Forum of Federations
The Global Network on Federalism and Devolved Governance

Women's Leadership Program Foundational Roadmap

August 2023

Cristina Golhiardi Malachias
Knowledge Management Consultant

DNA Hunter

Contents

1   WHY A ROADMAP

BACKGROUND

The wave of political protests in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in the early 2010s, known as the Arab Spring, was marked by the vanguard role played by women. However, contradictorily, after several subsequent transitional governments chose democracy as a means to adopt inclusive governance, women, constituting 50% of the population, remained excluded from leadership roles. Women's non-participation was also hindered by a conservative historical and cultural heritage that negatively impacted their confidence, background, and experience to run for office or engage in decision-making posts.

The Forum of Federations (FoF) launched the MENA Project, funded by the government of Canada (the donor), in response to the marginalization of women in leadership roles in three targeted countries (the hosts): Jordan in the Middle East (ME); Morocco and Tunisia in North Africa (NA). The project aimed to enhance women's inclusiveness through four dimensions of activities: capacity-building for established women or aspiring future leaders, public awareness raising, and improvement of institutional mechanisms. With the MENA Project, the FoF developed both the capacity to implement a multi-dimensional program and the capacity to implement a Women's Leadership program.[1]

THE ULTIMATE GOAL

The motivation behind creating this Foundational Roadmap (or Roadmap) was the desire to comprehend and document what was done in the program that led to the consistent achievement of results as a single unity, despite its multiplicity. The MENA Project is multi-dimensional, encompassing various themes, parties, sectors, regions, countries, cultures, languages, and realities. This multiplicity added extra layers of complexity and inherent challenges to its initiating and planning steps and continues to add complexity to its ongoing execution loop, monitoring and controlling, and adjusting for the next loop until the program's closure. Differences have to be harmonized into one set of programming goals, priorities, and coordinated activities that capture one set of qualitative and quantitative outcomes and indicators, forming one single program picture.

---

[1] The program is referred to as *The MENA Project*. That is why, in this document, the terms *project* and *program* are used interchangeably to denote the same initiative.

The ultimate goal of the Roadmap was to convert tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge by capturing insights dispersed among the minds of staff, partners, and experts and consolidating it into a tangible document (this Roadmap), made available in a digital medium. The Intellectual Property (IP) of the MENA Project will be conserved as a sustainable and enduring body of knowledge, encapsulated within this Roadmap, easily accessible, shareable, and consumable by FoF's teams, yet with the potential to be transformed into derivative collateral, such as brochures or presentations, targeting the broader public.

In a nutshell, this Roadmap aims to document the MENA Project's programming, planning, implementation, and management processes, along with success factors and lessons learned, to serve as a guide for the establishment of similar complex programs in the future.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology to develop this Roadmap is comprised of three stages:

1. The Setup stage involved a desk review of a comprehensive range of documents, including Annual Reports, Field Monitoring Reports, Program Implementation Plans, Steering Committee presentations, and Operational Reports. Any gaps in information identified during the desk review were documented in a Questions & Answers (Q&A) document and addressed by the consultant. Subsequently, the revised document was reviewed by FoF's staff. Additionally, country directors completed a specific questionnaire to capture their perceptions of key successful and less successful elements.

2. The Execution stage comprised 48 interviews and group sessions in two rounds. The first round involved headquarters (HQ) staff in Canada, covering the departments of communication, administration, finance, result-based management (RBM), and senior management. The second round included country staff, an international partner, and a group of 36 individuals from Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia, including implementation partners, government partners, experts, and Canadian embassy members. Internal interviewees were asked about what worked well and what should be repeated next time, as well as what should be changed. External interviewees shared their perspective on the uniqueness of the MENA Project compared to programs from other agencies and discussed challenges overcome during project execution. The findings were analyzed at the end of this stage.

