



# Inclusion of Women and Girls and Ensuring Their Rights

A Toolkit for Arab Cities

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Author: Marwa Barakat

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## SHORT SUMMARY

### Inclusion of women and girls in Arab cities: challenge or opportunity?

Inclusion of women and girls is central to the issue of urban inclusion.

Even though women and girls represent close to or more than half of the population of most Arab cities, they are one of the groups that are historically and structurally excluded from decision-making and development planning in the cities. They face many barriers in accessing cities services, and inequality participating in cities activities.

Developed on the basis of a virtual regional consultation workshop, as well as in-depth interviews with cities officials and representatives from the *Coalition of Arab Cities against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance*, this Toolkit provides tools and practical advice to enable Arab cities achieve a better inclusion of women and girls, and ensure their full right to benefit from local development programs.

The toolkit mainly targets local authorities in Arab cities including Mayors, Members of Municipality Councils, Municipal executives, and Entities concerned with the design, implementation, follow-up, and evaluation of local projects and programs.

This publication is the result of a joint effort involving the *European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Graz*, *UNESCO Coalition of Arab Cities against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance*, and UNESCO Cairo Office.



*“Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed”*



# Inclusion of Women and Girls and Ensuring Their Rights

A Toolkit for  
Arab Cities

# Foreword

This toolkit focuses on the ***inclusion of women and girls, and how to ensure the realisation of their rights***. It aims at responding to the core need of Arab cities for a reference material on mitigating crucial gender inclusion issues. Further, it contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on ensuring women's rights, and SDG 11 on making cities and human communities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. But why is it so important to foster the inclusion of women and girls in Arab cities?

Women and girls represent around half of the population in most Arab cities. However, only one out of five women participates in the labour force. Globally, this constitutes the lowest percentage of women's economic participation. Further, the Arab region continues to display one of the highest rates of gender inequality in the world according to the Global Gender Gap Index 2022. This gender equality gap along with its many complex and multi-dimensional exclusionary practices denies women the chance to fully benefit from development achievements, as well as to access to and control resources. Moreover, gender inequality prevents Arab countries from ensuring that no one is left behind; it considerably hinders the realisation of the commitments and 17 SDGs stipulated in the 2030 Agenda. Consequently, sustainable development in Arab cities, as in any city worldwide, is inherently linked to the full inclusion of women and girls, the full realisation of their rights, as well as the provision of equal opportunities for them in various spheres of city life. This includes areas like access to services and information, as well as participation in local decision-making.

It is of vital importance that Arab city leaders assume their responsibility to elaborate policies to reduce the gender equality gap by immediately shifting to innovative methods for the mitigation of existing challenges. Hence, this toolkit was developed to answer to this need in line with the recommendation of members of the Coalition of Arab Cities against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance and following the success of the Toolkit for Urban Inclusion in Arab Cities 2020. It provides practical guidance to city actors in the Arab region for promoting the inclusion of women and girls, and guaranteeing their rights in Arab cities. Further, it offers field-proven accumulated knowledge stemming from the actual experiences of Arab cities in planning, implementing, and evaluating their local programmes and projects. Therefore, it is a guide "by Arab cities, for Arab cities".

We would like to express our profound gratitude to the contributing Arab cities for sharing their experiences and expertise which are at the core of this publication. We would also like to thank the numerous experts and the youth of civil society, as well as all young researchers who contributed significantly with their insights to the elaboration of this toolkit during the preparation and review phase.

We aspire that this Toolkit with its participatory and applied approach supports Arab officials in their endeavour to promote the inclusion of women and girls, and to ensure their rights. Further, we hope that Arab cities actively engage and cooperate with a broad variety of stakeholders at the national, governorate, municipal, and local levels to implement joint activities that are inspired by the ideas shared in this toolkit. We at UNESCO and the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Graz remain committed to supporting Arab cities by means of technical advice, capacity-building, and facilitating the exchange of experiences and best practice examples.

**Dr. Nuria Sanz**

Officer In Charge, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States-Cairo Office



**Prof. Renate Kicker**

Head of the Foundation for the Promotion of Human Rights at Local and Regional Levels under the Auspices of UNESCO



# INTRODUCTION

# Background to the preparation of the toolkit for inclusion and ensuring the rights of women and girls in Arab cities

Believing in the pivotal role of cities in achieving the goals of sustainable development, UNESCO launched the International Coalition for Inclusive and Sustainable Cities in 2004, with the aim of creating a network of cities keen to exchange information and expertise in order to achieve inclusive development for all and combat flawed practices. One consequence of this was the creation of the Arab Coalition of Cities against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance, which seeks to formulate and foster policies of urban inclusion and equality in the Arab region, so that “no-one gets left behind”. The UNESCO Regional Office in Cairo supports member cities in developing the necessary capacities to build sustainable and inclusive cities for all.

Within this framework and in the light of the undertaking by Arab cities to achieve urban inclusion as one of the strategic goals of sustainable development, the “Toolkit for Urban Inclusion in Arab Cities” was published in 2020. Around 14 cities from the coalition, as well as regional and international experts took part in its preparation. The toolkit is a response to the need of cities for terms of reference adapted to local contexts that consider their particular characteristics. It prioritizes urban issues and challenges in the Arab region. The document is the product of regional consultation meetings between working groups from participating Arab cities, field visits, and joint knowledge production drawing primarily on the expertise and experience of cities. The toolkit achieved its defined goals and was well received by Arab cities as a practical step-by-step guidance based on the tacit knowledge and practical expertise in formulating and implementing local programs accumulated over the years by policymakers, city officials, and executives. It presents the challenges arising in the course of the actual implementation on the ground and highlights ways of addressing them. The toolkit comprises of four sections that deal with the core issues associated with urban inclusion which were raised by Arab cities during the consultations, namely: public participation, access to information, sport (to ensure the inclusion of young people) and education in citizenship and human rights.

Following the successful publication of the toolkit, the need for adding a new topic emerged. This new document shall address the issues of Arab women and be designed to provide tools and practical advice drawn from the actual experience of participating Arab cities that



can be adapted to the demands of the local context, enable all cities to achieve the inclusion of women and girls, and ensure their right to benefit from local development programs. Member States of the coalition welcomed the new document and expressed their readiness to contribute to the drafting process to make it, like the toolkit itself, a technical reference point “by and for Arab cities”.

## Target groups

The Toolkit mainly targets the following groups:




- Mayors;
- Members of Municipality Councils;
- Municipal executives;
- Entities concerned with the design, implementation, follow-up, and evaluation of local projects and programs.

## How to use the Toolkit

Importance	Planning	Implementation	Evaluation
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**Importance:** Explains the importance and relevance of the topic under consideration in the chapter. Clarifies the link to city commitments, notably those presented in global conventions, thus providing arguments that could be used to gain political support for proposed local programs. The link between the topic and city functions is also clarified in each chapter.

**Planning/Implementation/Evaluation:** Provides guidance on how to execute programs, based on participating city experiences, outlined according to the stages of the policy-making cycle, namely planning, implementation, follow-up, and evaluation. Specifies the major steps to be followed in each phase, the challenges cities may face, and the measures for addressing them.

-  Checklist provides a simple monitoring tool to help cities avoid missing any element of successful planning and implementation.
-  Inspiring city experiences, including projects, programs, and policies related to the topic of the chapter.
-  Tips from participating cities to enhance and develop the work.

## Methodology of preparing the toolkit for inclusion and ensuring the rights of women and girls

This toolkit was developed on the basis of a virtual regional workshop via Zoom, as well as in-depth telephone interviews with city representatives. A vital focus was placed on accessing the tacit knowledge of officials and staff of participating cities accumulated through their experience to publish it in the hope that it would be beneficial to other Arab cities. Member cities of the coalition nominated representatives, and individuals with practical experience and in-depth knowledge of making and implementing local policies targeting women and girls were selected.

In light of the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the workshop was held virtually over three days in October 2021. It discussed the inclusion and rights of women and girls in Arab cities. The workshop adopted an interactive methodology and included working groups moderated by a female urban inclusion expert, who was supported by UNESCO team members. The gender expert presented a research paper on the topic to initiate the discussion. Then, the floor was open for the participating cities to share their experiences and knowledge, as well as to respond to questions on aspects of policy-making, planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up of local programs and projects. Discussions were supplemented by in-depth interviews with several city officials.

The information obtained from these sessions formed the basis for this toolkit, which was drafted by the urban inclusion expert and complemented by knowledge acquired from regional consultations and her previous experience. The outputs of two previous workshops organized by the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and

Democracy in Graz in partnership with the UNESCO Regional Office for Science in the Arab States (Cairo), the African Local Governments Academy (ALGA) and the Network of Locally Elected Women of Africa (RAFELA) were also included. These workshops were conducted in December 2020 and March 2021. They brought together several Arab and African cities. The draft was reviewed by representatives of the coalition, and regional and international experts before it was finalized and published by UNESCO.

## Contributors to the toolkit for inclusion and ensuring the rights of women and girls *(in alphabetical order)*

Cities affiliated to the Arab Coalition of Cities against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance that took part in consultation sessions and meetings

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**Amman, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan**

Akram Kherisat, Elham al-Nawawi, Rash al-Shawariba

**Baghdad, Republic of Iraq**

Niran Jaafar, Khawla Mousa, Muhammad Mahdi Hussayn

**Byblos, Lebanese Republic**

Khalid al-Laquis, Serena Abi Shibal

**Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt**

Amira Khamis, Sherine Muhammad, Wisam Rajab, Khalil Shaath

**Essaouira, Kingdom of Morocco**

Hafiza Obayd

**Nouakchott, Islamic Republic of Mauritania**

Ayesha Badi, Lala Sidi al-Amin, Saida Barkil

**Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco**

Wardia Ben Ramadhan

**Ras al-Matn, Lebanese Republic**

Raja Abu Raslan, Nada Halawa

**Sharm el-Sheikh, Arab Republic of Egypt**

Rania al-Sheikh, Dua Abdulalim, Ahmed Al-Shahat, Hani al-Sibei

**Sidon, Lebanese Republic**

Muhammed Baba

## Consultants and experts taking part in regional consultations on drafting the toolkit

---

**Isabella Meier, Bernadette Holzer,  
Klaus Starl**

European Training and Research Centre  
for Human Rights and Democracy, Graz

**Abdulaziz Zaki, Marie Hanna,  
Heba Shama**

UNESCO Regional Office for Science in the  
Arab States, Cairo

**Marwa Barakat**

Urban inclusion, planning and  
development expert, Cairo

**Monia Braham**

Gender and local governance expert,  
Tunis

## Author

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Marwa Barakat

## Reviewers

---

**Salma Nasser**

Program Specialist,  
UN Women – Egypt Country Office

**Rouba Arja**

Social Affairs Officer, Gender Justice,  
Population and Inclusive Development  
Cluster, United Nations Economic and  
Social Commission for Western Asia –  
ESCWA

**Manar Zaiter**

Attorney at law, Human Rights activist

**Livia Perschy**

European Training and Research Centre  
for Human Rights and Democracy, Graz

**Isabella Meier**

European Training and Research Centre  
for Human Rights and Democracy, Graz

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Importance

Planning

Implementation

Evaluation

# 1. Why women and girls' inclusion?

## 1.1 The relevance of women and girls' inclusion on the city level

The integration of women in Arab cities presents a challenge and, at the same time, an opportunity. Women are not a marginalized minority in the usual sense. In fact, women and girls represent close to or more than half of the population of most Arab cities. Nevertheless, they still suffer from historic and structural marginalization in public and private life, a lack of economic opportunities, and discrimination in the political, cultural, and social life. Further, they also face discrimination with regard to accessing public spaces and revealing their bodies and identities without fear of exclusion, discrimination, violence, and aggression.

