

Field Visit 3: Political Participation

1. Background

The Gender Equality Network (Gendernet) organizes a global face 2 face (f2f) that will take place from 28th of April – 1st of May 2019 in Switzerland (Hünigen, Bern).

The f2f aims at **sharing learnings and exchanging among peers** within the **three strategic topics of the Gendernet**, notably the various approaches and activities on 1) Women's Economic empowerment; 2) Women's Rights and Protection, and 3) Women's Political Empowerment.

To enhance learning and exchange, **three parallel field visits** are being organized along the three above mentioned themes. The field visits take place on **Tuesday, 30 April, afternoon**.

2. Visit description

Women's political participation and public policies for gender equality in Switzerland

Overall Aim:

There are two thematic workshops on women's political participation being organized at the first day of the f2f: one on women's representation and influence in local governance structures and one on gender responsive and socially inclusive budgeting. Key questions guiding these two workshops are 1) How can we strengthen women's participation, influence and impact in local politics and governance? And 2) How can we ensure that public policies and expenditures trigger positive change towards more gender equality and social inclusion?

The field visits aim to reflect on these topics by sharing experiences with Swiss stakeholders. It includes two parts 1) Gender in public policies and the Swiss gender machinery' and 2) Women's political participation in Switzerland

Part 1 /Gender in public policies and the Swiss gender machinery

Objectives

- How is the Swiss gender equality law implemented in our political system?
- What are the structures/architecture, competences on the different levels of our political system - national, cantonal and local/municipality level?
- What are the issues and priorities on the different levels of our political system - national, cantonal and local/municipality level?
- What are the resource available and is gender budgeting applied (officially, or elements of it), and on what level?

Host Institution / organization: Municipality of Köniz

The visit will take place in the community of Köniz (large municipality of 40'000 inhabitants in the agglomeration of Bern). In Switzerland, municipalities usually don't have a gender focal person, however, they have a department of social affairs, and some have an equal opportunity and diversity office.

The director of the Federal Office for Gender Equality (FOGE) will be invited to join the meeting in Köniz. This allows to discuss and illustrate the different mandates and competences, but also the different topics and priorities on each of the different governance levels.

The visit is structured as follows (13.15-15.15):

- Presentation of the municipality of Köniz, facts and figures, responsibilities (Pascal Arnold, general secretary Köniz)
- Gender in communal politics. Input by the mayor/president of Köniz (Annemarie Berlinger Staub)

- Short presentation /introduction by the FOGE on gender equality in Switzerland, the mandate of the Federal office for Gender Equality, and the division of responsibilities between federal, cantonal and municipal/city level.
- Discussion with selected municipal representatives on what the challenges are on municipal level, and how they are addressed by the community? What resources they have, and how they interact with the cantonal and federal level (if they do).

Location: Köniz municipality
 Timing: 13h15 to 15h15
 Contact: Pascal Arnold, chief of staff of the municipality
 Website: www.koeniz.ch

Part 2 /Women’s political participation in Switzerland: The *Helvetia is calling* Campaign

Objectives

- What are current trends for women’s political participation in Switzerland?
- What are enabling /supporting factors, and what are major obstacles?
- How do women politicians build alliances (across and /or within parties)?
- What are personal experiences of being a politician? How do they see their positions in terms of influence, power to change?
- What are strategies and activities to increase women’s political participation and their influence in Swiss politics?

Host Institution / organization: Alliance F / *Helvetia is calling* Campaign

Alliance F is an umbrella organization of Swiss women’s associations. The campaign *Helvetia is calling* aims to increase the number of women candidates and elected parliamentarians in national parliaments and executive bodies in the elections 2019. It includes the mobilization, support and coaching of female candidates, such as ensuring a positive competition between and within parties, to ensure the highest number of women to run for high-potential list positions by publishing a political party ranking of the cantonal party sections.

The visit includes a presentation of the campaign *Helvetia is calling* and an exchange with women who are candidates for elections in 2019 on national, cantonal and/or municipal level and active women politician(s). This exchange allows participants to learn about what means becoming or being a politician in Switzerland, and compare it to realities in their own context.

Location: “Stube im Progr’ /Progr, Bern
 Contact: Jessica Zuber, project manager *Helvetia calling* Campaign
 Sophie Achermann, director alliance F
 Website: www.alliancef.ch

Timing: from 16h00 to 17h30

Participants:

SDC Gender Focal Points from the headquarters and cooperation offices
 Up to a maximum of 20-25 participants per visit

Logistics:

Rented passenger bus
 Pick up from F2F venue at 12.30h to Köniz, then by public transport from Köniz to Bern.

Language(s):

The main language will be English, however translation with French will be accommodated on a needs basis.