3. the Conclusion stage included the sharing of key insights through a presentation, as well as the design and writing of this Roadmap. The uniqueness of the MENA Project was documented in fifteen Success Factors, covered in the chapter titled "What is unique about the MENA Project." The challenges overcome were documented in the chapter titled "What are the top Lessons Learned." The richness of the interviews allowed for the illustration of the document with examples and quotes. [2].

---

[2] The quotes in this document are summaries of the interviewees' statements, not transcripts of their exact words, especially considering that a significant portion of them did not speak English.

2   WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT THE MENA PROJECT

The list below compiles responses from both internal and external interviewees to the question: What sets the MENA Project apart from projects of other agencies? Fifteen reasons, also referred to as success factors, have been identified.

The sentences representing these success factors are carefully crafted to succinctly summarize specific aspects of the program, utilizing elements from within the program itself. The titles serve as concise summaries of the topics, enhancing the overall readability.It is crucial to highlight the presence of enablers, such as external communications, informational support, and knowledge sharing, embedded within the topics. Additionally, best practices are integrated throughout.

There is a rationale behind the chosen order for presenting the success factors, commencing with the simplest and culminating with what is deemed the most significant. In fact, if there is one factor that binds all the others together, a strong contender would be the very last on the list: the transformational leadership style. While each factor acts as a cornerstone, the transformational leadership style toward the Women's Leadership cause pervades them all, serving as a common core.

The MENA Project is not merely transactional; it is transformational. The FoF does not just deliver training or organize events and move on to the next one; instead, the FoF continues to support beneficiaries until they become leaders. It monitors the impact on their lives, sensitizes stakeholders repeatedly, recognizing that cultural change takes time, and demonstrates a genuine commitment to achieving long-lasting transformative results.

THEMATIC RELEVANCE AND RESPONSIVENESS TO LOCAL NEEDS

2.1   The focus on one theme to orbit around: Women's Leadership

The selection of a specific theme as the focal point of the MENA Project enables the FoF to maintain a clear and precise focus, advancing with minimal risk of distractions, and thereby achieving more significant milestones. Women's Leadership serves as the overarching theme of the program, with other topics seamlessly integrated into it.

> "What is **unique about the MENA Project is the precise theme and goal**: Women's Leadership program. Unlike others that tackle more general topics like Gender Equality." – SH, expert with the MENA Project.

2.2   The polyvalent nature of the training content, touching multiple aspects of women's lives

The central theme is Women's Leadership. Nevertheless, the program encompasses a comprehensive collection of related topics in a 360-degree approach. Without these associated topics, the program might be overly generic and likely less effective. The orbiting topics include subjects from various

dimensions such as political, legal, social, financial, cultural, and others, contributing to a versatile, diversified, and rich content.

> "The project successfully tackled significant themes on both national and international levels. We customized our themes and strategies to harmonize not only with the priorities of national development plans but also with the imperative goal of attaining program outcomes, as collectively agreed upon by the host, the donor, and the FoF." – SE, MENA Project senior director.

Examples of capacity building focusing on hard skills across the MENA region include the Political Academy and the Transformational Leadership, driving positive shifts with different stakeholders: established and future female leaders, institutions, and the public.

> "The **Transformational Leadership** concept introduced by the FoF was extraordinary. Leadership is not only for politicians, but also for everyone, it's for life, to bring change to people's surroundings." – AM, expert with the MENA Project.

The training programs designed for women aim not only to enhance hard skills but also to develop soft skills. Through the implementation of a training-action framework centered on self-exploration, women build self-esteem and enhance self-confidence, enabling them to pursue leadership roles in politics or modestly within their environment. This approach emphasizes the integration of gender considerations in all aspects of their lives.

> "The **number of elected women went up** considerably at national, territorial, and local levels. The project certainly helped, especially with the Political Academy." – SB, member of the Canadian Embassy in the MENA region.

2.3   The popular and participative training approach, accessible to ordinary people

The language and content of the training programs are simplified to ensure easy comprehension for beneficiaries. The use of complicated and fancy vocabulary can be intimidating for non-experts, hindering their participation. Messages are therefore conveyed using day to day fluent terms in the local language, making them accessible to ordinary people and youngsters. This principle is also applied to course collateral.