The inclusion of women and girls and ensuring their rights are vital components of sustainable development. Therefore, Arab countries and international agencies place it prominently on the list of development priorities. Nevertheless, the Arab region still registers one of the highest rates of gender inequality in the world, according to the Global Gender Gap Index<sup>1</sup>. This gap, and the complex, multi-dimensional exclusionary practices it causes, deny women the opportunity to fully benefit from development and access to and control of resources. The gender gap is characterized by low rates of female participation and access to fundamental rights in terms of enrolment in education, assumption of political and leadership positions, voting, access to job opportunities, earning a living, owning land and property, and other forms of active involvement in the State and society. In the case of employment, for example, there continue to be many obstacles preventing women from entering the labour market. According to statistics and despite a slow improvement in Arab cities in recent years, the unemployment rate of young women is more than twice as high as the unemployment rate among men in the region. Unemployment rates of young women in the Arab region are also the highest in the world, at 48 percent; the global average rate of unemployment among young women is at 16 percent, compared to a rate of 23 percent for their male counterparts in the region, which is also a high rate globally, given that global youth unemployment stands at 13 percent<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The index, issued by the World Economic Forum, measures gender equality. See: <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021>

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Development Programme in the Arab States. Retrieved on 17 December 2021 from: <https://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/rbas/ar/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-5-gender-equality.html>

Despite the opportunities urban life offers to women and the relative improvement of living standards, educational opportunities, and employment opportunities, the gender gap continues to persist. Development issues in Arab cities are further complicated by a rapid and often unplanned urban expansion, as the major cities have grown in recent decades and many slum and semi-urban communities (rural or Bedouin) have sprung up on their outskirts. This places the responsibility for planning and managing the development of these communities as well as for addressing the lack of services on the city authorities; such areas have also emerged in historical city centres.

The complexity of the problem of women's inclusion in city life is also mirrored with the diversity of their backgrounds, and class, sectarian, religious and ethnic affiliations. These factors aggravate the forms of discrimination which some groups of women suffer from. These differences among different groups of women must be taken into account alongside the privileges and entitlements of some groups, as well as the obstacles to development they pose for each group of women in particular. When planning for the inclusion of women in the city, local authorities must take diversity into account, and collect accurate data on each category of women, involve them in the study and decision-making processes, and, subsequently, target each category with the appropriate programs to overcome the problems and challenges they face in their daily lives.

Most of these gaps and inequalities intensified during the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic made visible the poor quality of city infrastructure, discriminatory health services, and weak crisis management systems when reaching out to deprived communities. This is not specific to Arab cities or cities of the Global South but holds true for most of the world's cities. The inclusion of women is an important factor for containing the spread of infection, as mostly women are engaged in providing care at home, where they are responsible for ensuring cleanliness and sterilization. Furthermore, the majority of nurses and cleaners in health facilities and public places, such as schools and places of work in both the public and private sectors, are female. This has placed a double burden on women, requiring special programs to address the crisis. In Egypt, for example, women represent 91% of the nursing staff<sup>3</sup>, and the percentage of women among those who perform unpaid care work exceeds 90% in both Iraq and Algeria<sup>4</sup>. Despite these percentages varying in Arab countries, there is a clear pattern of feminization of care work whether paid or unpaid.

In a broader sense, regional reports<sup>5</sup> on monitoring the state of sustainable development in Arab countries and the effects of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic indicate that

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<sup>3</sup> UNDP, 2021. "Assessing the potential impact of COVID-19 on women and girls in Arab States". URL: <https://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/rbas/en/home/library/crisis-response0/assessing-the-potential-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-and-girls-in.html>

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

women were more exposed to many economic, social, and health risks than men in the region, and they also bore the higher negative cost of the measures and measures that were taken by governments to tackle the pandemic. On the issue of work, the risks are not limited to the doubling of the burden of unpaid care work, but the layoffs have affected a greater proportion of women than men, as it has been observed that about 1.1 million women in Arab countries have lost their jobs in 2020<sup>6</sup>, and some of them withdrew from the labor market completely; a rate that was expected to increase with time. Women are also particularly exposed to the risks of instability of small and medium enterprises and their weak ability to continue and overcome economic shocks, especially women workers in the informal sector or unpaid female workers in family businesses or those who work without documented contracts or social and health insurances: where female workers in the Arab region represent a much higher percentage than their male counterparts in the absence of legal rights. The challenges immigrant women face, especially domestic workers, who did not find appropriate care and many of them lost their source of income, have increased. The immigrant and refugee communities have become more fragile, especially in Arab cities with the highest economic growth and which have a high percentage of foreign domestic workers.

Another feature of the crisis is the intensification and expansion of violence against women and girls as a result of the measures taken to close public places and the curfew, which led to the detention of many women with their family men who abused them, especially after increasing pressure on these men which they projected in unhealthy and criminal ways against women. The rates of declining food security for women in the region are generally higher than for men as a result of complex factors related to the division of food resources within the family and women's access to food of less nutritional value, which is reflected in the deterioration of women's condition in indicators of public health, obesity, and malnutrition. The crisis has exacerbated the risks faced by women due to the lack of adequate nutrition and food shortages in some areas, and the restrictions placed on movement, food markets, and food transport between the countryside and the city, especially through unorganized small vendors. With regard to ensuring women's health rights, the reports also noted a lack of medical resources and supplies allocated to health services directed at women, including reproductive and sexual health services, as a result of directing the largest number of resources and health facilities to address the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> See the report of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2022 on the progress made towards achieving the fifth goal of the sustainable development goals, which provides many sources for studies conducted in the past two years that monitor gender differences in several areas. See link: <https://afsd-2022.unescwa.org/sdgs/pdf/documents/3-background-notes/en/22-00073-BackgroundNote-Sdg5-GenderEquality-E-WEB.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> UNDP, 2021. "Assessing the potential impact of COVID-19 on women and girls in Arab States".

<sup>7</sup> Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2022 on the progress made towards achieving the fifth goal of the sustainable development goals



Arab governments have taken some measures that take into account these gender gaps and the multiplying risks women face, but these measures represented a very small percentage of public spending directed to address the pandemic. Reports indicate an increase in the establishment of shelters for female victims of domestic violence, communication lines to respond to complaints, and awareness campaigns to address violence against women in most Arab countries. Fewer measures have been taken to ensure women's economic security, with very few gender-sensitive protection measures against the risks of poverty and hunger. Measures that address the issue of unpaid care work and the risks and burdens it poses for women and girls are largely absent. Local governments in the countries of the world, and the Arab countries as well, have turned to solutions based on remote communication through Internet networks to confront the crisis, whether in educating children, providing local development programs or the possibility of registering for assistance. These solutions revealed a large gap between the number of Internet users of men in the Arab region and the smaller numbers of women in most countries, as well as the fewer number of women who own smart phones or computers than men<sup>8</sup>. It also highlighted the knowledge and training gap between women and men with regard to the use of technology. Additionally, it deprived the poorest groups, which lack access to technologies and electronic networks, from benefiting of many of the existing programs.

Addressing the gender gap, promoting women's inclusion, ensuring their rights and non-discrimination, and protecting them from gender-based violence significantly increases the social value of cities and their ability to grow and develop in a sustainable and inclusive manner. Women-inclusive cities are cities that benefit from the totality of their human potential and the capacities of all their residents, making them safe, healthy, and productive places that enjoy high rates of economic, social, and political growth. These cities ensure that the situation of the whole population, especially women, improves, and a better future for girls and future generations is guaranteed.

Given the major role women play in reconstruction and development, women-inclusive cities can adapt to and better recover from shocks and war. Furthermore, women-inclusive cities seek to build a decent environment for children, families, and the local community based on the foundations of coexistence and peace. These cities welcome immigrant and refugee women, and seek to empower and integrate them in the local community. They enable women from indigenous and marginalized communities whom development has passed by, as well as women with disabilities, and the weakest and most vulnerable groups to integrate into society, create new opportunities, and forge a better life for themselves and their families. All of this can become a reality only in an atmosphere of equal opportunity,

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<sup>8</sup> UNDP, 2021. "Assessing the potential impact of COVID-19 on women and girls in Arab States".

justice, and security, by introducing a transformational change to policies, legislation, and programs to make them people-centred, rights-centred, and rooted in the values and principles of equitable and sustainable urban development.

## 1.2 How do local governments benefit from women's inclusion?

- The inclusion and participation of women in city activities will reduce gender inequality, achieve gender balance, and ensure the full realization of the human potential of society.
- Raising the level of women's health and education along with building capacities and qualifying them to participate fully and effectively in all economic and social activities, will help to increase the city's productivity and contribute to its economic growth and quality of life.
- Developing a sense of citizenship among women and girls, given that they are key agents in society and the State, and have the same rights and duties as men and boys, will increase their sense of belonging and contribution to the city's prosperity.
- Ensuring the full rights of girls and educating boys and girls on the basis of equality, citizenship, and engagement will contribute to preparing new generations to fight the culture of discrimination and misogyny.
- Enabling outstanding women to advance and occupy leadership positions, while overcoming the institutional, political, and cultural obstacles which prevent them from fulfilling their roles, will eventually enable best utilisation of their ability and talents for the city's good.
- The economic empowerment of women in poor and marginalized communities will provide opportunities to earn a living, enabling them to help provide for the family's needs, and raise the economic and social level of the family and wider community.
- Maximizing the benefit of women's artisanal skills by launching craft-based projects: High-quality handicrafts, such as pottery, textiles, carpets, woodwork, wickerwork, and food products, are widespread in local Arab communities and could help revive local markets and the national economy, if properly marketed and distributed.
- Making use of the knowledge and skills of local women in city planning and development: Local studies conducted in many Arab cities have shown that women often know a

lot about housing needs and the state of municipal services, such as drinking water, electricity, sewage and waste collection, as well as food delivery services, and local markets supplying basic commodities. They are also familiar with health and education services, given that they are usually responsible for ensuring family welfare and the children’s nutrition, health, and education.

- Promoting the concepts of safety and well-being in public spaces: Cities that are safe for women and girls are cities that are safe for all, free from violence, extremism, and crime, and provide a better quality of life.

## 1.3 Women and girls’ inclusion and commitments of Arab cities

### 1.3.1 The 10-point plan of the Arab Coalition of Cities against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance<sup>9</sup>

<p><b>Commitment #1</b></p> <p><i>Monitor racism, discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance</i></p>	<p>Develop mechanisms, and qualitative and quantitative indicators at the city level in order to monitor and evaluate the scale and severity of all manifestations of racism, discrimination, xenophobia, and intolerance practices.</p>
<p><b>Commitment #4</b></p> <p><i>Engage city inhabitants and all stakeholders in decision-making, planning and follow-up processes for an equitable and participatory implementation of municipal programs</i></p>	<p>Adopt a participatory approach that engages all segments of society and stakeholders in order to combat discrimination in various areas of life, such as the provision of housing, education, health, and other social services that fall under municipal authority.</p>
<p><b>Commitment #5</b></p> <p><i>Support all victims of racism, discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance</i></p>	<p>Establish and implement effective programs to support all population groups who are subject to racism, discrimination, and hate speech, especially children, women, the elderly, persons with disabilities, immigrants, and refugees. Help strengthen their defence capabilities, and provide them with necessary medical and social services.</p>
<p><b>Commitment #6</b></p> <p><i>Enhance cooperation between cities members of the Arab Coalition, and with other non-member cities wishing to implement joint programs and activities against racism, discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance</i></p>	<p>Strengthen partnerships and the exchange of experiences and best practices in promoting urban inclusion, social cohesion, gender equality, and the protection of rights, especially the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the freedom of religion or belief.</p>

<sup>9</sup> Plan consisting of 10 commitments covering all areas of competence of the city authorities, including education, housing and employment. Arab coalition member cities signed the plan and undertook to incorporate it in their strategies and policies and involve civil society bodies in the promotion and implementation. See: [https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/revised\\_tppoa\\_formatted\\_english.pdf](https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/revised_tppoa_formatted_english.pdf)

## 1.3.2 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>10</sup>



The list of the *17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* dedicates a particular goal, namely number 5, to ensuring women’s rights. However, gender equality is also crucial to achieve the other goals and their detailed objectives, including Goal 11, which seeks to make cities and human communities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

### Goal no. 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

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#### Target 5.4

Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

#### Target 5.5

Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life

#### Target 5.a

Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws

#### Target 5.b

Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women

#### Target 5.c

Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

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<sup>10</sup> The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” on 25 September 2015, being the concluding document of the United Nations Summit Conference to adopt the post-2015 development plan; see <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

### 1.3.3 The New Urban Agenda<sup>11</sup>

**The 2016 New Urban Agenda mentions women and girls in 19 of its articles, ensuring their inclusion and guaranteeing their rights at several levels of policy-making and implementation. The agenda begins by enshrining a common vision among States on the basis of the Quito Declaration, which includes:**

*13. We envisage cities and human settlements that: [...] (c) Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by ensuring women’s full and effective participation and equal rights in all fields and in leadership at all levels of decision-making, by ensuring decent work and equal pay for equal work, or work of equal value, for all women and by preventing and eliminating all forms of discrimination, violence and harassment against women and girls in private and public spaces”*



