reducing the opportunities for women to participate in the local decision-making processes.

It would be valuable to bring together the experiences of the seven women Mayors in Lebanon: their successes and failures, and the difficulties they have encountered could form the basis for helping women leaders in Municipal Councils in the future.

In similar projects in the future, UNIFEM ASRO should explore other possibilities. For example, modern technology makes it possible to organise teleconferences between people in different countries, through which particular issues of concern can be discussed between project partners from different countries. Sharing between the counterparts concerning their difficulties and their successes in overcoming difficulties can trigger new ideas and strategies for dealing with problems encountered. Through such exchanges, partner organisations could identify useful links in other countries for beneficiaries of their own activities. The Internet and websites can provide another place where exchanges are possible – although these need monitoring to ensure regular updating and to avoid hi-jacking of sites (as occurred with arabwomendirect.com).

It is also essential that UNIFEM ensure good monitoring of the national level work of a regional project, both in order to provide feedback to each country both on their reports to UNIFEM and on lessons being learnt in the other countries participating in the project. Themes for teleconferences between partners could be identified on the basis of issues identified through regular reports – which could also encourage partners to provide more information about difficulties as well as achievements.

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A. Background

The overall development objective of the Arab Women Parliamentarian Project (AWP) is 'to facilitate the empowerment of Arab women parliamentarians to act as agents of change through their transformative participation in political processes and to foster an appropriate political climate needed to achieve gender equality in all aspects of national development'.

The immediate objectives as set out in the Project Document are:

- Establishment and functioning of an Arab Women Parliamentarians' Forum (AWPF).
- Gender sensitization of Arab Parliamentarians.
- Establishment and functioning of national incubators for prospective Arab women leaders.¹¹⁰

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) was one of eight countries selected to participate in the AWP Project.¹¹¹

1. National Context

The UAE is not an electoral democracy in the conventional sense. However, whereas previously the 40-member Federal National Council (FNC) (an advisory body that does not hold legislative powers) was appointed by the rulers of the seven Emirates that comprise the UAE,¹¹² since 2006 significant changes have taken place with important implications for Emirati women's political empowerment.

Specifically, the UAE in 2006 became the first Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) state to introduce - albeit indirect - elections for both men and women. The current process - referred to as Phase one in respect of planned transformations in the electoral process - continued with the principle whereby the seven Emirate rulers appointed members to the Electoral College (EC).¹¹³ The 6,595 appointed EC members - of whom 1,163 (i.e. 17.6 per cent) were women - were the only ones eligible to be nominated, or to nominate themselves, for membership in the current FCN. The novel step during the 2006 elections was for the EC to elect half of the 40 FCN members, while the remaining 20 FCN members continued to be appointed by the seven Emirate rulers.¹¹⁴

Although there were no female members in the 2006 National Election Committee (NEC), two out of the seven election centres had appointed female supervisors (Abu Dhabi and Fujairah), and two had deputy supervisors (Sharjah and Ajman), revealing that 'the visual image of female supervisors of centres was intended as an indirect boost to promote women to positions of political responsibility'.¹¹⁵ Of the 456 EC members who stood for office, 65 (14.3 per cent) were women. As indicated in Table 1 overleaf, eight women currently serving on the FCN were appointed. One woman got elected to the FNC 'marking the only time (up to 2006) that a woman has won an election during the first national vote in any of the Gulf States'.¹¹⁶

110- UNIFEM ASRO AWP Project Document, pp. 16-17, p. 20.

111- The other countries are Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco and Syria. The ninth country - Oman - eventually withdrew due to political developments.

112- Comprising Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Fujairah, Umm Al-Quwain, Ras El-Khaimah and Ajman.

113- The second Phase, expected to include an expansion of membership and powers of the FCN by 2008, has been postponed to 2010.)

114- Dubai School of Government/Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs (DSG/MSFNC) (2009). 'Women in Parliament and Politics in the UAE'.