> "**The FoF masters communications**. The message is conveyed in a simplified way, easy to understand." – NK, expert with the MENA Project.

The FoF embraces a participatory approach for delivering training, positioning both trainers and trainees as equals—essentially, they are all learners. Active-interactive sessions create a more engaging environment for participants, allowing them to interact informally through chat. These sessions involve practices like brainstorming, group dynamics, case studies, and peer-to-peer learning. Moreover, the FoF places value on and incorporates local productions, leveraging women's hobbies such as performing song pieces or participating in theater plays. This approach provides women with opportunities to express themselves not only verbally but also artistically, fostering connections with others.

> "We focus on youngsters between the ages of 11 and 12 making concepts plain and simple. **We give them the floor and let their voices speak**." – DJ, implementation partner with the MENA Project.

2.4   The pragmatic training approach, tailored to maximize responsiveness to local needs

The content covered in the trainings make sense to the participants because it resonates powerfully with their needs. Women are armed with practical tools to deal with immediate challenges in their own environment. Real life examples are used in compliance with local requirements of the country. One aspect about the MENA Project is that it goes beyond bridging gaps for deficiencies. Knowledge is built on women's strengths, granting them some power to use when they get back home.

> "It's not about policy change, but about transformation of the self as a community, and finding ways to build strengths. The FoF goes beyond *Capacity Building*, the UN term for identifying deficiencies and bridging the gap; **The FoF builds on women's strengths**, allowing them to take some power and bring it to the public sphere." – AC, international expert with the MENA Project.

Women learn how to assert themselves in discussions, effectively present their arguments, handle minor work crises, manage ideological differences and conflicts diplomatically, approach voters for votes, speak publicly, allocate and distribute budgets, formulate laws and policies and overall create a positive impact. The program supports women in discovering their roles in society, encouraging them to actively contribute to positive change.

> "The program focuses on the **immediate challenges** in women's lives and gives them practical tools to take the next step to become leaders, starting in their local communities." – AS, university partner with the MENA Project.

The tailored training avoids a "one-size-fits-all" approach, acknowledging diverse needs It adopts a supportive approach for women to assert their rights, championed by advocates of gender equality and pioneers. Participating in such customized training sessions help integrate women into decision-making processes and equip them with empowerment mechanisms. Progress through empowerment phases, ultimately help women identifying and achieving goals while recognizing weaknesses through self-awareness.

> "We integrate women into decision-making processes by equipping them with empowerment mechanisms. We progress through empowerment phases identifying and mitigating risks. We foster self-awareness to address vulnerabilities. It is important to ensure tailored development, because this is a personal journey, and **individual needs vary**." – HL, MENA Project country director.

2.5 The proximity between trainers and trainees creates a fruitful environment to share

The trainings eliminate any student-teacher distance, fostering an atmosphere of equality regardless of age, gender, titles, social positions, or academic background. The environment is likened to an oasis in the desert, particularly in traditional societies where women have limited opportunities to discuss gender topics with other women, especially in private. This safe space proves valuable as it encourages

women to freely express their feelings and thoughts, discussing ways to improve conditions. Externalizing thoughts helps mitigate disadvantages and fortify advantages.

> "Other agencies treat beneficiaries like students, and as soon the training is completed, women are sent home and the subject is forgotten. **The FoF takes them for key players**, checks on them, follows up their progress. The FoF focuses on actions, putting theory into practice." – NF, expert with the MENA Project.

The FoF genuinely supports the success of its beneficiaries. Whether in-person or remotely, the FoF demonstrates a high level of dedication during sessions, actively listening, conducting pre- and post-session evaluations, and inviting women for individual interviews. This commitment extends beyond sessions, as the FoF continues to monitor progress, providing mentorship or support to help participants apply theories in practice, accompanying them throughout their journey. Participants recognize the FoF's sincerity and respond positively with high engagement. Women understand that it is a collective effort, fostering a shared sense of belonging to something greater than themselves.