*The Quito Declaration seeks to implement the New Urban Agenda on the basis of a number of commitments, of which we want to mention:*

*35. We commit ourselves to promoting, at the appropriate level of government, including subnational and local government, increased security of tenure for all, recognizing the plurality of tenure types, and to developing fit-for-purpose and age-, gender- and environment-responsive solutions within the continuum of land and property rights, with particular attention to security of land tenure for women as key to their empowerment, including through effective administrative systems.*

*39. We commit ourselves to promoting a safe, healthy, inclusive and secure environment in cities and human settlements enabling all to live, work and participate in urban life without fear of violence and intimidation, taking into consideration that women and girls, children and youth, and persons in vulnerable situations are often particularly affected. We will also work towards the elimination of harmful practices against women and girls, including child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.*

*59. We commit ourselves to recognizing the contribution of the working poor in the informal economy, particularly women, including unpaid, domestic and migrant workers, to the urban economies, taking into account national circumstances. Their livelihoods, working*

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<sup>11</sup> The New Urban Agenda was adopted by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Habitat III (Quito, 20 October 2016) and endorsed by the General Assembly on 23 December 2016; see <https://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf>

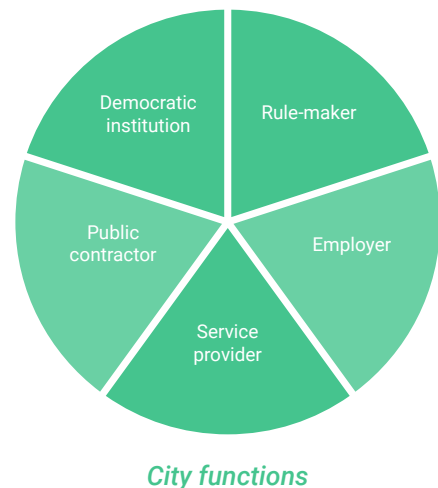
conditions and income security, legal and social protection, access to skills, assets and other support services, and voice and representation should be enhanced. A progressive transition of workers and economic units to the formal economy will be developed by adopting a balanced approach, combining incentives and compliance measures, while promoting preservation and improvement of existing livelihoods. We will take into account specific national circumstances, legislation, policies, practices and priorities for the transition to the formal economy.

61. We commit ourselves to harnessing the urban demographic dividend, where applicable, and to promoting access for youth to education, skills development and employment to achieve increased productivity and shared prosperity in cities and human settlements. Girls and boys, young women and young men are key agents of change in creating a better future and when empowered they have great potential to advocate on behalf of themselves and their communities. Ensuring more and better opportunities for their meaningful participation will be essential for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

155. We will promote capacity-development initiatives to empower and strengthen the skills and abilities of women and girls, children and youth, older persons and persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as persons in vulnerable situations, for shaping governance processes, engaging in dialogue, and promoting and protecting human rights and anti-discrimination, to ensure their effective participation in urban and territorial development decision-making.

## 1.4 Women inclusion and city functions

The inclusion of women and girls is linked to the city's mission to consolidate and institutionalize democratic practices that seek to involve all residents without discrimination and guarantee the rights of women and men on an equal basis. The inclusion of women and girls will ensure rational decision-making and rule-making in response to the needs of residents, especially marginalized groups and groups in need. It will provide employment opportunities through fair representation of women in decision-making, and address the need and ability of women to access public services efficiently and effectively by outsourcing these to contractors and partners.



Importance

Planning

Implementation

Evaluation

## 2. Planning for the inclusion of women and girls

### 2.1 Data collection and assessment of needs and priorities

The availability of data and detailed information on the needs of target groups is the first step towards successfully planning women's inclusion programs. However, many Arab cities face substantial challenges in this regard due to a lack of data, and inadequate information and statistics, e.g. out of date information or flawed data collection and management systems. Indeed, women's rights will remain an abstract set of concepts and principles on paper and in public discourse, having no real benefit unless translated into actions and plans that can be implemented on the ground.

Cities adopt many ways of overcoming this obstacle. They employ mechanisms for collecting data on the ground in a participatory manner, making use of members of the local community, as well as civil and private sector workers. They foster field research conducted by multidisciplinary work teams to collect, classify, and analyse the data, and draw conclusions before proceeding to project planning. A designated amount of the project budget is set aside for the planning process. The local authorities may also make use of databases developed and managed by other governmental and non-governmental entities in order to facilitate access to data during the planning process. In the last decade, the role of electronic platforms and social media networks to collect population data, and identify trends and attitudes increased through direct interaction with the public and the use of opinion polls and questionnaires. The use of smart applications to collect data and monitor specific phenomena in an innovative, participatory manner also increased. However, as the confidentiality of user data continues to be challenged, greater efforts are needed to protect privacy.

According to the Arab cities participating in the preparation of this toolkit, the following saying holds true: "If you've not been counted, you'll not be taken into account". This means that groups that do not show up in censuses, statistics, and studies tend to be overlooked in development plans. There is a need for detailed databases to monitor the characteristics, numbers, and living conditions of women belonging to the most vulnerable groups. The more accurate, up-to-date, and easy to use these databases available to the local authority are, the better the planning process will be, since it can be based on evidence and proof.

The collection, documentation, and management of data requires the development of integrated databases and the allocation of the necessary financial, technological, and human resources. Quantitative indicators need to be developed to enable the city to measure the situation of the rights of women and girls and the progress achieved over specific timeframes. It is also helpful to create institutions responsible for monitoring, evaluation, and documentation to ensure that plans reflect political will. Some Arab cities already dispose of specialized data management departments that monitor indicators of inclusive, sustainable development, while others rely on databases operated by specific departments, such as social security, education, health, housing etc. In all cases, the availability of data, statistics, and studies is an important enabling factor in making rational and effective decisions on women's inclusion.

When it comes to statistics, cities must mainstream the gender perspective. Consequently, all statistics that they produce consider gender differences, disparities, and inequalities in society. Such mainstreaming will have a transformative effect on data collection, classification, and analysis. It is not enough to collect data on numbers of men and women, qualitatively disaggregated by he/she. Gender-based factors affecting the productive, reproductive, and care-giving roles of women and men in society must also be considered, as well as the different opportunities women and men have to access resources and the way women and men benefit differently from the access to facilities and services. Mainstreaming the gender perspective in statistics might include collecting new types of data or expanding data collection in certain areas to fill existing knowledge gaps. It will also affect the assumptions and principles upon which surveys and questionnaires are based. Ensuring that gender issues are covered will probably require a change in the methods of data collection and analysis.

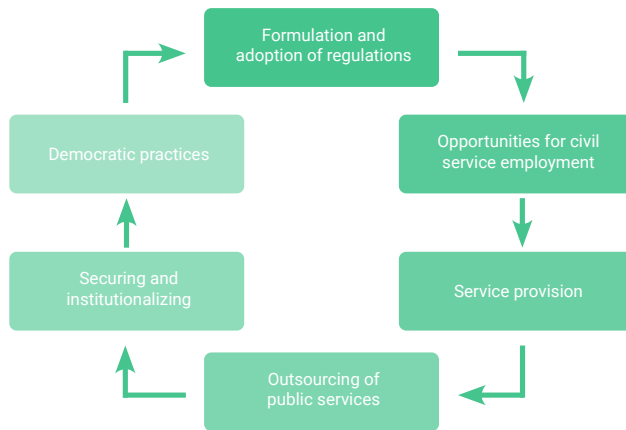


### Amman Urban Observatory, Amman, Jordan

#### Good governance for women's inclusion

The Greater Amman Municipality Urban Observatory is the responsible institution for collecting data and producing quantitative and qualitative urban development indicators. These indicators measure economic, social, and urban development performance variables to help achieve the goals of sustainable urban development policies – the most important of which are those relating to women's inclusion and reduction of gender inequality. In particular, the Observatory is responsible for the following tasks: maintaining an up-to-date and accurate database that reflects the city's specific features and urban integration issues; building the capacities of local authorities to generate and manage information; transforming urban phenomena and issues into measurable characteristics; producing, using, and analysing urban indicators; using urban indicators for city planning; improving the capacity to manage urban development; and cooperating and exchanging data and expertise with other bodies. As such, the Urban Observatory is an effective tool for strategic planning and can help to draw up effective, efficient, inclusive, and sustainable urban policies.



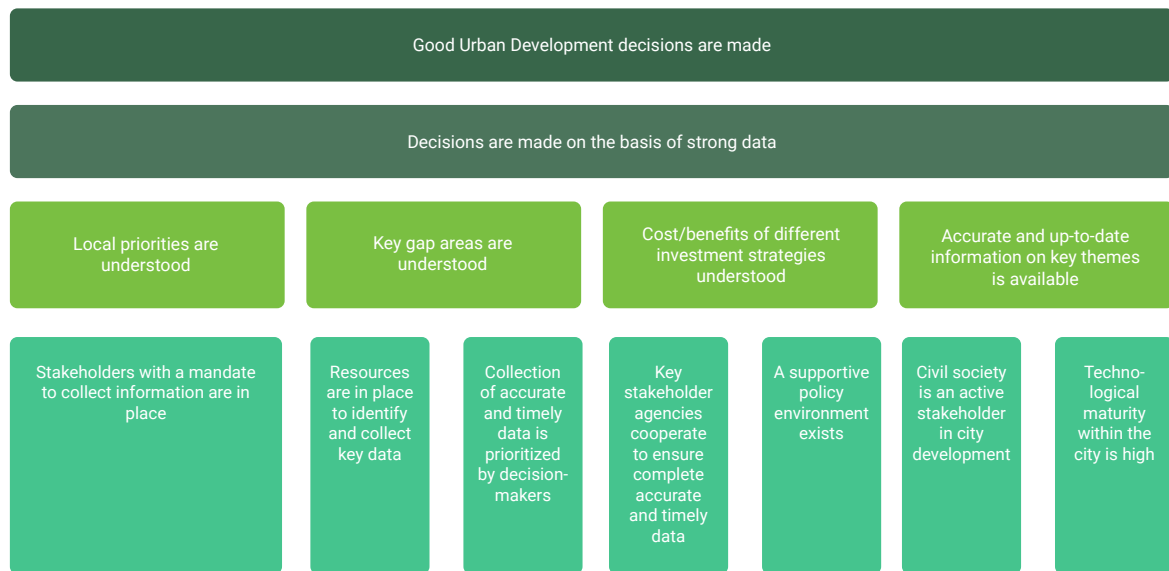


Source: Velluci S., *Non-linear research data lifecycle* (2014)

Data management is a continuous process. It starts with planning. This includes not only methods of data collection, but also an understanding of the nature of the data to be collected, ethical aspects to be adopted, data ownership and use, the target audience, the purpose of the data, and the conditions of use. Next, the implementation of data collection follows: data are collected and, then, classified, processed, analysed, and interpreted to produce detailed conclusions and recommendations useful to the planner and decision-

maker. The data management process also includes systems of documentation, storage, and protection to ensure that data are not lost or tampered with. The process ends with data ownership, sharing, and archiving. Data management systems help to protect and preserve data, and maximize its use to support rational planning and decision-making.

## Framework to illustrate the maturity pathway from enablers to decisions



Source: *An innovative data toolkit for city management: Cities Alliance* (Brussels, 2017)

## 2.2 Identifying target group and evaluating its inclusion and methods of communication

The next step involves defining the target group of women and examining the current situation in terms of the level of awareness of women's rights and issues, as well as the extent of progress made in integrating this specific group economically, socially, politically, and culturally at the level of the family, the wider community, and the city as a whole, and its ability to access city services and facilities and the urban opportunities and benefits the city offers.

It is recommended to evaluate the current situation by answering the following questions:

- How can we describe the local perspective on citizenship, gender equality, and women's rights? What are the key factors that shape, affect, and are affected by this perspective?
- To what extent do existing laws, legal texts, and measures guarantee women's rights? Are there clear mechanisms for combatting discrimination and closing the gender inequality gap?
- To what extent do women in this geographical area, organization or targeted social group enjoy basic rights, such as food, housing, clothing, and medical care, along with all other economic, social, cultural, political, and civil rights as recognized by human rights instruments and writings?
- What is the impact of different social hierarchies and identities on the inclusion of women? Are social class, race, ethnicity, nationality/citizenship, religion, physical disability or age factors that aggravate exclusion and marginalization?
- Are there open channels of outreach to women and platforms or spaces specifically for and/or accessible to women, enabling them to participate, express their opinions, and have their voices and issues heard?
- What are the socially and institutionally preferred or available activities for these women and girls?
- What are the obstacles and barriers to women's participation?
- How can we reach out and encourage women to take part in projects and programs?