115- Ibid.

116- S. Kirdar, S. (2009). 'Women Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: United Arab Emirates', p. 12.

Table 1: UAE FNC Election 2006¹¹⁷

Emirates	Total Number in EC	Total Registered Candidates	Female Registered Candidates	Total FCN Seats	FCN Seats by Election	Females Elected to FCN	Females Appointed to FCN
Abu Dhabi	1741	100	14	8	4	1	1
Dubai	1520	82	15	8	4	-	3
Sharjah	1017	101	29	6	3	-	1
Ajman	436	24	2	4	2	-	
Umm Al-Quwain	403	29	1	4	2	-	-
Ras Al-Khaimah	1061	83	3	6	3	-	1
Fujeirah	417	37	1	4	2	-	1
TOTAL	6595	456	65	40	20	1	8

Currently of the eight FCN Committees (each with a membership of seven), three are headed by women (Education, Youth, Media and Culture; Religious Affairs and Waqf; and Follow-Up on Complaints committees). Women currently also serve on the following committees: Education, Youth, Media and Culture (three women); Health (four women); Foreign Affairs, Planning and Oil (one woman); and Religious Affairs and Waqf (two women).¹¹⁸

2. Key Gender-Specific Challenges

As is generally the case in the Arab Region, the UAE Constitution does not discriminate between men and women, yet - as is also the case in much of the Region - the wording of pertinent articles is either in gender biased or gender neutral language, thus allowing multiple if not conflicting interpretations.¹¹⁹ In principle, female citizens in the UAE are not legally discriminated against in respect of education, employment and access to services. In reality, gender-based inequalities do exist and continue to be reflected in application of legislation (even where the latter may include gender sensitive articles); in social and cultural life; in the labour market; as well as in female representation in decision-making posts, including political life. Efforts to tackle entrenched attitudes towards women's more visible and equal participation in public life are reflected in the *UAE National Strategy for Women*.¹²⁰

http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special_report/section/175.pdf

117- DSG/MSFNC(2009), op.cit, p. 22.

118- Thus indicating that female FCN members are serving on more than one committee. http://115.124.33/arabic/Committees_List_Members

119- UAE Constitution 1971, amended 1996. For example, Article 25: All persons are equal before the law without distinction between citizens in regard to race, nationality, religious belief and social status'. See General Women's Union (GWU) (2008). 'Indicators of Women's Empowerment in the UAE' (Arabic) for further constitution articles relevant to women's status.

120- General Women's Union (GWU) (no date). 'National Strategy for Women's Advancement in the UAE' (Arabic).

Some progress is discernible in respect of decision-making and appointments to positions of authority. For example, in 2004 the first female UAE Minister of Economy and Planning was appointed. Since February 2008 four female ministers are serving in the Cabinet, two as Ministers of State, one as Minister of Social Affairs and the fourth as Minister of External Trade.¹²¹ Also in 2008, the first two female UAE ambassadors were appointed (to Spain and Sweden). That same year the pertinent UAE law was amended which enabled women to serve as federal prosecutors and judges. Yet, although women constitute some 60 per cent of public sector employees, only one in three holds senior positions.¹²²

The *UAE 2008 National Report to the CEDAW Committee* more or less reflects the socio-cultural challenges impacting on efforts to address gender-based inequalities in practice, keeping in mind that each of the seven Emirates will tend to have its own socio-cultural specificities inter-linked with, and affected by, its particular stage of political development and economic base. Thus while the CEDAW Report points to efforts to gender sensitize legislation that – according to CEDAW articles – may discriminate against women, it also maintains that introducing changes must be in line with religion and tradition as well as women’s gender-specific role.¹²³ This is more or less the message inherent in discussions held by the Evaluation Mission with a prominent Emirati lawyer and legal expert in UAE family law.¹²⁴