> "If out of 30 women we train, 3 decide to run for political office, the program is already a success. It's not easy for Jordanian women to become activists, **surrounded by such a sexist environment**. Some are even prohibited by their families from posing for pictures during elections." – HH, expert with the MENA Project.

LOCAL PRESENCE, LOCAL NETWORK, LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

2.6 The extensive, nurtured and engaged informal network of diverse beneficiaries

While most agencies target very homogeneous group of beneficiaries, the FoF's beneficiaries are heterogeneous: They provide distinct levels of instruction which come from different social classes in various different locations.

> "A strength of the program is its **inclusive nature** to embrace diversity: all social categories, regardless of their cultural background, remote regions, different lifestyles, different culture context." – CB, expert with the MENA Project.

The FoF establishes a lasting relationship with beneficiaries, initiating during their training and continuing indefinitely. This ongoing support enhances the effectiveness of the program, assisting women in navigating real-world situations within their communities. With a focus on youth, the FoF extends mentorship to emerging young leaders after their training, aiding them in the application of tools to their evolving realities.

> "Trainees start the program thinking: **why should we bother to assume leadership posts?** They are taught to believe more in themselves, to dare to dream, i.e., to have the ambition to seek higher posts." – AK, expert with the MENA Project.

The FoF facilitates networking opportunities for beneficiaries to connect and foster synergies with individuals who share their commitment and face similar situations across countries. They gain access to accomplished women whose success stories serve as inspiration and sources of unity. The FoF ensures the network of beneficiaries remains dynamic and engaged through organized encounters, sustained follow-ups, and the promotion of activities on social media, including articles, events, testimonials, among others.

> "Follow-ups invigorate connections, be it with beneficiaries that one day may become partners, founding associations, for example. Yet, it's imperative **to strike a balance** to channel the invested energy, mindful of the finite nature of resources."
> – LH, MENA Project country director.

In Morocco, post-training, the FoF invites women to serve as unofficial representatives of their regions. They take on roles as volunteer coordinators or focal points for the MENA Project, effectively expanding the FoF's lean team and extending the program's reach. In this way, these women contribute to building program awareness, tracking and communicating progress, and collecting post-session questionnaires and training feedback.

2.7 The right choice of implementing partners engaged on a win-win dialogue-based relationship

The MENA Project operates in collaboration with the respective government coordinating bodies in each country and a variety of local implementing partners, including NGOs/CSOs, as well as regional and/or international experts. Some activities are directly implemented by the FoF with experts in relevant fields, while with implementing partners, the FoF may integrate its activities into their existing programs or leverage partner expertise to implement specifically tailored FoF activities.

Partners are thoughtfully selected based on their commitment to the cause, shared convictions, and complementary skillsets. The FoF establishes long-term win-win relationships, aligning objectives among partners, donors, and the FoF, while navigating diverse requirements from each country. Equally crucial is the careful selection of experts, as they represent the face of the FoF to training participants and play a pivotal role in building trust with stakeholders, fostering collaboration, and driving change.

Partners and experts are considered an extension of the FoF team and are encouraged to feel accountable and included. Unlike other agencies that impose their programs, the FoF adopts a participatory approach, cultivating a sense of belonging and fostering smooth collaboration that pleases partners and makes them eager to work with the FoF.

> "The FoF flexibility and openness to suggestions **allow me to unleash my full potential**. I teach and I learn. That is why I am loyal to this organization. Even when I am busy with other projects, I readily accept the FoF invitations without hesitation." – SH, expert with the MENA Project.

Partners and experts working with the FoF often highlight a distinctive aspect: the opportunity for continuous learning. They unlock their full potential by customizing trainings based on participants' needs, seamlessly blending their expertise with that of the FoF, creating a synergistic group learning experience. Continuous learning occurs through onboarding processes and regular updates. Cross-country sessions facilitate the sharing of knowledge and exchange of experiences. Learning happens not only through interactions with people but also through interactions with information, such as accessing

the knowledge base of courses. Moreover, existing collateral can be repurposed to expedite the creation of similar resources in another country or enhance overall quality.