- Have previous projects and programs been implemented with a view to achieving the same goals? What were the results and the lessons learned?

Categories of women proposed by Arab cities for targeting; proposals for assessing state of inclusion; and suitable means of outreach to ensure success of the program and achievement of goals:

Target group of women	Initial assessment of inclusion status and guarantee of rights in accordance with Arab cities	Examples of rights and issues that may be linked to development programs	Means of outreach to target group
<p>Female breadwinner; divorcées; widows</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female breadwinners face difficulties and obstacles in providing sufficient income to meet family needs: they suffer from a lack of opportunities for women in the job market, as well as the pay gap between men and women in the same jobs.</li> <li>• In some communities, female-headed households may face social stigmatisation, exclusion, and ostracism.</li> <li>• In view of the gender gap in favor of men in respect to ownership of land and housing, the likelihood of female-headed households being homeless or living in sub-standard housing increases.</li> <li>• In war and conflict zones, the number of families who lose their primary breadwinner (typically the husband/ father) because he was killed, is missing or was injured, increases. Women do not have the necessary support systems and networks to enable them to assume the role of breadwinner and head of household. Accurate, updated data on the numbers of these families are not available from local authorities, given the difficulty of counting war victims in general.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reintegration of families into society and raising awareness of the need for social solidarity: such families should not be ostracized or marginalized by the local community.</li> <li>• Provision of basic needs: food, housing, and healthcare.</li> <li>• Ensuring children’s rights to education.</li> <li>• Economic empowerment of women, building their capacities and providing them with suitable employment opportunities.</li> <li>• Development of suitable business models to enable women to perform the role of family carer, as well as holding down a job or managing a project efficiently.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making use of statistics and case studies covering the numbers and living conditions of female breadwinners and their families.</li> <li>• Employing databases to help reach out to these women, using lists held by ministries of social solidarity, women’s affairs, and family affairs, and local branches, as well as NGOs targeting female breadwinners at the local level.</li> <li>• Research; setting up focused working groups that seek to listen to women from these groups and understand their issues and problems more deeply, with the aim of improving the city’s action mechanisms.</li> </ul>

Target group of women	Initial assessment of inclusion status and guarantee of rights in accordance with Arab cities	Examples of rights and issues that may be linked to development programs	Means of outreach to target group
<p>Women living in informal areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women living in slum areas face a lack of financial resources and economic and social opportunities for advancement; their families suffer from unsuitable, often dangerous and life-threatening housing conditions, a lack of security in the streets and public spaces; they also face the repeated threat of homelessness or eviction as a result of insecure tenancy.</li> <li>• Women living in slum areas, who are usually marginalized, need proper platforms and channels to enable them to integrate into society and express their needs and aspirations. Some cities lack sufficient data to target residents of these areas, including women and girls, as statistics and censuses often do not cover them accurately.</li> <li>• Many women in slum and poor areas work in the informal economy and their livelihoods are unstable and precarious; they need a stable source of income and more humane working conditions. Economic empowerment of this group is key to solving their problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The right to decent housing, including healthy living conditions, minimal overcrowding, security of tenure, and provision of basic services and amenities.</li> <li>• Economic rights, open markets and job opportunities.</li> <li>• Provision of safe, women-friendly public spaces, free from violence and harassment.</li> <li>• Decent and humane working conditions, including reasonable working hours, a fair wage, rest periods, security and safety rules and good health and environmental standards.</li> <li>• Healthcare, including women’s sexual and reproductive healthcare.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical presence of the work team in the area, gaining the trust of residents and their support for the project.</li> <li>• Calling upon the assistance of NGOs, community leaders regional VIPs.</li> <li>• Holding events and meetings in the region that involve all sections of society, including men and women of all ages, with a view to achieving the desired transformational change regarding women’s rights and the place of women in the development process.</li> <li>• Setting up women's service centres, including offices to receive suggestions and complaints from local women.</li> </ul>
<p>Women from traditional communities; indigenous inhabitants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many Arab cities face the challenge of integrating marginalized traditional communities in general, and women in particular.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to basic services and utilities, especially housing, education and healthcare; access to foodstuffs and basic commodities.</li> <li>• Provision of vocational and professional training on how to manage small and medium-sized businesses; literacy programs, if applicable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It may be necessary to arrange home visits by municipal employees to persuade women to take part.</li> </ul>

Target group of women	Initial assessment of inclusion status and guarantee of rights in accordance with Arab cities	Examples of rights and issues that may be linked to development programs	Means of outreach to target group
<p><i>(cont.)</i></p> <p>Women from traditional communities; indigenous inhabitants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are many social and cultural barriers to reaching out to these societies, including a language or local dialect different from the official language of the State. Many of these societies in Arab countries are culturally closed and have their own laws and customs, including particular perceptions of the role of women and their presence in public life that are sometimes at odds with the centralizing tendency of the city.</li> <li>• There are often physical and geographic barriers too, as many of these tribes and clans live outside the city in inaccessible regions that lack adequate services and infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural inclusion; preservation of the tangible and intangible heritage of all groups making up the national fabric.</li> <li>• Economic empowerment of women, the family, and the community in general.</li> <li>• The health rights of women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important that work teams include female tribal or political party leaders who enjoy the trust of the local community and who understand them and the challenges of outreach.</li> <li>• It will be helpful if persons who speak the local language/dialect are present.</li> </ul>
<p>Girls who have dropped out of education or are at risk of doing so</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite the recognition of the importance of girls' education and the adoption by Arab States of national policies to promote this right decades ago, in many Arab cities girls still drop out of school for economic or cultural reasons that have to do with the family and perception of the benefits and costs of girls' education, for institutional reasons such as a lack of available schools or the need for the school to be close to home, so that girls will not be exposed to danger on their way to and from school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The right of girls to academic and physical education.</li> <li>• Ensuring the physical and psychological health of girls and combating gender-based violence.</li> <li>• Combating the phenomena of early marriage and child labour.</li> <li>• Providing access to schools for girls from the poorest social classes and the most marginalized and remote regions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making use of reliable and updated databases to determine the number of children of school age, the situation of families with girls, and ways of reaching out to them. Databases should be developed, if they do not already exist.</li> <li>• Reaching out to families, especially adults, to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of girls' education; discussing how to address difficulties and obstacles.</li> </ul>

Target group of women	Initial assessment of inclusion status and guarantee of rights in accordance with Arab cities	Examples of rights and issues that may be linked to development programs	Means of outreach to target group
<p><i>(cont.)</i></p> <p>Girls who have dropped out of education or are at risk of doing so</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a need to introduce multi-faceted programs designed to raise awareness of girls' right to education in local communities with a particular focus placed on supporting their families financially; there is also a need to provide girls' schools, libraries, cultural centres, and sports facilities, either by creating new or upgrading existing ones to take the needs of girls into account.</li> <li>• This is linked to other issues too, such as child marriage, where families force their daughters into marriage with adult men to relieve the family of their financial burden or for other cultural and social reasons.</li> </ul>	<p>--</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeting the most vulnerable female students at school by putting in place mechanisms to monitor their situation; discussing the potential risks of dropping out of education.</li> </ul>
<p>Women in leadership positions and decision-making roles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is recognised that there has been an increase in the number of women working in local government organizations and departments in Arab cities, as well as a rise in the number of women holding leadership and senior positions in cities and elected local councils. Indeed, empowering women to occupy senior positions is a strategic goal for many Arab governments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combat discrimination by removing institutional, legal, political, social, and economic obstacles to female leadership.</li> <li>• Full political rights, including the right to vote and stand for election.</li> <li>• Empowering women to assume the role of decision-makers and participate in formulating the vision for city planning and administration.</li> <li>• Qualification, training, and capacity building.</li> <li>• Development of strategies to enable women to balance work and family; provision of alternative care and assistance for children and families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine local authority records, personnel files, and organizational databases that document the efforts of work teams, project outcomes, and assessment.</li> </ul>

Target group of women	Initial assessment of inclusion status and guarantee of rights in accordance with Arab cities	Examples of rights and issues that may be linked to development programs	Means of outreach to target group
<p>(cont.)</p> <p>Women in leadership positions and decision-making roles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nevertheless, the proportion of women in leadership and elected positions is still well below that of men due to the persistence of institutional obstacles that prevent women from being promoted. Employment laws and regulations fail to provide clear, practical solutions to the issue of women's empowerment, the impact of gender differences on women's performance at work and their ability to excel and progress.</li> <li>• There are also cultural and social factors relating to a lack of respect for or acceptance of female leadership in many Arab communities, as well as discrimination between women and men in terms of evaluation, pay and remuneration, sometimes in return for performing the very same work.</li> <li>• Women wishing to stand in local elections lack political and financial support networks, and have to rely chiefly on their individual position, without family relationships, male relatives and associated power relationships and interests. The lack of these relationships and support networks reduces opportunities for talented women.</li> </ul>	<p>--</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct regular assessment and monitoring in local institutions, identifying women with the best performance indicators, and targeting them for empowerment and professional advancement programs; removing institutional obstacles to participation and listening to their suggestions on how to address professional, gender-based difficulties.</li> <li>• Monitoring women who face difficulties in professional development and career advancement, putting in place mechanisms to reach out to them in order to understand and respond to their needs.</li> </ul>



## Integration of Bedouin tribeswomen in Sinai, Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt

### Economic and social rights of women in indigenous and marginalized communities

The city of Sharm el-Sheikh is facing the challenge of integrating Bedouin tribal women. As the indigenous inhabitants of the Sinai Peninsula, these women inhabit their traditional lands in the desert and valleys on the outskirts of urban areas but lack access to city services due to poor Internet and telephone networks. The city is overcoming these challenges by prioritizing the inclusion of Sinai women, providing them with healthcare, and ensuring social, cultural, and economic integration. A specialist centre has been established to empower women and solve the problems they face in the city.

Reaching out to Bedouin women involves arranging field missions to tribal communities by work teams from the city to carry out home visits, going from door to door, sitting with women, and convincing them of the benefits of participation and the positive impact on their lives and the lives of their families. The key to success of these visits is the composition of the work team, made up exclusively of women out of respect for the local culture. It includes female employees of local government departments, members of local NGOs, women's rights activists, political party leaders and parliamentarians representing local tribes, as well as persons who understand cultural sensitivities. Teams typically consist of 10 or more influential women; and follow-up visits are held throughout the year to assess outcomes and ensure that progress is being made.



## Empowerment of local female leaders, Baghdad, Iraq

### Career empowerment and access to leadership positions

Iraq considers the access of women to leadership positions as a strategic goal, which it seeks to achieve through the Department of Women's Empowerment, which reports to the Council of Ministers. There is a women's committee in every municipality that seeks to achieve strategic goals at the local level. Furthermore, a quota of 25 percent of seats is allocated to women in the Iraqi parliament, elected to represent the people nationwide.

Nationally and through its branches in the towns and cities, the Department of Women's Empowerment has adopted several strategies to study and monitor the needs of women holding leadership positions in the spheres of legislation, policy-making, and implementation. It seeks to support these women through training programs to build and develop their leadership capacities. As far as possible, it responds to specific requests and suggestions concerning job performance and provides them with a supportive environment for promotion.



## 2.3 Setting detailed objectives

Targeting women's right to inclusion and empowerment is a very broad canvas that covers a wide spectrum of programs and public policies with multiple goals and components. Setting detailed objectives helps to clarify the proposed project or program vision, and define its scope, ensuring consistency and integration with the strategic direction and development plans adopted by the city and the State in general. Once detailed objectives have been clearly formulated, the project agenda becomes clearer and more realistic. Consequently, the local authority is in a better position to elaborate plans and build political and financial support from local, national, and international parties interested in the areas of development addressed by the project.

The detailed objectives are to be defined according to:

1. the needs of the target group,
2. the ability of the local authorities to meet these needs and
3. the extent to which objectives are consistent with the priorities of local and national development plans.

For example, the program might target multiple age groups or a specific age group, and adopt the appropriate outreach strategies; it may target girls, young women or the elderly. It may target geographical regions within the local authority mandate, especially remote and marginalized ones, specific social classes and income groups or non-national groups such as refugees and migrants. There are also certain qualitative strategic goals, such as ending chronic poverty and hunger or ensuring education, decent housing, and a healthy environment.