Apart from the AWP national partners in the UAE, discussed in the following section, there are also various women’s associations – for example in Ajman and Sharjah – which tend to be welfare- rather than development-oriented. There are also various women business associations affiliated with chambers of commerce. The Abu Dhabi Business Women Council, for example, aims to provide ‘appropriate opportunities for women to be well trained and qualified and expand the scope of their involvement in professional and commercial business’,¹²⁵ while the Dubai Business Women Council aims to ‘encourage business and professional women ... to participate in a variety of business segments’.¹²⁶

B. Main Findings of the AWP Country Evaluation

1. Overview

The original AWP UAE national partners were the General Women’s Union (GWU) and the Diplomatic Institute (DI), both based in Abu Dhabi. During AWP project implementation, the DI was closed down and in 2007 the Family Development Foundation (FDF) was added as the second UAE AWP project partner. These changes were not explicitly reflected in the various UNIFEM Arab States Regional Office (ASRO) AWP annual reports 2006-2009.

Both the GWU and the FDF are chaired by Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak (widow of the former President of the UAE), reflecting political will and support to Emirati women’s empowerment at the highest level. The GWU – established in 1975 (Law 6/1975) is the umbrella organization covering all seven Emirates. Though it does not have branches in the other six Emirates, its mandate is to support efforts of women’s associations in the quest of promoting women’s role and status in the UAE. The Union is organizationally

121- <http://ipsnews.net>

122- Kirdar, 2009, op. cit. pp. 11-12.

123- United Arab Emirates/Ministry of Foreign Affairs & General Women’s Union (2008). ‘Report of the UAE on Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)’.

124- See Annex.

125- <http://www.adcci.gov.ae>

126- <http://www.dcci.ae/portal>

divided into various sections, which includes the National Graduate Employment Office. The latter's aim is to support female graduates in securing suitable employment opportunities, by linking them to the labour market and as a means of increasing their family income.¹²⁷

The FDF, established in 2006 (Law 11), replaced the former Abu Dhabi Women's Association. Based in Abu Dhabi Emirate it has some 15 branches in this Emirate, which have the strategic aim to ensure 'achievement of sustainable development for the family, women and children', as well as 'help women to reinforce their status and empower them to actively participate in the socio-economic development'.¹²⁸

Since the 2006 elections, women appointed to the Electoral College have become more visible through their official links with the Emiri Diwan (court), a development of particular importance in the smaller Emirates where the GWU does not have local branches. By all accounts, even though it is based in Abu Dhabi, the FDF generally reaches out to women in some of the other Emirates.

While the UNIFEM agreement and correspondence with the GWU explicitly refers to the AWP, in respect of the FDF the documents reviewed by the Evaluation Mission refer to the 'political empowerment of women', even though in both cases the same training modules are used. The explanation proffered is that the FDF's mandate is mainly focused on supporting women and the family, rather than on actively supporting women candidates to run for political office.

2. Relevance of the Project

The AWP Evaluation Mission held focus group discussions during 2-5 August 2009 with members of the GWU and the FDF in Abu Dhabi, as well as with selected women from Fujairah and Sharjah (in Fujairah City) who are affiliated with the respective Emiri Diwan. In addition, one Fujairan female FCN member who also participated in the AWP training was interviewed.¹²⁹ Few of the participants in these meetings, even those with direct involvement in the AWP Project, could name the three AWP objectives presented earlier. For example, though the GWU folder on AWP activities includes information on project aims and activities, participants in the pertinent meeting could not offhand name the three project objectives. The same applies more or less to the selected FDF staff met by the Evaluation Mission, as well as the individual women met in Fujairah City who participated in the AWP training. Rather, the respondents' understanding of the AWP Project is that it focuses on enhancing the capacity and skills of potential women candidates in support of their participation in political life (GWU), and women's political participation as part of their overall empowerment (FDF).¹³⁰

Almost without exception participants in the focus group discussions indicated to the Evaluation Mission that the AWP as they understood it was relevant to promoting and supporting women's political empowerment in the UAE. Though, as far as could be

127- General Women's Union (GWU) (no date/b). 'Bureau of the GWU for Employment of Women Graduates' (Arabic). Contrary to the general impression that all Emiratis are affluent, there are discernible differences in income and living standards, with Fujairah perceived as the relatively least well off among the seven Emirates.