> "Partner involvement in deliberating program intervention strategies prior to implementation was crucial for the program planning. Ongoing collective work with partners generate complementary synergies, cultivating a collaborative environment that enhance the program's impact and results." – HL, MENA Project country director.

The FoF is attentive to supporting partners and experts, flexible and open to dialogue. The FoF provides regular technical support and engages in joint reflection on the implementation of activities, aligning them with the defined objectives.

2.8 The focus on a multi-level ecosystem of local stakeholders

The nurturing of an ecosystem of local stakeholders is crucial because, in addition to expanding the FoF's reach to a wider beneficiary base, they bring local in-depth knowledge of their focus areas and socio-economic and political forces influencing Women's Leadership matters. In return, the FoF contributes to building local capacity that remains in the country beyond program's lifespan.

> "It's a **tremendous effort to engage stakeholders in politics**, reluctant decision-makers, some mindsets are not keen to empower women. Change was difficult, but **progressing gradually to nurture not one, but a hub of partners**." – LS, expert with the MENA Project.

Besides the public in general, including men and women, the MENA Project impacts the following groups of local stakeholders:

- Beneficiaries, i.e., established women leaders, including legislators, political and administrative officers; and future women leaders, including women in middle level administrative positions with capacity to assume higher, trade union members, university and high school leaders, potential women candidates for political parties.
- Institutions, i.e., government administrations, NGOs/CSOs, universities, media outlets, trade unions.

> "We need to involve more and more stakeholders to get more cooperation and empowerment. **After women become leaders, they help enlarge the network.** There are several stories of fighters that continued the program in their communities. Their testimonials help convince other women to engage in the cause." – FS, partner with the MENA Project.

In essence, political rotation is the established norm—the status quo. Political allies may not secure re-election, and current stakeholders in positions of trust may not maintain their posts for an extended period. Acknowledging this inevitable reality, the FoF establishes connections at various levels within institutions, spanning from technical to political, to circumvent the need to start afresh after subsequent elections. This approach aims to instill a degree of stability in the program.

2.9 The relentless sensitization of institutions to the Women's Leadership theme

The FoF promotes intensive institution awareness campaigns, targeting the same actors repeatedly, whether contacting them to promote new collateral, like a social media video, for example, or to invite them for events and sessions.

> "Establishing partnerships at the highest institutional echelons not only enhances visibility but also mitigates the risk of implementation delays. Overcoming challenges across different implementation levels, even amid changes such as a new minister, underscores the **importance of mid-level institutional collaboration**, while maintaining a Plan B approach remains crucial for continuity." – LH, MENA Project country director.

As a general rule, the FoF publishes collateral in English on its webpage, Facebook page and/or Twitter account. Publications in local languages are normally posted and promoted via country partners' channels, and via specific groups created for social media, and re-posted by the FoF. This ensures that the message gets spread around for the larger audience. It is important to mention that corporate communications have been instrumental in building program credibility across the countries and reached the expressive audience of 15,000 users in 2023.

> "Effective communication is paramount; our endeavors might go unnoticed if not disseminated. However, the decision to centralize or distribute communication warrants caution, especially when dealing with governments. While our country teams serve as advocates and even activists, a delicate balance must be struck to **avoid potential political sensitivities that could strain FoF's relations with donors and host governments**." – JL, FoF communications director.

In sessions, participants are encouraged to reconsider their actions and scrutinize them. The primary challenge lies in identifying a shared foundation that transcends geographic, cultural, background, mindset, and ideological differences. The FoF adeptly employs dialogue and negotiation techniques to guide sessions, emphasizing commonalities among participants rather than highlighting what sets them apart.