## Ensuring the rights of women in marginalized urban area, Nouakchott, Mauritania

### **Economic and social rights of women in marginalized communities: right to decent housing and safe streets for women**

Once the general objective of the program was defined as empowering and guaranteeing the rights of women in marginalized and deprived areas in Nouakchott, the local authorities and partners adopted a number of detailed program and project goals, based on a participatory needs study that included female residents of these areas.

#### *Needs and problems identified:*

- Women and their families suffer from health problems due to a lack of clean drinking water at home.
- The streets are not safe for women due to a lack of street lighting; to avoid being assaulted, women do not leave their homes at night.
- Poverty and a lack of economic opportunities, in particular due to the poor education and lack of employment skills of many women and girls in these areas.

#### *Detailed project goals:*

- Integration of marginalised urban areas and geographical coverage of all areas of the city.
- Ensuring women's health rights and the right of all to clean and safe drinking water.
- Ensuring the right to physical safety; addressing violence against women in public places.
- Economic empowerment and training of women to enable them to enter the job market and earn a decent living.

#### *Planned and implemented program elements:*

- Extension of clean drinking water networks to these areas
- Provision of solar-powered lighting in all streets and public spaces in the area.
- Training women to enable them to acquire the capacities to meet the needs of the job market:
  - » Training groups of women in the skills of sewing and handicrafts;
  - » Training educated women in the use of computers, social media platforms, hospitality, and tourism.

## 2.4 Identifying and engaging stakeholders

The identification of stakeholders is one of the key tasks to be undertaken prior to formulating the project implementation plan, especially when a participatory approach to the planning and implementation of development programs is adopted. Tasks are divided among stakeholders commensurate with their abilities and capabilities, and the material, IT, and human resources available to them, including experts, craftsmen, and volunteers. An effective participation and monitoring of stakeholders allow for the optimal use of local resources for the benefit of the project, and enable local authorities to plan and implement projects beyond the scope of their limited budgets and capacities. Furthermore, it helps to consolidate democracy and strengthen local good governance by preventing government agencies from dominating the decision-making process.

Stakeholders consist of:

- Direct beneficiaries: groups directly affected by the program or project, such as the women of a particular residential area, women engaged in handicrafts, employees of a particular entity or political activists, and electoral candidates.
- Partners in implementation: parties directly involved in implementing the program and responsible for monitoring the work plan and progress on the ground, led by the core project work team formed by the city, joined by local government departments, the relevant utility and service companies and authorities (e.g. electricity, water and contractors), as well as NGOs, consultants, and experts.
- Implementation influencers: parties influencing program workflow, outputs, and results, either directly or indirectly, such as supervising ministries and oversight bodies, official and private media, social media platforms, civil society, and women's rights groups.

To ensure the effective participation of all parties, program management must adhere to certain principles, of which the most important are:

- Transparency, availability of data, and sharing of information and updates on the progress of the project in an appropriate and timely manner by all parties.
- Inclusion of all parties in the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages; implementation of strategies to reach the most marginalized groups and those least able to participate, removing obstacles to their participation, and providing safe, welcoming, and well-equipped spaces where all are equal.

- Building the capacities of all parties, encouraging the exchange of knowledge and expertise; ensuring that the local authority provides all necessary information to enable stakeholders to make decisions based on sound knowledge, supported by evidence and proof.
- Building consensus between the parties: Due to the different views and interests of each of the local parties, consensus-building can be a challenge. However, it is essential in order to ensure teamwork and make progress towards achieving program goals. Consensus may be phased, moving forward one step at a time, or be renewed and renegotiated on a regular basis at the start of each major phase of the project.



### Vocational training and English language teaching as essential for employment, Byblos, Lebanon

#### **Economic and social rights: professional empowerment and training and women's education**

*Project concept:* To provide employment opportunities for women in the tourism sector – one of the most vibrant economic sectors in the city of Byblos – by training them to work in tourist facilities.

*Stakeholder involvement:* Considering all citizens in the town to be partners and stakeholders, Byblos municipality called for proposals with regard to the economic development and empowerment of women in the form of questionnaires. Private sector investors were contacted to identify their needs and capacity to provide support or employment opportunities for local women.

The municipality defined the project concept, objectives, and activities in the course of a participatory process, following close monitoring of local needs and available private sector opportunities. The municipality identified opportunities for vocational training for women to address the shortage of trained female staff in the tourism and hospitality sector in Byblos, as well as a gap in English language teaching.

The municipality held a grand public event in the form of a dinner party, bringing together leading figures in the town and municipality staff with stakeholders, including owners of hotels, tourist facilities, banks, financial institutions, and NGOs. Thanks to this event, technical and financial support was mobilized, and several bodies were engaged to become involved in the project.

Stakeholders as suggested by Arab cities	Possible roles of each stakeholder
<p><b>Government bodies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministries or national councils for women’s affairs;</li> <li>• Ministries, national authorities, and relevant local departments (social security, social development, health, education, sport, housing, industry, agriculture);</li> <li>• Companies and authorities supplying and managing public utilities (electricity, water, wastewater, civil defence, public security etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct studies and collect essential data</li> <li>• Participate in work planning, provide the necessary infrastructure, and form work teams to manage and monitor program implementation</li> <li>• Facilitate necessary institutional, legal and financial procedures, operations, and approvals/authorizations</li> <li>• Organize events to attract and integrate different community groups</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial institutions and funding bodies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional, and international banks</li> <li>• International donors</li> <li>• Funding bodies (private sector, NGOs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide required finance</li> <li>• Facilitate funding mechanisms and procedures</li> <li>• Work with the local municipal authority to devise sustainable financial management methods for projects and programs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Educational, research, and training bodies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools, university institutes of higher study</li> <li>• State-affiliated national research centres</li> <li>• Independent research centres, particularly in the fields of gender studies, feminism, urban studies, as well as social and spatial justice</li> <li>• Consultants, experts, research and development departments in the private and NGO sectors</li> <li>• International experts, global research and development centres active in Arab cities</li> <li>• Vocational training and business development centres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help to educate and inform about women’s issues; analyse the root causes of the problems and negative phenomena prevalent in Arab societies</li> <li>• Contribute to surveys and field studies; collect, classify, and analyse primary data, and make it available to local authorities</li> <li>• Work with local authorities to create efficient databases and data management systems</li> <li>• Provide training for work teams and executives on the rights of women and girls, taking sensitivities into account</li> <li>• Contribute to capacity-building events and raise community awareness of women’s issues; provide training targeting women themselves</li> </ul>
<p><b>Private sector investors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real estate development companies; contracting and construction companies</li> <li>• Corporate community responsibility programs</li> <li>• Companies that organize events and advertising campaigns based on the discourse of promoting the rights and empowerment of women and girls; companies whose client base consists largely of women and girls</li> <li>• Companies that provide opportunities or allocate an employment quota for women</li> <li>• Employment platforms and agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage women and girls to participate in the programs and help the local authority reach out to them to gain their trust and the trust of the local community as a whole</li> <li>• Help to raise awareness of women’s issues, presenting role models and promoting concepts of equality</li> <li>• Provide technical, IT, and financial support to local authorities in the planning and implementation stages</li> <li>• Monitor local needs and participate in the development of plans appropriate to the local context</li> <li>• Provide assistance, gifts, and grants to the poorest and most marginalized groups, especially to help them cope with disasters, economic crises, epidemics, war, and post-war recovery</li> </ul>

Stakeholders as suggested by Arab cities	Possible roles of each stakeholder
<p><b>Media:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional/official media: TV, radio, and newspapers</li> <li>• Social media platforms and networks</li> <li>• Broadcasting of local news in marginalized urban areas (including by traditional media)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote program activities and events, and encourage women to take part</li> <li>• Collect opinions, suggestions, and complaints to measure community reactions to the program/ project</li> <li>• Take part in campaigns to educate the community, and raise awareness of the rights of women and girls; consolidate the values of equality through media items suitable for the public and consistent with the values, and principles enshrined in international and national charters and agendas</li> </ul>



## Gender equality in the development of Rawdh el-Farag market, Cairo, Egypt

### **Economic and social rights: entry of women into job markets; design of women-friendly public spaces and facilities**

*Project concept:* To establish a new market that takes into account the integration of women and gender equality in planning, administration, and at the point of sales.

*Project goals:*

- Establish an alternative market designed and equipped in line with proper planning standards to which street vendors both men and women, who are presently working in neighbourhood streets and public squares, can relocate.
- Make optimum use of the capacities of women working in the informal market.
- Develop and upgrade the capacities of women vendors; embrace the concept of equality at work; and maximize the knowledge and use of resources among female vendors to ensure successful transition to the formal market.
- Develop indicators to measure the extent to which women are involved in the experiment: quantitative indicators show the number of female participants, while qualitative indicators represent empowerment and outcomes.

*Stakeholder involvement:*

- Effective public participation and inclusion of women in planning and management depends upon the proper distribution of roles among stakeholders.
- Throughout the year to assess outcomes and ensure that progress is being made.

Stakeholders participating in implementation	Role played by each in planning and implementation
<p><b>Local government bodies:</b></p> <p>Cairo Governorate</p> <p>Housing Directorate (at governorate and Rawdh el-Farag district level)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several meetings were held to identify social and economic needs, in partnership with Cairo Governorate, governorate-affiliated bodies, the House of Representatives and neighbourhood representatives.</li> <li>• Fieldwork was carried out at all stages; participants included marginalized neighbourhood women with a focus on listening to their views and identifying their needs.</li> <li>• Allocation of land on which to establish the market; provision of material and financial resources; announcement of local projects.</li> <li>• Monitoring of building work, carried out by one of the contractors working on housing directorate projects.</li> <li>• Responsibility for rehousing female vendors and supervising the transfer process in its entirety.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Members of House of Representatives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating in local city council meetings and committee meetings.</li> <li>• Attracting the concerned parties and seeking to bring about a convergence of views between local authorities and civil society.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Civil society</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging women to play a mediating role between local authorities and residents.</li> <li>• Encouraging women to communicate their views and express their needs to the local authorities.</li> </ul>

## 2.5 Institutionalization, ensuring continuity and gender mainstreaming

Local authorities must take action to institutionalize women’s inclusion programs to ensure their continuity, success, and development. This means that local authorities must create an institutional structure capable of accumulating knowledge and expertise relating to the planning of women’s inclusion programs and their incorporation in the annual plans and programs. Further, they must also mainstream the concepts of gender equality in all their programs and projects, including those addressing health, education, housing, economic development, urban development etc.

Institutionalization requires action on several levels:

- Legislative and regulatory frameworks:

The legislation, regulations, decisions, and terms of reference that regulate and govern the institutions of local governments and local departments must be reviewed to ensure the mainstreaming of the concepts of gender equality. Legislation must be introduced to prevent and penalize discrimination and promote the empowerment of women. Such legislation must be unambiguous, leaving no room for interpretation. Existing laws must be enforced and assistance given to those women who initiate legal action for breach of the law in relation to appointment, promotion, gender equality at work, exercise of political rights, involvement in the public affairs of the city, and access to information, services, and opportunities, as well as other economic and social rights.

- Administrative and political reform:
  - » Development of local authority working methods and tools to ensure social inclusion in general and inclusion of women in particular; training the staff of local organizations, like introducing them to gender concepts and issues, as well as showing them how to achieve the desired goals.
  - » Institutional reforms, enabling better management of data and expertise; creation of institutional memory and learning lessons with a particular focus on how to reshape public policies in the short-, medium-, and long-term.
  - » Supporting and empowering female employees of local units, removing obstacles to career advancement, and benefiting from their input when shaping policies and programs.
  - » The institutionalization of gender ensures the creation of inclusive and integrated frameworks to facilitate cooperation and joint action between government bodies at local and national levels. It further ensures the creation of frameworks for public participation and cooperation between governmental and non-governmental bodies, such as civil society and the private sector. Cooperation will be based on transparency, data exchange, support for decision-making, as well as integrated project planning and implementation.