128- Family Development Foundation (FDF) (no date/a) 'Brochure on Aims and Activities'.

129- See Annex for list of persons met. It should be noted that due to the timing of the Evaluation Mission during the summer break, the self-selected GWU and FDF participants in the focus group meetings were not always those with direct experience of the AW Project.

130- Translation of the English language term 'capacity building' into Arabic was more often than not criticized, as it is deemed to be 'offensive' to professional women and female political candidates. Instead the Arabic terms for enhancing capabilities and skills were used by the Evaluation Mission.

ascertained, at the time the AWP commenced implementation in 2005 there were no official pronouncements regarding the 2006 elections, in the event the AWP project is deemed to have contributed to Emirati women being more politically active in seeking to submit their names as candidates, to varying extent strengthened by the type of skills they were able to 'enhance'.

Moreover, as one FDF staff indicated:

FDF participants in the AWP training were thereby encouraged to support the idea of some of their sisters entering politics ... it is not always the case that women support each other to be politically active.

An important issue here is that training was not confined to the more affluent Emirates such as Abu Dhabi and Dubai, but also included women from some of the smaller and less affluent Emirates. Here too political will at the highest level has been a catalyst in promoting women's political participation, though there appears to be discernible differences between the smaller Emirates in this respect.

Indeed as GWU members pointed out, UNIFEM funding support was timely since - similar to the FDF - activities are not supported by the UAE federal government and depend on fundraising. Rather, GWU and FDF staff receives salaries from the government institutions from which they are seconded. The organization is provided with the building it is housed in and government funding to cover running costs. The funding received from donors via UNIFEM,¹³¹ as well as the provision of generic training materials in Arabic, were therefore both relevant and timely.

3. Implementation Process

3.1 Efficiency

The review of, for example, the 2008 UAE AWP work plan developed by the UNIFEM National Coordinator (NC) reveals that while the project objectives were formulated as being applicable to the eight participating countries, there was some flexibility in adapting and implementing the training component in particular. In effect, the UNIFEM NC commissioned the 'emiratization' of the AWP training modules to adapt them to the socio-cultural specificities of the UAE, including examples deemed to resonate with the social and political realities faced by Emirati women.

Almost without exception, participants in the meetings with the Evaluation Mission indicated that these training materials continue to be of value. They would be used in future activities though, as one respondent put it, 'we need to further develop the examples to reflect women's achievements in finally getting into the FCN'. Some mention was made of training in gender responsive budgeting, though overall it appears that the pertinent training did not achieve its aim, i.e. the few respondents who did mention this topic and had participated in this training appeared to have a rather limited idea of what gender responsive budgeting actually entailed. But most of the respondents agreed that such training is important for women 'since it has usually been the men who deal with government finance and budgets'.

Another efficiency aspect is the inclusion of the FDF as a national partner when it became evident that the GWU - after implementing a series of AWP training courses - was apparently too involved in organizing other events. Since both organizations have the same Chairperson and Patron (Sheikha Fatima), UNIFEM's NC's inclusion of the FDF was not questioned. UNIFEM also widened its outreach by organizing AWP training courses in, for example, Fujairah and also included women from Sharjah districts that border the

¹³¹- The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the case of the AWD Gulf countries.