> "Examining the Tunisian legislation, there is no discrimination. The problem lies on the social practices that establish distinct roles for men and women. **Actors and stakeholders are invited to re-think their actions and question them**, to look around and ask themselves if there are true equal opportunities for men and women." – LS, expert with the MENA Project.

.

It is essential to recognize the critical importance of training and establishing long-term relationships with gender advocates and sectorial experts in Women's Leadership, given their ability to navigate institutional structures and influence stakeholders. Hence, the FoF has decided to prioritize the Training of Trainers (ToT) approach. This strategy ensures continuous knowledge dissemination through a smaller group of trainers responsible for training women officials in both central and regional administrations. These trainers also work with politicians, judges, academics, service providers, activists, journalists, and others.Media outlets play a pivotal role in influencing public policy, attitudes, and practices among the general public. Potential political stakeholders remain attentive to public opinion.

> "Sensitization is akin to a snowball effect. Initially propelled by the FoF, it has now gained momentum, drawing other local actors into the circle, who have taken the lead and are driving the movement forward." – HL, MENA Project country director.

It is indeed notable that the FoF walks the talk, i.e., it practices what it preaches and succeeds doing what it teaches beneficiaries to do: to convince stakeholders to engage in the Women's Leadership cause.

> "The FoF walks the talk: they create team spirit, joining men and women from different backgrounds and ideologies. **Experienced experts lead them to focus on what unites them rather than on what sets them apart**. After all, at the essence we are all humans." – TF, a prior beneficiary who became a partner with the MENA Project.

COMMITTED STAFF, INSPIRING LEADERS, EFFECTIVE MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP

2.10   The alignment and engagement with the Canadian government vision

The FoF maintains an open and collaborative relationship with the donor for the MENA Project, which is the Canadian government. This includes Global Affairs Canada (GAC) based in Ottawa, as well as the country embassies. Unlike imposing its own vision on the program, the Canadian government takes into account the perspectives of other involved parties. The MENA Project aligns with the interests of the local country, the donor, and the FoF, all under an overarching regional focus.

Representation from these parties is integral in the country Steering Committees, established to ensure strategic alignment on an annual basis. During these sessions, the FoF communicates past achievements and presents plans for the next period, seeking agreement. Participants, in turn, provide valuable recommendations. These include:

- Canadian government – GAC and/or members of the embassy.
- Local government – country government coordinating bodies, responsible for coordination international assistance and/or women and gender.
- FoF – Country Director, HQ representative and/or country director.
- Observers – Gender/governance expert, civil society representative.

> "During the last Steering Committee, the FoF went beyond presenting mere figures: they showed a video with beneficiaries speaking about the impact of the program in their lives. **That reminded us of what we really want, and it is not only about figures, but also about translating them to understand the change.**" – NG, member of the Canadian Embassy in the MENA region.

> "The country Steering Committee serves as a forum to showcase the program's achievements and outline future initiatives. It is an opportunity to discuss the program with all the interested parties gathered in the same room, get their insights and recommendations, and **ensure prompt alignment and approval, with no space for loopholes or ambiguities.** The program is firmly backed by a strong buy-in." – CC, FoF executive committee member.

In addition to the Steering Committee, alignment with the Canadian government occurs through periodic reports encompassing outputs, outcomes, and impact. These reports enhance quantitative data with qualitative indicators. Due to its regional focus, the MENA Project employs a shared set of measurements applied uniformly across all countries.

2.11 The goal-driven and results-based approach, monitoring transformation to beneficiaries

The MENA Project employs a Results-Based Management (RBM) methodology to systematically monitor indicators and measure outcomes, facilitating an ongoing assessment of the program's impact. The analysis of trends and results aids in programmatic and strategic decision-making for the subsequent cycle, ensuring a continuous process of improvement. Having well-defined goals helps maintain focus and progress towards them without distractions. Regularly updating measurements for reports enables the timely identification and management of deviations in timeframe and budget.