- » Creation of innovative, multi-resource financing mechanisms and tools capable of providing ongoing support for projects implemented for the benefit of women.
- » In some Arab contexts, city officials are elected, increasing the possibility of holding them accountable and motivating them to work towards sustainable development for all. The presence of strong institutions and work systems capable of achieving sustainable and measurable results across successive governments is a key objective.
- Community awareness and creation of an atmosphere supportive of women's rights:
  - » Creation of women-friendly spaces, allowing women to get actively involved, meet, organize, exchange ideas, discuss issues, identify problems, obstacles and barriers, as well as propose programs and projects that address and surmount these identified issues.
  - » Creation of broad networks of local women, organizations, governmental and non-governmental support groups, and focus groups; strengthening existing networks and benefiting from members' accumulated experience in the field of women's development and rights advocacy; removal of political and institutional barriers to cooperation with these networks, coalitions, and civil society organizations.
  - » Encouraging Arab cities to set up media platforms, form committees to work on awareness campaigns, and advertise local authority activities and services for women and girls, inviting them to get involved and benefit from the resources available. Media tools must be sufficiently sensitive to differences between women. Content must be monitored and assessed to ensure compatibility with the rights of women enshrined in the Constitution, national law, and international charters.
  - » Celebrating female entrepreneurs as role models; empowering women leaders and spreading awareness of their achievements, thereby helping to break down the stereotypes that exist in Arab societies regarding women's capabilities; and encouraging all women to demand their rights and believe in the importance of the role they play in society and the State.



## Committee for Equality, Equal Opportunity and the Gender Approach, Essaouira, Morocco

### Political rights: career empowerment and access to leadership positions

The Commission for Equality and Equal Opportunity and the Gender Approach was established in Morocco as a mechanism to institutionalize the principles of good local governance that is inclusive of women, and to provide sustainable local development for all citizens on the basis of equality. The Commission seeks to institutionalize the Gender Approach by means of a local committee formed in each commune (the local authority in Moroccan cities), concerned with implementing the principles of equality and equal opportunities, a participatory approach to dialogue, and consultations with all local parties and civil society.

Committees seek to enable local women to participate in the city administration and decision-making, build women's capacities within government, provide training, remove institutional barriers, and combat discrimination at the workplace, including city councils and departments. They also formulate detailed action plans, define local objectives, such as those for Essaouira, take part in preparing this guide, determine stages of implementation and the measures to be adopted, identify stakeholders, and ensure the means necessary to achieve the objectives.

Another important aspect of the work of the Committee for Equality, Equal Opportunity and the Gender Approach is the capacity-building program for local authority employees. This is a key aspect of institutionalization and ensures continuous learning and development. Programs are implemented by the General Directorate of Local Authorities in partnership with UN Women.



## Business incubators to ensure the continuity of women's projects in Arab cities

### Economic and social rights: professional empowerment

One success in the sphere of institutionalization has been the establishment of business incubators to support and develop small scale projects for women. These have been successful in Arab cities such as Sidon (Lebanon) and Amman (Jordan).

Business incubators are institutions that help owners of start-up companies and projects to develop their business by providing them with guidance and direction, as well as the necessary administrative and financial training. They also provide office and workshop spaces, if project owners lack the resources, as well as other services and assistance.

In Amman, for example, many women are skilled in making pottery and ceramics but lack the needed space for designing, furnaces, and equipment. The incubator provides these needed aspects for an extremely low rent. Incubators are very important in helping women set up their businesses and keep them going. There is a pressing need for this type of service.



## Institutionalization of working from home to empower stay-at-home women Amman, Jordan

### **Economic and social rights: women's access to economic opportunities, vocational training and empowerment**

The government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has sought to modify and develop the legislative and institutional system that regulates working from home with a view to institutionalizing this important sector, which consists largely of female workers and business owners, and includes a significant proportion of small and micro-businesses.

The work-from-home sector is a vital component of the national economy of many countries but usually exists within the so-called informal private sector. This has an adverse impact on women working in this sector in terms of legal protection and potential for expansion and growth. It also affects the accuracy of economic indicators and growth rates for the city and country as a whole. Working from home provides an acceptable option for many women as costs are low and it does not require a large amount of start-up capital. It also minimizes the problems women face using public transport, given the time and cost involved, the mental and physical stress, and occasional threats to safety, given the growing problem of violence and harassment. Furthermore, it offers flexible working hours, allowing time to take care of family and home. As such, working from home provides an opportunity for female entrepreneurs with innovative ideas to trial and grow their businesses at relatively low costs compared to other business sectors. In Jordan, a diverse range of professions can be licensed to practice from home, e.g. knowledge work, handicrafts, food processing, and domestic services. The Greater Amman Municipality, other municipalities, and local councils allow for professions that are currently not on the list to be added to it.

A formal registration and a permit to work from home provides many advantages for the female business owner. It contributes to the institutionalization of the work, ensures project continuity, increases productivity, and helps a business to succeed by providing legal protection, financial regulation, better access to credit and finance, and access to markets and clients. It also enables women to take part in public and private bids and tenders. Women working in this sector are eligible to obtain technical and financial support from several sources, as well as social security benefits. Furthermore, there is a program under which permits are awarded to deserving women from poor and vulnerable groups for a period of three years, during which time they are exempt from payment of tax.

## 2.6 Planning challenges and solutions

Planning challenges in accordance with the experience of Arab cities	Arab cities proposals for overcoming challenges
<p>Inadequate or inaccurate data available on the needs and priorities of various groups of women</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect data from stakeholders and relevant parties, especially local NGOs, research centres and women’s centres.</li> <li>• Enforce institutional and legislative reforms to enable local governments to improve data collection and management.</li> <li>• Foster cooperation between local authorities and exchange information in a smooth and effective institutional manner.</li> <li>• Make use of smart technology, social media platforms, and secure participatory data collection techniques to enable local communities to take part in shaping knowledge of urban areas.</li> </ul>
<p>Shortage of financial and technical resources available to the local authority for women’s development projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attract international and national funding by submitting proposals and feasibility studies to stakeholders, particularly donors and banks, as well as national governments.</li> <li>• Ensure that advance financial planning covers all required items; ensure accurate monitoring of available resources; attempt to achieve a balance between project requirements and the resources available to the local authority and other partners who are willing and able to contribute.</li> <li>• Involve women's groups and NGOs active in women’s rights and women’s empowerment with a focus on providing the essential knowledge and skills to address women’s issues.</li> <li>• Take advantage of the experience of male and female volunteers who believe in the viability of the project, and involve female beneficiaries themselves, if possible, in order to maximize benefit and foster a sense of project ownership.</li> </ul>
<p>Institutional, political, cultural, and social barriers to women’s participation in the public sphere</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement strategies to raise local community awareness and change attitudes towards the inclusion and participation of women.</li> <li>• Call upon distinguished women to act as role models and leaders who are able to influence local women and make them more enthusiastic about getting involved.</li> <li>• Drive the institutional change which seeks to put in place rules to guarantee fair access to opportunities, and prevent discrimination on the basis of sex or other grounds.</li> <li>• Encourage girls to be educated to enable them to become more effective citizens in the future.</li> </ul>

Planning challenges in accordance with the experience of Arab cities	Arab cities proposals for overcoming challenges
<p>Language and cultural barriers when reaching out to and communicating with women from certain closed local communities, particularly indigenous communities and traditional communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure representation of indigenous populations by appointing individuals belonging to indigenous communities as volunteers or city employees on work teams; this will help open channels of communication and build trust.</li> <li>• Implement projects by female staff to overcome restrictions on interaction between local women and male strangers.</li> <li>• If necessary, use interpreters when communities speak a different language than the official one, which is usually Arabic.</li> <li>• In general and also in particular when dealing with conservative, traditional societies, programs must take into account the power disparity between the government body and local community, as well as disparities within the local community on the basis of the position in the social hierarchy; action must be taken to achieve balance and minimize the impact of existing hierarchies.</li> </ul>

## ✓ Checklist - Planning stage

- ✓ Identify the needs as well as human rights and development aspects of the program or project.
- ✓ Analyse and assess the situation and opportunities for the inclusion of women and girls in the city in general and in the regions and local communities targeted by the program in particular.
- ✓ Identify target groups of women, especially the structurally and institutionally marginalized and deprived.
- ✓ Observe cultural and social determinants and impediments that may hinder the participation of the women targeted by the program.
- ✓ Involve women’s groups and civil society organizations active in the areas of development and women’s rights when planning programs and setting priorities.
- ✓ Identify stakeholders from all sectors and categories, and seek to engage them with clear strategies and mechanisms.
- ✓ Study ways of ensuring sustainability, and identify the steps necessary to guarantee the success and continuity of the program.

Importance

Planning

Implementation

Evaluation

## 3. Implementing inclusion programs for women and girls

### 3.1 Define the means of implementation and the division of roles and responsibilities

It is difficult to determine a particular approach to implementing female inclusion programs, given that there is such a wide range. Programs vary in terms of their nature, timeframe, goals, target groups, and targeting methods, and cover all the services and areas of development addressed by local authorities. Furthermore, “women and girls” are a huge population group and quite diverse in terms of standard of living, needs, and aspirations. Moreover, gender intersects with other classifications, such as social class, place of residence, race, ethnicity, language, religious or political affiliation, age, and physical ability/disability.

In general, programs targeting women can be divided into:

- Regularly recurring programs:
  - » Programs implemented throughout the year together with a department or committee responsible for the implementation as part of a long-term strategy to include specific groups of women and girls in the target development.
  - » These programs require a degree of institutionalization and allocation of suitable space for activities; the use of resources needs to be maximized to ensure continuity and cumulative achievement of results over the medium- and long-term.



Arab cities recommend, when starting with implementation, to draw on the experience of active women’s groups, women’s rights defenders and NGOs with a history of planning women’s empowerment and development projects. These grassroots parties often have greater access to women in their own communities, especially in marginalized and geographically remote communities. They also accumulated important and rich knowledge and data due to their focus on local women’s issues for many years, which contributes to anticipating and avoiding obstacles and challenges that may face the implementation process at an early stage, thus compensating for the lack of data and expertise that local authorities may sometimes suffer from in programs directed at women.

- Short-term programs and seasonal events:
  - » These include events, awareness campaigns, festivals, and celebrations, basically designed to raise awareness of women’s issues and involve larger groups in the community in support of women’s rights.
  - » They may also include one-time training and empowerment programs for specific groups in certain tools or skills.
  - » They may also include intervention to resolve a crisis or address emergency needs.
  - » Implementation is dependent upon the availability of funding in good time and the support and sponsorship of multiple local parties.
- Incorporation and mainstreaming of gender in all existing programs and departments:
  - » This approach represents the maximum degree of institutionalization in terms of the inclusion of women and girls, with a particular focus on the presence of elements that ensure the rights of women and the incorporation of women’s issues in all programs implemented by local authority departments and committees, such as housing, education, health, culture, labour, economic development, etc.
  - » This type of program may require a comprehensive review of institutional structures and frameworks, with any changes implemented in stages over the long-term, thereby ensuring that the plans put forward by each department are consistent with the principles and objectives of women’s inclusion. It also ensures that local authority staff are aware of core concepts and principles, understand the technical aspects, possess the appropriate tools, and are committed to achieving the goals.

Means of implementation vary in accordance with the nature of the program and goals, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved. It is generally recommended to follow these steps to ensure proper and effective management of the implementation process:

1. Choose the appropriate means of implementation: A program may include several elements and require diverse means of implementation. For example, a program aimed at the integration of women in marginalized areas may include a component that involves the delivery of a local service or requires the involvement of companies to carry out a construction or other work; it may contain a training element that requires workshops to enable a specific group of women to acquire particular

knowledge or skills; it may also contain a component on planning processes, a review of planning standards, and a review of government approaches to dealing with these areas as a whole.

2. Formulate an implementation and follow-up action plan consisting of clearly defined steps: The plan must set out the actions required in order of priority, the resources allocated to each action, the knowledge and skills needed, and the timeframe. It is recommended to involve all stakeholders in formulating the action plan to ensure optimum use of the capacities and resources of all parties.
3. Division of roles: The tasks defined in the action plan are to be distributed in such a way that the responsibilities and duties of each party are clearly identified within a fixed timeframe. Standards must be formulated and adhered to by all parties both governmental and non-governmental, while carrying out the tasks assigned to them. Typically, multiple government bodies are involved in the implementation in line with the division of administrative responsibility. These include local authorities, such as the governorate, district and regional councils, city or municipal council, and local branches of ministries for example social security, education and investment. However, program and project implementation should not be limited to government bodies only; all actors must be involved in a framework of participation and sound governance.