Fujeirah Emirate, i.e. where the GWU and the FDF do not have a local base or branches. However, implementation of the project in the UAE appears to have gradually lost sight of the first objective, i.e. the AWP Forum. It appears that while selected GWU staff did remember the two regional AWP symposia in Beirut (2005) and Amman (2006),¹³² they were generally less aware of the aim of these meetings, i.e. exchange of views and disseminating news on good practice and achievements, as well as coordinating responses to emerging and continuing challenges, among Arab women parliamentarians.¹³³

There also appeared to be some confusion with other regional meetings focusing on Arab women and their empowerment; for example meetings of the Arab Women's Organization (AWO), very probably because Sheikha Fatima was President of the 3rd session (June 2009).¹³⁴

Similarly, sight appears to have been more or less lost of the second AWP objective, namely mainstreaming gender in the Parliament (FCN) with the aim of generating support for potential women candidates. As far as could be ascertained, FCN members were not targeted for gender sensitization. It was brought to the attention of the Evaluation Mission that UNDP had planned a gender mainstreaming project focusing on capacity building of the GWU which aimed to 'complement the AWP Project'.¹³⁵ Yet the UNDP project is not explicitly mentioned in the UNIFEM ASRO AWP annual reports. Moreover, minimal if any cooperation seems to have taken place between the two UN organizations in this area.¹³⁶

As for the third AWP objective, namely establishment of national incubators to serve as catalyst for increasing women's political awareness and participation, and providing potential women candidates with the tools necessary for increasing their abilities to run for elections, here again the planned incubator appears to have been lost sight of. Few of the women met by the Evaluation Mission were aware of such an incubator (referred to as *hadinah*).¹³⁷ For GWU and FDF staff, such an incubator is deemed to be part of their organizational, i.e. training, set-up anyway. However, there is clearly a missed opportunity here in respect of supporting the establishment of incubators in the less affluent Emirates, linked for example to existing Women's Colleges.¹³⁸

In effect, the three AWP objectives in the UAE appear to have become blurred, a development not flagged in the UNIFEM ASRO annual reports, in turn reflecting the weak monitoring system in place in the Amman regional office. The result is that training of potential women candidates, or of women who wanted to improve their leadership and decision-making skills, appears to have been taken as the primary aim of the AWP project in the UAE. Since there does not appear to have been any clear guidance from UNIFEM ASRO Amman on this,¹³⁹ the UNIFEM NC has focused mainly on the AWD training and supporting the follow-up on two UNIFEM commissioned studies, as well as following up on other gender-related activities in the UAE. In turn

132- A third Forum scheduled in the UAE for May 2008 did not take place apparently for 'political reasons' details of which could not be ascertained by the Evaluation Mission.

133- Keeping in mind that the self-selected participants in the meetings with the Evaluation Mission were not always those who were directly involved with the AWP Project.

134- <http://www.wam.ae>

135- Government of United Arab Emirates/United Nations Development Programme (GUAU/UNDP) (2006). 'UAE National Gender Mainstreaming Initiative: Capacity Building of the UAE's General Women's Union'. According to the UNIFEM National Coordinator, the project has not been implemented.

136- Although the UNIFEM National Coordinator is housed in the UNDP premises.

137- Arabic colloquial in the UAE.

138- Apart from Abu Dhabi and Dubai, there are women's colleges in Fujeirah, Sharjah and Al-Ain.

139- See also various UNIFEM ASRO UAE Mission Reports.

One of the UNIFEM commissioned studies was meant to be part of the AWP aim of developing baseline information on the eight AWP participating countries.¹⁴⁰ In effect while this study diagnosing women's participation in the UAE, based on 'seven axis' or entry points, provides an overview of Emirati women's role and status, it is not a baseline study *per se*. The other study on political activities of women in the UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait provides relevant information on political systems as well as women's political participation in the three countries and the link with pertinent legislation, the education sector and the economic base.¹⁴¹ Both studies are available in Arabic which facilitates their dissemination to a wider audience, and some of the women met by the Evaluation Mission appear to be aware of these publications. However, there does not appear to be a strategic approach of systematically linking AWP-related publications, including training materials, with an effective communication and advocacy strategy. Here again the Evaluation Mission concludes that no specific guidance was forthcoming from UNIFEM ASRO.

