# Women's Political Leadership: Concept Note and Programme

Date: Friday September 18th, 2020

Time: 9h00 am – 13h00

Topic: Women's Political Leadership

Venue: Online/ Microsoft Office TEAMS (see attached guidance)

Language: English

1. Background

Since 2017, the SDC Gendernet together with backstopping partners HELVETAS and the IZFG, University of Bern have been organizing annual Gender themed Partner Learning Days involving SDC staff but with a focus on learning and exchange with representatives from SDC partner organizations and institutions. Topics have ranged from Unpaid Care Work, Gender Based Violence and Engaging Men & Boys, to Mainstreaming Gender in project analysis and cycle management. Most recently Women, Peace and Security topped the learning agenda for the day.

According to the latest Global Gender Gap Report, on average globally, the greatest gap remains in women's political empowerment sub-index, (only 25% of the gap has been closed) with worrying regressive trends affecting women's economic participation and opportunity.
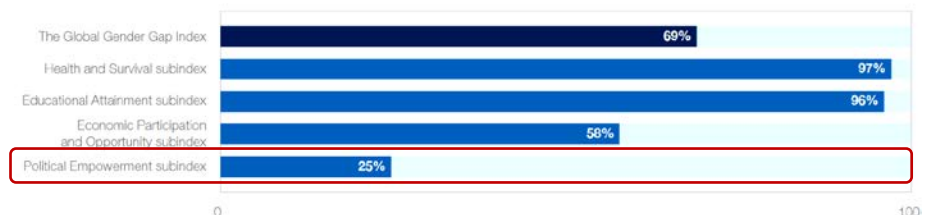
Gender Equality is embedded in Switzerland's national and international commitments. The strategic goal 7 on Gender equality and the Rights of women and girls of the Dispatch 2017-2020 sets three strategic priorities, of which the third focus on, *'Strengthening and supporting **women's political participation**, and gender-responsive approaches in local and national governance and peace & state building processes.'*[1]

2. Rational and scope

The ongoing COVID19 pandemic has highlighted the indispensable contributions of women's leadership on the frontlines be it as policymakers, homemakers, caretakers, business owners or health and other essential service providers. At the global level, prior to the crisis, international studies reported an increase in inequality, fragility and declining civic space. Where democracy is in decline, we can observe the emergence of authoritarianism, conservatism, patriarchy, and radicalization, with particularly negative impacts on women, and other marginalized groups. This is evidenced by the increase in different forms of violence against these groups, and a regression in Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) and an especially persistent and significant global gender gap in Women's Political Empowerment (WPE).

While there is increasing data and evidence supporting the business case for Women's Economic Empowerment, insights and analysis related to the case of Women's Political Empowerment remain limited. What research and practice indicate so far is that when women are better represented, decisions taken tend to benefit a broader spectrum of society, contributing to more inclusion, cohesion, equity and security.

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[1] More information on the gender shareweb topic page on women's political empowerment

However, what is women's political leadership, what types of leadership exist, for example in national/subnational, formal/informal political 'institutions' (i.a. the executive power, parliaments, committees, political parties, political movements or campaigns, informal political leadership positions), as well as in spaces of political deliberation, bargaining and decision-making. In addition and importantly, what are the framework conditions and other decisive factors, which most enable women's leadership role? What motivates or encourages women to assume, exercise political leadership, and what incentivizes political 'institutions' to accommodate, promote female leaders?

SDC wishes to explore these questions further, and in doing so contribute to bridging the information gap related to better understanding and therefore better addressing Women's Political Leadership in the different contexts and programs it and its implementing partners operate in globally.

3. Purpose

Overarching goal

To share lessons learned and good practices, namely to foster learning and practice based on cumulative experiences to date in *'strengthening and supporting **women's political leadership** in local and national political institutions and processes.*

Key objectives

- To explore different dimensions of Women's political empowerment and leadership
- To develop understanding of what is Women's Political Leadership for SDC and its partners
- To strengthen, foster practice by learning about what works, why and how in different contexts

Added value

- To contribute to SDC's Gendernet planned experience capitalisation on Women's Political Participation and Empowerment
- To contribute to SDC's Learning Journey on working in Authoritarian contexts

4. Approach / key methodology

- During the learning day we will
  - Review and introduce the important dimensions of empowerment and role modelling
  - Zoom in and learn from particular case studies from partners and their Women's Political Leadership project experiences
  - Jointly discuss and develop a common understanding of what is women's political leadership and what are promising approaches in enhancing their leadership role

- To mitigate disruptions due to unpredictable pandemic scenario, the meeting will be online/ virtual while maintaining a participatory and interactive approach. The sessions will be structured in
  - Brief presentations (webinar format)
  - Break out groups (virtual working groups w/ collaborative note taking options using Padlet)
  - Plenary (webinar format w/ Q&A and/or interactive discussion)
  - Interactive polls using Mentimeter

- Presenters and resource persons will be primarily from SDC partners, with punctual contributions from the SDC and its Backstoppers.

Agenda

#	Timing	Session Title	Session Description	Responsible	Methodology
1	9h00	Opening and framing **(30 min)**	- Introduction to the learning day topic and its objectives, - Introduction to participants and organizing/backstopping team	Corinne (SDC)	• Plenary
			Introduction/ review of the Agenda in brief	Selina (SDC)	
			IT Do's and Don'ts	Franz (Helvetas)	
	9h30	*Interactive Transition*	*Poll 1*	*Agnieszka (Helvetas)*	*Mentimeter*
2	9h35	Introduction to the topic: **(25 min)** + Q&A **(10 min)**	Presentation - Defining Women's Leadership - Dimensions of empowerment - Dimensions of role modelling	Marianne (IZFG)	• Plenary w/ Q&A
	10h10	*Interactive Transition*	*Poll 2*	*Agnieszka*	*Mentimeter*
3	10h15	Case study holder Introductions **(20 min)**	Introduction to Case Holder session **(5 min)**	Selina	• Plenary
			Mini 'pitch' by Case Holders **(5 min each)**	Case Holders	• Plenary
		Instructions for break-out working groups **(5 min)**	'MS TEAMS' 3 Working Groups according to case	Selina and Franz	• Plenary
	10h40		BREAK (10 min max)		
4	10h50	Group work **(60 min)**	Case holder presents their case (10 min max) Group discussion (40 min) Group selects 4 key messages and wraps up (10 min)	Facilitator/ moderator with support/ notetaker from organizing/ backstopping team	• In 3 parallel break-out working groups (pre-assigned)
	11h50		BREAK (5 min max)		
5	11h55	Working group reporting **(30 min)**	4 Key messages from the group discussion (1 per key question +1 bonus take-away)	Group notetaker/ reporter	• Plenary • 10 minutes each w/ Q&A
	12h25	*Interactive Transition*	*Poll 3*	*Agnieszka*	*Mentimeter*
6	12h30	Interactive discussion **(30 min)**	Open exchange with presenters, and contributions of other experiences from participants	All	• Plenary
7	13h00	Closing	Summary of key learning take-aways and next steps	Corinne	• Plenary