The experience of Arab cities shows that projects are more successful when events and activities are held in locations geographically close to where the target groups of women and girls live. What also contributes to success is the organization and planning of project activities at the local neighbourhood level with the participation of local community actors. This helps to create real opportunities for cooperation between local parties, enabling them to work together to achieve common goals, build a strong network of relationships that brings together local partners, and allows them to plan strategically for sustainable long-term development.

4. Selection of work group: The implementing bodies select work team members based on their expertise; this is one of the most important factors for a successful implementation. To this end, it is helpful to have up-to-date databases containing local authority and municipality employee records, including their experience, qualifications, on-the-job training received, projects worked on, professional evaluations, and achievements. This helps to ensure the selection of the most competent and suitable staff for the relevant tasks.



5. Announcing project activities to attract and promote public participation: This involves reaching out to female members of the public via points of contact between the local authority and target group. These contact points may be local authority officials, NGOs, trusted politicians or local community leaders. Project activities should be announced in the media, such as television, radio, newspapers, billboards, social media platforms, and traditional news broadcasts in target areas. This will help to raise awareness of projects and encourage women's participation.



**Allocating a full-time work team to implement women's programs will improve efficiency and effectiveness, and allow the work team to focus on capacity-building, training, self-development and acquiring knowledge of women's rights and needs, and the skills of successful project management.**

## 3.2 Provision of physical infrastructure and human resources

### Provision of suitable physical infrastructure

The appropriate physical infrastructure must be allocated to project. This included facilities, equipment, devices, tools, and the raw materials necessary to implement projects. The following suitability criteria shall apply:

- Must be safe, healthy, and sensitive to cultural differences between target women.
- Costs should not be beyond the reach of the poorest and most vulnerable groups.
- Must be easy to access and use in the absence of cultural, social, economic or material impediments, and must consider women's different capacities, for example: using icons and visual illustrations to help those who cannot read and adapting the facility for disabled access.
- Choose project implementation sites that are relatively close to where target women live, meet safety and environmental standards, are women-friendly, and welcome women of all identities and affiliations.

- Local authorities must plan for the transport of women to and from project activity locations, and ensure the availability of safe and appropriate means of transportation.
- Clear mechanisms must be put in place to prevent violence, bullying, and harassment of women and girls; these mechanisms must be reflected throughout the physical infrastructure, from streets, buildings, and rooms hosting activities to digital safety when using IT tools and the Internet.
- The COVID-19 pandemic forced to rethink existing physical infrastructure and standards for the design of facilities and public spaces in order to meet the demands of social distancing, proper ventilation, appropriate waste disposal, and other design specifications. Furthermore, it has become necessary to provide a telecommunication infrastructure, including the extension of telephone and Internet networks to remote and marginalized areas, and to facilitate access to devices and technologies by all sections of the city's population.

### **Provision of qualified human resources**

- Provision of qualified staff to deal with local women; members of work teams must dispose of knowledge about and experience with the target groups and the rules governing social interactions in the region; they must be sensitive to and aware of gender issues in general.
- Staff must be able to develop and acquire communication skills and work together with women and other stakeholders.
- Staff must possess the technical and technological skills and knowledge to implement programs; they must understand the tools and tactics needed to achieve social and institutional change.
- Staff shall seek to instil the concepts of equality and strengthen the parties' understanding of gender issues; they shall seek to penetrate the social system of local communities.
- Staff shall possess crisis management skills and be capable of responding to emergencies quickly and effectively without adverse impact on project and program outcomes.



## Re-use of historic buildings, Sidon, Lebanon

### **Economic and social rights: access of women to opportunities and public spaces**

Facing a lack of resources to build new facilities to host women's development programs, the city of Sidon undertook the rehabilitation and reuse of historical buildings. From the city's point of view, this has been an extremely successful undertaking, providing the local authority with an enormous budget, and turning the spotlight on the city's many unique historical buildings. The citizens of Sidon cherish and take pride in these buildings, which give them a feeling of happiness and sense of connectedness to the past. Furthermore, the rehabilitation of historical buildings has turned long-abandoned and neglected cultural assets to good use by raising the city's tourist profile.

A former prison is now a centre hosting women's economic development programs and business incubators. Two other historical buildings have been rehabilitated to serve the community: One has become an art gallery, providing an exhibition space for artists, as well as displaying women's handicrafts, such as ceramics. The other is an NGO-run teaching and training academy offering specialized training courses largely for the benefit of women. Women as a group seek opportunities to develop their capacities and compensate for the lack of education and training that they have encountered due to discrimination and other structural reasons.



## Role of the Women's Committee in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic Baghdad, Iraq

### **Health rights and access to health services: right to health-related knowledge; women's access to public spaces**

The Baghdad Municipality Women's Committee is the institutional entity responsible for planning and implementing women's inclusion programs in the city. The committee has played an important role in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. It has gone to great lengths to ensure that women are protected. The Committee has, inter alia, organized and overseen the implementation of the women's vaccination campaign in partnership with medical teams. It arranged for locations to be made available to women in order to get vaccinated, and provided training in public health for groups of city women. It has published information on the risks of the epidemic spreading and guidelines on reducing the spread of infection by means of personal hygiene and sterilization at home and work. It has formulated procedures to be adopted when dealing with infected persons, organised training courses and sessions where women discussed the particular COVID-19-related challenges that they were facing, and tried to find solutions.

In the course of project/campaign implementation, the Committee faced a lack of sufficient resources to provide physical infrastructure and staff capable of carrying out the tasks and achieving the planned objectives in optimum fashion.

*Challenges of implementation*

1. The municipality began constructing a building to house the Women’s Committee but, due to problems with financial management and an inadequate budget, the project was suspended and the building left unfurnished and without equipment and appliances; it remains unusable.
2. The Women’s Committee working group consists of female employees of several local departments, meaning that they are not in a position to devote themselves exclusively to the Committee’s business, which often requires effort and full-time dedication.

*Overcoming the challenges*

1. The Women’s Committee submitted an application with a concept note attached, explaining the value and objectives of the project with a particular focus placed on obtaining approval to use the facilities, halls, and rooms of Baghdad Municipality guest house for the Women’s Committee’s activities.
2. Show material and moral appreciation by providing incentives and rewards to female employees to highlight the vital role played by the Committee in managing the pandemic crisis; staff should be suitably remunerated for working overtime.

These temporary solutions represented a way of overcoming obstacles in a time of crisis, and enabled the Committee to work within available local authority resources. However, more radical and sustainable solutions are needed in the future.

### 3.3 Access women and girls to participate

Due to a number of obstacles, the participation of women is a major challenge for many Arab cities and local authorities.

Potential obstacles to the participation of women	Proposals for overcoming obstacles
<p>Women labour is under a double burden of reproductive and childcare roles, as well as domestic and housekeeping roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to women, calculate the time they spend each day on household duties and responsibilities, and seek to understand what they actually need to enable them to participate.</li> <li>• Design programs, projects, and activities to consider women’s needs as women themselves express them. This includes, for example, giving women the opportunity to choose the most suitable time to carry out a particular activity, attend a meeting or receive training, allowing mothers to bring their children (as long as this does not affect program effectiveness) and providing alternative childcare solutions.</li> </ul>

Potential obstacles to the participation of women	Proposals for overcoming obstacles
<p><i>(cont.)</i></p> <p>Women labour is under a double burden of reproductive and childcare roles, as well as domestic and housekeeping roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce innovative mechanisms to enable women to participate in economic, cultural, and political activities from home or in community centres close to where they live; set up cooperatives where the women of the region can meet and divide responsibilities among themselves by turns.</li> <li>• Spread community awareness of the need to change stereotypes of male and female roles and encourage public debate on these issues.</li> </ul>
<p>Projects and activities unsuited to the nature, conditions, and needs of local communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve local communities from the outset in all stages of the project to ensure proper planning of project components and activities.</li> <li>• Study the local situation thoroughly to ensure appropriate means of implementation.</li> <li>• Work teams should be selected to include members of the local community who enjoy the trust of their peers and possess appropriate skills. For example, local craftsmen and laborers can be employed in building and renovation work or production of handicrafts, while local teachers, nurses, and doctors can take part in education and health campaigns. It is preferable to recruit staff from among local women.</li> </ul>
<p>Reluctance of women to participate due to unclear vision of the benefits of participation or for other reasons.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce media reports and arrange events to promote projects, with the aim to help women understand the direct benefit of getting involved and the positive future impact on their lives and the lives of their families.</li> <li>• Introduce motivating factors to help overcome initial obstacles, such as women’s fears of participating due to being unaccustomed with engaging in such activities.</li> <li>• Review published project documentation and the discourse used by government bodies to ensure the content and language used is appropriate to the target group of women.</li> <li>• Announce all project objectives and activities clearly, transparently, and in detail.</li> <li>• Provide offices, hotlines, and staff to receive inquiries, explain the positive and negative (if any) results of participation, and enable women to submit complaints and suggestions with a view to improving performance.</li> <li>• Reach out through community leaders, especially influential women, and involve them in explaining and instilling the desired message.</li> </ul>
<p>Failure of local authorities to reach out to all groups of women.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call upon the assistance of parties that have established channels of communication with target groups, and are in a position to reach out to them.</li> <li>• Data are also important to the implementation process: beneficiary contact information (postal address, phone number, email address, social media accounts, etc.) can be held in databases, alongside times of availability, preferred means of contact, record of participation in program activities, and other useful information. Data will sometimes be held by a body such as the Ministry of Social Security.</li> </ul>

Potential obstacles to the participation of women	Proposals for overcoming obstacles
<p><i>(cont.)</i></p> <p>Failure of local authorities to reach out to all groups of women.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social inclusion may be institutionalized by means of long-term programs, where local authorities build a relationship over the years with communities coping with structural and historical marginalization, achieving tangible results.</li> </ul>
<p>Failure of local authorities to reach out to all groups of women.</p> <p>Cultural restrictions and barriers that limit the ability of women to appear in public places and participate in urban life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans and activities should be adapted and localised in a manner consistent with the local culture, as far as possible without violating the general principles and objectives of the project, while endeavoring to raise awareness and gradually change modes of interaction with new ideas and projects, in partnership with women themselves. For example, if it is completely unacceptable in some of the more conservative communities for women to leave the house or move beyond the confines of the neighbourhood, activities can be arranged for women at home and in places where local women gather, such as a town or local event hall. It is important to ensure gradual empowerment of women who wish to be more visible and involved in the wider community, providing them with opportunities, and working with them to convince their families and communities of the benefits.</li> <li>• Representation of women in local governments in general and of women from marginalized communities in particular is extremely important in helping to build bridges of communication, explain programs and plans to the local community, and encourage participation. It is also important to have women representation in the parliament as well as at all executive and legislative levels.</li> <li>• City plans and long-term goals should include clear and detailed local plans, outlining mechanisms and steps designed to change the culture, raise societal awareness of women's rights and roles, and promote gender equality in all aspects of public life.</li> </ul>
<p>The language or local dialect (particularly of refugee communities) differs from the official language of the State or the language spoken by the members of the city work group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work teams should include interpreters and individuals able to speak the language or dialect of the target group and understand the specifics of the local culture.</li> <li>• Pamphlets and posters targeting women should be translated into the language the women understand; if possible, project documents and plans/summaries should also be translated. Printed materials containing explanatory illustrations should be provided for illiterate women.</li> </ul>



## Participation of girls from slum areas in sports, Cairo, Egypt

### Right to practice sport: social inclusion, leisure and fitness, safe spaces

The participation of women and girls in sports activities is a major challenge for Cairo Governorate, particularly when it comes to programs targeting slum, deprived, and marginalized areas. There are many reasons why women and girls are reluctant to participate. However, it is more accurate to say that they are often prevented from doing so by male relatives, and the many obstacles imposed by society, a lack of suitable spaces and playing fields for women, and the prevalence of a culture that considers sport as a luxury which, if permitted at all, is only for boys and men. In many areas, it is not culturally acceptable for women and girls to take part in sports. The few existing female athletes face difficulties, such as a lack of funding, shortage of trainers, lack of suitable equipment and space, and the likelihood of violence and bullying by others.

In the Asmarat neighbourhood, created to rehouse slum dwellers, the Cairo Governorate has introduced sports facilities for girls, and encourages them to participate by various means, including:

- Providing facilities and spaces for girls and adapting these to their needs; forming girls' teams.
- Visiting schools, encouraging girls to take up sports, and highlighting successful sportswomen as role models.
- Meeting families to convince parents of the importance and benefits of exercise for their daughters; parents are invited to attend with their daughters so that they can see the benefits for themselves and reassure themselves that the girls' physical and psychological safety is ensured.
- Installing lights in areas and streets around the sport centres, and ensuring that streets are safe.
- Recognizing and encouraging girls with proven athletic skills by entering them for local, regional, national, and international competitions.