Notwithstanding the above, overall both national partners – the GWU and the FDF – have more or less efficiently implemented the 'emitarized' AWP training courses with support from the UNIFEM NC. This is also reflected in the AWP folders compiled by each of the partners, which includes the list of training activities by date, location, topic and number of participants. Furthermore as far as could be ascertained, the national partners implemented the AWP training more or less as per the schedules agreed upon with the UNIFEM NC.

Yet, the Evaluation Mission also learnt that in fact some AWP funding remains, mainly because of the in-kind support offered to the AWP Project by government counterparts (covering some of the logistics cost of the training). However, no plans appear to be in place to utilize these remaining funds and the UNIFEM NC does not appear to have received instructions from UNIFEM ASRO.

3.2 Effectiveness

At first glance, it appears that all the women who participated in the AWP training courses were successful in becoming part of the Electoral College (EC). However, further probing of this issue by the Evaluation Mission revealed that in fact this has been more or less by default. Trainees had erroneously assumed that by virtue of participating in the AWP training they would be 'automatically' appointed to the EC. While neither UNIFEM nor the national partners ever indicated such a possibility, it appears that the Emiri Courts – supported by Sheikha Fatima – took the decision to include the women trainees in the EC list in order 'not to discourage women from being politically active' as one respondent put it. Indeed, all eight women appointed to the FCN are said to have participated in AWP training; though the one woman elected to the FCN did not.

Another dimension of effectiveness is that the UNIFEM NC has a good relationship – based on social and family networks – with both national partners. This has been conducive to widening the outreach of training activities as mentioned earlier and also avoiding duplication (for example targeting the same participants). It has also contributed to strengthening the role of both the GWU and the FDF as contributors to

140- United Nations Development Fund for Women/UAE (UNIFEM) (2007). 'Women and Political Participation in the United Arab Emirates: Diagnosis of the Reality and the Drive Towards More Effective Participation'. By M. S. Lootah (Arabic/English).

141 United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM/ASRO) (2008/b). 'Women's Political Activities in the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Kuwait'. By M. A. Fadl (Arabic).

Emirati women's empowerment in general, and political empowerment in particular.

A further dimension of effectiveness is the reality that - due to support at the highest political level, women's political empowerment-related activities generally receive wide media coverage. This is also reflected in examples of media coverage included in the GWU and FDF files on the AWP Project. Studies by reputable institutions such as the Dubai School of Governance also serve to support the effectiveness of efforts aiming to promote women's political empowerment.

3.3 Sustainability

Insofar as the two UAE AWP national partners continue to be supported at the highest political level in efforts to promote women's empowerment, including their political participation, the AWP project activities - albeit with the focus on further developing the 'emitarized' training modules as mentioned earlier - can be said to be sustainable. From various meetings with stakeholders in the UAE, the Evaluation Mission concludes that the political empowerment of Emirati women - perceived to include enabling female FCN members to be more effective in their role and activities, as well as mobilizing both the male and female public at large to support women's increased visibility in political life - is an ongoing process that is expected to gain increasing momentum.

Such sustainability is also further supported by the reality that parallel to the AWP project, there have been various high-level meetings of direct relevance to Emirati women's political empowerment. For example, the First, Second and Third 'Regional Conference for Women Parliamentarians in the GCC States' (respectively in July 2006, Manama/Bahrain; October 2007, Abu Dhabi/UAE; and December 2008, Muscat/Oman) were all co-organized by the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) with the pertinent Shura Council in the host country.¹⁴²

Apart from the previously mentioned AWO meetings, the UAE has also been participating in high-level meetings of the Arab Inter-Parliamentarian Union (AIPU).¹⁴³ For example, the UAE participated in the 'Regional Seminar on Parliaments and the Budgetary Process, Including from a Gender Perspective' (Beirut/Lebanon, June 2004),¹⁴⁴ as well as other regional meetings during subsequent years. Thus, in effect from the perspective of UAE stakeholders met by the Evaluation Mission, the reality that the planned Regional AWP Forum (first AWP objective) has not materialized is generally not perceived to have impeded regional networking in support of Arab women's political empowerment.

However, as various stakeholders met by the Evaluation Mission also pointed out, the reality that government authorities do not generally fund GWU, and FDF project activities and expect the latter to do their own fund-raising, in effect means that sustainability of the contribution of the AWP Project to Emirati women's political empowerment - including addressing the challenges they face in campaigning - requires diligent follow-up through strategic fund-raising.

142- This is the information available via the pertinent website; see <http://www.ipu.org>. It remains unclear to the Evaluation Mission if/to what extent UNIFEM ASRO was involved in these events. For example, the UNIFEM ASRO AWP UAE Mission Report of 29-31 October 2007 mentions the Second Regional Conference and UNIFEM's planned presentation to the meeting, but does not clarify the link with the AWP Project.

143- Established in 1974, based in Damascus/Syria.

144- <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/lebanon>

C. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Key Results

1.1 Challenges

The particular challenges faced by female FCN members are well captured in the *2009 study on UAE women in the FCN*, key points of which are summarized below:¹⁴⁵

*In general, both male and female respondents held positive attitudes towards women's political participation, though women were more inclined to stress the 'qualitatively meaningful role' of their participation.

*Women were more inclined to endorse a gender-based quota system.

*More men than women mentioned spouses assisting them in their campaigns, and male candidates generally also had higher budgets at their disposal for campaigning.

*Campaign messages of female candidates tended to differ somewhat from that of male candidates and generally did not include contact information or photos.

*Female FCN members indicated that their lower number (9 out of 40) meant that they were less represented in FCN committees.

*Overall there were reservations against establishing a women's committee as this was deemed to involve the risk of marginalizing female FCN members and perpetuating a focus on the 'family' rather than on 'women' *per se*.

*More male FCN members received support services compared with female FCN members.

*While the role of the media was overall deemed to be positive, it was perceived as deficient in communicating the positive contribution of female FCN members to the public.

Various issues identified in this study were more or less confirmed by the appointed Fujairah female FCN member met by the Evaluation Mission, as well as by the appointed female Fujairan and Sharjan members of the EC. All respondents stressed the important role of male family members in particular, though many stressed that this did not always include financial support. Indeed some women who nominated themselves for elections took up loans in their names, pointing out that in general contrast to male candidates, fund-raising by individual women tends to be socially frowned upon.

This is where formal institutional support becomes important; i.e. women candidates require a 'reputable umbrella' under which they can campaign – for example the GWU or even the business women's associations. This is deemed to also help address the social stigma of having the female candidate's photo and contact address on campaign posters, as well as more effectively mobilizing the media in support of women candidates.

For Emirati women who participated in the AWP training in the quest of acquiring leadership and decision-making skills, public visibility is less of an issue since it is confined to the place of work. There are many female role models to be emulated in the Emirati society as well as in the labour force, though here again support of male family members is deemed a crucial variable. Interestingly respondents in salaried employment did not

145- DSG/MSFCN Affairs (2009) op. cit., pp. 10-11. All 40 FCN members responded and participated in the study. However, of the 346 male EC members who ran for election, only 12 per cent responded to the questionnaire. Of the 48 female EC candidates, only 27 per cent responded. a learning process deemed relevant to the future. The study is also an example of progress in institutional transformation, i.e. the Dubai School of Governance that co-authored the study has a Gender and Public Policy Initiative which supported the research. However, it should be noted that none of women met by the Evaluation Mission mentioned the existence of this 2009 study which is accessible via the website and was mentioned in the UAE media.

perceive juggling jobs with the demands and responsibilities of wife- and motherhood to be a particular problem. As one respondent put it, 'many of us married young then continued with our education... and generally we can rely on family networks and paid help to take care of our children and household'. For another respondent a main challenge is encouraging the younger generation of men and women 'many of whom have higher education than we do' to be actively engaged in political life.