## Integration of girls from the Sinai valleys in the education system, Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt

### Right to education, economic and social rights of girls, indigenous and marginalized communities

The city of Sharm el-Sheikh addressed the problem of girls being denied education, particularly girls from the indigenous Bedouin tribal communities in the Sinai Peninsula, by working on several levels to remove the physical and cultural obstacles to school enrolment. Most of the indigenous communities live in valleys separated from the city by mountains and desert roads. One of the main obstacles to girls' education has been a lack of schools close to where they live in combination with the absence of good, safe, and affordable transport, the burden of walking long distances to reach the nearest school, and the inability of parents to accompany them. Some of the poorest groups could not afford the cost of education. Furthermore, the local community refused to allow girls above a certain age to leave the valley. Finally, there was a lack of awareness of the importance of girls' education, which was considered a luxury by some families and faced outright opposition from others.

Sharm el-Sheikh overcame these obstacles by:

- Introducing a single-class schools program, involving the building of schools in the middle of the target region, close to girls' homes. Given the small number of girls in each area, schools were limited to one class only. Companies affiliated with the Egyptian army participated in the implementation by providing ready-made classrooms which were then transported to the region, thereby reducing construction costs and suiting local conditions.
- Launching awareness campaigns targeting local inhabitants to convince them of the benefits of girls' education and the right to enrol in school, while ensuring safety and security.
- Focusing on opportunities for advancement and highlighting the achievements of educated Bedouin women, including university graduates, government employees, the Egyptian parliament deputy representing the Bedouin tribes in South Sinai, and other role models; holding meetings with these women to encourage families and raise awareness through real examples of women from the local community.

### 3.4 Implementation challenges and solutions

Potential obstacles to the participation of women	Proposals for overcoming obstacles
<p>Action plans are insufficiently detailed to give clear guidance and support to implementation teams; lack of clarity in the distribution of responsibilities, roles, and detailed tasks; or failure on the part of all parties to fulfil the responsibilities assigned to them within the set timeframe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the work plan is clear, accurate, and sufficiently detailed; ensure it is shared with all parties in a transparent and timely manner; ensure that each party properly understands its respective tasks.</li> <li>• Regular monitoring and accountability to ensure adherence to the plan of all responsible parties.</li> <li>• Ensure that sufficient flexibility and mechanisms are in place to respond to sudden changes; developments must be studied systematically, all parties informed, and timely solutions formulated in partnership with all concerned parties.</li> </ul>
<p>Shortage of financial, physical, institutional or human resources; suspension of work due to interruption of funding or inadequate funding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure accurate project financial planning; anticipate and calculate the indirect costs of work covered by the plan.</li> <li>• Ensure continuity of project finance, obliging funding bodies to provide the necessary budget for all project stages until conclusion, with guarantees of financial efficiency and proper use of resources without waste; put in place strict mechanisms to prevent corruption.</li> <li>• Attract strategic actors and parties concerned with women's issues, especially international and regional donors, as well as financial and investment institutions, that allocate part of their budget to social development programs.</li> </ul>



Potential obstacles to the participation of women	Proposals for overcoming obstacles
<p><i>(cont.)</i></p> <p>Shortage of financial, physical, institutional or human resources; suspension of work due to interruption of funding or inadequate funding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think innovatively and involve all parties in formulating solutions to overcome shortages of project finance and equipment. For example, existing buildings and land belonging to the municipality or other partners can be used instead of new buildings having to be constructed. Another example involves relying on volunteers to perform certain tasks, thereby reducing the wage bill.</li> </ul>
<p>Different opinions, working methods, and governing frameworks among the various participating institutions and bodies, and poor coordination and cooperation between them, consuming time, effort, and resources, and having an adverse effect on progress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign a protocol of cooperation or joint memorandum of understanding, binding for all parties, that sets out responsibilities clearly and leaves no room for interpretation. It further lays out rules governing the cooperation between different institutions, especially in respect of administrative, financial, and legal matters.</li> <li>• Allocate a team or committee, in which various executive bodies are represented, to carry out coordination and follow-up, and foster ongoing communication between partners concerning progress and developments.</li> <li>• Understand existing institutions, their modus operandi, the procedures they follow and the time required to carry out these procedures; subsequently, seek to adapt detailed work plans with a particular focus on harmonising them as much as possible; and ensure sound planning in order to manage cooperation between different institutional systems.</li> </ul>
<p>Reluctance of targeted women to participate due to cultural, social, and economic barriers, community resistance to the project or the inability of local authorities to attract women and girls, and maintain their level of interest and involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor, study, and document obstacles preventing women and girls from participating; fully understand the dimensions of this issue.</li> <li>• Formulate carefully thought-out plans and mechanisms to overcome obstacles; attempt to devise ways of addressing obstacles in a radical and integrated way; and develop new solutions to complex and multi-faceted problems.</li> <li>• Use innovative means to reach out to and attract women and girls, and maintain their enthusiasm; study successful practices in the same and other cities, and draw on the resources of groups and organizations working in the fields of women’s inclusion.</li> <li>• Provide qualified human resources and form work teams sensitive to women's issues to gain the confidence of women.</li> <li>• Foster a participatory approach, allowing all parties to contribute to the formulation and promotion of the project, and giving the public a general sense of ownership of the project, which has the ability to reflect their ideas and meet their needs.</li> </ul>

## ✓ Checklist - Implementation stage

- ✓ Choose the means of implementation most appropriate to the nature, circumstances, and needs of women in target communities.
- ✓ Take care when selecting the work team to include qualified individuals able to reach out to target women; it is desirable for work teams to include as many women as possible.
- ✓ Establish monitoring and accountability mechanisms to reduce the risk of abuse of women or violation of their rights by those in charge of the project.
- ✓ Observe the balance of power to ensure that one group of women does not dominate another group that is more in need.
- ✓ Organize all events and activities in locations that are easily accessible for the target group and at a time that suits them.
- ✓ Take into account the division of gender roles in the target community, and the roles that women in these communities play, particularly care and reproductive roles, and housework duties, and the impact thereof on their ability to participate. Propose innovative ways of helping women to carry out their domestic roles and duties to make it easier for them to participate effectively and benefit from the program.
- ✓ Draw up detailed action plans, ensuring the distribution of roles and regular monitoring of progress.
- ✓ Manage cooperation, coordination, and participation between all parties engaged in the implementation.
- ✓ Provide appropriate physical infrastructure and effective tools; ensure continuity of financing and management of existing work.

Importance

Planning

Implementation

Evaluation

## 4. Evaluating inclusion of women and girls

It is important to employ clear indicators to assess the extent to which a project or program has achieved its objectives, successfully reached out to the target group of women, especially the most marginalized, and used appropriate methods and tools to promote integration and participation.

Potential obstacles to the participation of women	Proposals for overcoming obstacles
Achievement of the goal of effective inclusion of women and girls, especially the marginalized, ensuring that inequalities are not reproduced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were the problems of the local situation accurately diagnosed?</li> <li>• Were existing balances of power in the local situation and how to confront them during project stages considered to ensure that there is balance, and that forms of discrimination and exclusion will not be reproduced?</li> <li>• Were legal tools put in place to ensure non-exclusion and enable accountability in the event of grievance?</li> <li>• Were all target groups of women informed of their right to inclusion? Were they made aware of available tools?</li> </ul>
Reaching out to target women and encouraging them to become involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the program reach out to the target number of participants or service recipients?</li> <li>• Did the program embrace all possible categories of women, particularly the poorest and most marginalized, who are excluded from city activities and the least able to participate, and have their opinions and suggestions heard?</li> <li>• Did the program help to surmount institutional, material, and cultural obstacles to women's participation?</li> <li>• Were the appropriate methods, tools, and languages used to meet the needs of the target group, and did they take into account the intersections of women's social identity?</li> <li>• Was a form of discourse employed that is appropriate for the target women and participants? Were appropriate and effective means of communication and media employed?</li> </ul>

Potential obstacles to the participation of women	Proposals for overcoming obstacles
Involvement of target women in the assessment process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a clear institutional and legal mechanism in place to receive and respond to complaints, suggestions, and ideas?</li> <li>• Are there ways of following up communication with women, and measuring the impact of participating in the program or project over the short-, medium-, and long-term?</li> </ul>
Involvement of stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were institutions and individuals active in the areas of women's rights and empowerment represented and involved?</li> <li>• Did the government body succeed in attracting the private and NGO sectors to provide financing, physical infrastructure, tools, and equipment for the project?</li> <li>• Were work plan details, budgets, and schedules shared clearly and transparently with all parties involved?</li> <li>• Did the program contribute to the formation of sustainable partnerships between parties?</li> </ul>
Enshrinement of the values of equality and respect for women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the program achieve tangible results in terms of changing the views or raising the awareness of individuals and groups involved in the project, including work teams from government and non-governmental bodies, beneficiary women and families, and the wider community?</li> <li>• Did the program include a capacity-building component to which financial and human resources were allocated?</li> <li>• Did the program interact successfully with local, national, and international events and activities for women and girls, and make good use of the momentum created for its own benefit?</li> </ul>
Institutionalization of women's inclusion programs and ensuring the continuity thereof in the city's future plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have institutional and legal frameworks been created to ensure continuity of project benefits?</li> <li>• Has the program succeeded in making optimum use of available resources, diversifying sources of funding, and creating innovative and sustainable systems of financing in the long-term?</li> <li>• Does the inclusion of women in project activities ensure their access to the assets, tools, and skills necessary to manage activities themselves, particularly in economic empowerment programs?</li> <li>• Do city plans include women's empowerment and capacity-building programs, and have budgets been set aside for this purpose?</li> </ul>



## Evaluation of programs and performance indicators, Amman, Jordan

### Good governance involves the inclusion of women and girls

The city of Amman is keen to evaluate development programs, especially social integration programs aimed at the inclusion of women, girls, young people, and the elderly. The municipality applies a range of monitoring and evaluation techniques as part of the quarterly and annual evaluation of each program. These measure the extent to which pre-determined action plans and outcomes have been achieved. Clear and specific performance indicators have been formulated to evaluate team performance and improve future planning. Monitoring and evaluation are divided into two levels:

- Self-evaluation, conducted by work teams in charge of the project and responsible for documenting outputs concurrently with implementation, writing reports and ensuring commitment to the details of the plan and achievement of goals.
- Broad, comprehensive evaluation of all municipality activities, programs and projects, including progress made towards achieving the SDGs in line with the municipality strategy. The outputs of these evaluations are used to prepare the reports submitted by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the specialized committees of United Nations bodies. For example, the municipality took part in preparing the First National Voluntary Review on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda (2017). In the form of the Greater Amman Municipality, the city of Amman is currently preparing the voluntary local review (at the city level), the first of its kind in the Arab world and scheduled for release in 2022. The municipality also took part in the preparation of the second national review (at country level), likewise scheduled for release in 2022. With partners at the city and country level, the city of Amman is preparing a progress report on achieving the goals of the New Urban Agenda.



## Training women entrepreneurs, Ras al-Matn, Lebanon

### Economic and social rights: professional training and empowerment

The city of Ras el-Matn has adopted a best practice example of monitoring and evaluating the women's entrepreneurship training program: a plan for the post-implementation phase was formulated that includes measuring the economic and social impact of the project on the lives of women by:

- Opening channels of regular communication with program beneficiaries, taking their comments into account and studying their experience in the post-training stage, and how the training affected their ability to address challenges and exploit opportunities.
- Assessing women's ability to set up their own companies and businesses, individually or collectively, monitoring the stages of business launch and growth, and providing these businesses with the necessary guidance and direction.

# Inclusion of Women and Girls and Ensuring Their Rights

A Toolkit for Arab Cities

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Following the successful publication of UNESCO's Toolkit for Urban Inclusion in Arab Cities (2020), the need for adding a new topic emerged. This new document addresses the issues of Arab women and is designed to provide tools and practical advice drawn from the actual experience of participating Arab cities that can be adapted to the demands of the local context, enable all cities to achieve the inclusion of women and girls, and ensure their right to benefit from local development programs. Member cities of the Arab Coalition of Cities against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance informed with their practical experiences the substance of this publication by providing hands-on advice, keeping this toolkit as a technical guidance document "by Cities and for cities".