1.2 Lessons Learnt

The experience of AWP implementation in the UAE points to various lessons learnt relevant to the Gulf Region, as well as in some respect to other Arab countries where support to women's political empowerment remains a challenge.

To begin with, it is not only political will and support at the highest level which is important; equally important is how this is strategically put into practice. As one respondent put it:

'We women in the Emirates prefer to go about things more quietly than in some other Arab countries...and this includes ensuring that no one can fault us in respect of dressing modestly (i.e. the black 'abaya/cloak and headscarf worn by all Emirati women) ... this way we avoid antagonizing those whose support we need'.

Another lesson learnt is that male support of progress in electoral reforms is less challenging in a political system where men also may have been excluded from political participation, i.e. where they are not appointed to the Electoral College. This may also explain why a quota system in favour of women is generally not deemed to be necessary, a point in which many respondents met by the Evaluation Mission also concur.

While the need for organizations such as the GWU and the FDF to fund-raise for their project activities is perceived by some respondents to be a handicap, it may well be a factor in encouraging a more strategic 'cost/benefit' approach to programming in support of Emirati women's political empowerment. This includes being strategic in mobilizing media support and developing effective advocacy strategies conducive to further entrenching the importance of women's empowerment as part of progress in Emirati society, the economy and political life.

Last but not least an important lesson learnt is the need to ensure that a project such as the AWP needs to be strategic in the way it coordinates with similar activities, be it by the UN system, be it by international and regional organizations. There would appear to be some missed opportunities in respect of joint efforts, particularly in respect of communication and advocacy strategies, as well as involving other potential partners; for example the Dubai School of Governance or the various business women's association, or female colleges, as well as community-based associations which may not be visible beyond their particular geographical setting. This would also have been conducive to promoting a holistic approach to women's empowerment where the 'political' is effectively supported by the 'social' and the 'economic'.

2. Recommendations

During discussions with the many stakeholders met by the Evaluation Mission respondents repeatedly mentioned the need for *training of trainer (TOT)* courses targeting potential female trainers and equipping them with the necessary skills to mainstream gender in the focus and topic of training materials.¹⁴⁶ A pool of national female trainers with the skill of adapting, i.e. further ‘emiratizing’ generic training materials would be conducive to reaching women in remote areas, specially in the smaller and less affluent Emirates. However, the Evaluation Mission notes that a pool of gender sensitized male trainers is equally important in support of the message that promoting equal opportunities irrespective of gender is a requirement, specially in communities where gender segregation remains the norm.

Training in gender responsive budgeting, not only for both male and female FCN members, but also for members of the GWU and the FDF, as well as interested members in the Electoral College was also identified as a need. This is held to be particularly important in respect of the less affluent Emirates, but also in view of forthcoming electoral reforms where the FCN is expected to be accorded a say in legislative matters.

Another felt need raised by respondents met by the Evaluation Mission is the need to ensure that *female candidate’s campaign messages* are not confined to social issues, but also include current economic challenges in a globalizing world where the global credit crunch is having some impact. This requires adapting the generic training materials to equip female candidates with the required skills, which would contribute to developing the ‘incubator’ concept.

Last but not least there is a need for the UN system to put into practice a *joint UN vision* which ensures that cost-effective cooperation is the norm rather than being *ad hoc* as seems to have been the case in the UAE. This includes a strategic analysis of missed opportunities in respect of implementation of the AWP project, linked to identifying strategic entry points for supporting gender sensitive political participation in the UAE, and including a strategic approach to mobilizing the youth population.

¹⁴⁶- As part of AWP activities UNIFEM ASRO has implemented regional TOT courses; however none of the respondents met by the Evaluation Mission appeared to be aware of this.