Aligned with the framework outlined in the Logic Model, the FoF, in collaboration with its implementing partners in the three countries, collects data to populate predefined standard performance parameters. These country-specific inputs are then amalgamated to produce a regional report, subsequently consolidated to present a comprehensive overview of the program.

"The FoF is goal-oriented and **ensures that partners adopt Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** in their implementation plan, which will enable them to produce appropriate inputs for the donor's report." – AS, partner with the MENA Project.

While it may appear straightforward, the consolidation process is, in fact, a multi-layered undertaking involving three countries at the regional and global levels. This process is time and resource-intensive, demanding meticulous coordination to ensure smooth, timely, and accurate execution, and to avoid the need for rework. One key factor contributing to the effective functioning of the consolidation process is the establishment of robust processes and monitoring instruments at the initiation of the program. There are continuous efforts to optimize these processes at each cycle's conclusion, gradually making them less manual and procedural. Functional team members, dispersed across the three countries, collaboratively construct intervention strategies, work plans, reports, tools, and procedures.

The RBM functional team has standardized a report for partners to fill in performance parameters, following the instructions provided during onboarding. Providing guidance and close support to partners is crucial for ensuring the high quality of collected data and maintaining consistency between what different partners gather within the same country and across different countries. A simple example pertains to the count of training participants. Should only women be counted, or should men be included? When a minor brings tutors, should they be counted? Should institutions to which participants belong also be included in the count?

"**Crafting a robust Logic Model requires meticulous indicator definition and thorough preparation**. While monitoring is essential, the challenge lies in the potential misalignment between indicators and actual results, due to the intricate nature of outputs. Indicators may unintentionally omit valuable nuances, such as men's participation or indirect beneficiaries accompanying young attendees, thus limiting the scope of measuring comprehensive progress." – ID, MENA Project country staff member.

The Finance functional team elaborated a template for financial reports and agreements to reuse in multiple partnerships. It saves time to have a template ready with clauses already pre-approved by the legal department. The challenge for a multi-country program, however, is to develop an umbrella business model that is flexible enough to be used in different countries, complying with respective policies,

practices, rules, and laws, and yet meet the donor's requirements. This comprises employment, payment, reimbursement, and commercial aspects. To facilitate the dialogue and improve communication between the FoF headquarters, partners, the FoF hired an accountant who, besides English, is also proficient in French and Arabic, the languages spoken in the MENA region.

> "The program has allocated sufficient financial and human resources to execute plans, aligned with established leadership priorities. A crucial consideration from a financial standpoint is that once a budget is set, making changes becomes challenging; hence, **it's mandatory to grasp the financial intricacies of each country beforehand**. Creating local template agreements helps streamline negotiations and prevent errors. Striking a balance between branch autonomy and a unified framework ensures efficient oversight without the weight of excessive micromanagement." – DB, MENA Project accountant.

The FoF employs both quantitative and qualitative assessment methods to showcase program results. Qualitative reports provide insights into the impact of the program beyond activities and offer explanations for the figures presented in quantitative reports. Beneficiary satisfaction is a key consideration, with the FoF administering questionnaires before and after training and mentoring activities, probing participants about the changes they have experienced. Additionally, the FoF gathers and analyzes testimonials to gauge the program's impact on beneficiaries' lives.

Utilizing the Most Significant Changes (MSC) approach, beneficiaries are encouraged to share their life stories, focusing on how they perceive the transformations following the program intervention. They identify the most significant changes across four levels: individual, institutional, environmental, and collective. The program is designed not only to deliver activities but also to create enduring results for the beneficiaries.

> "The partnership with the FoF differs from others because **it is not about performing an activity and moving to something else; it is about ensuring lasting results to the participants**." – AF, partner with the MENA Project.

2.12 The team spirit and cohesion sustained by a strong commitment to the cause

To adhere to the budget constraints, the FoF maintains a lean staff. In addition to managing the program in the country, staff members in Tunisia shoulder the additional responsibility of consolidating information for the MENA region. The FoF retains only essential human resources internally for ongoing program operations. For new initiatives requiring complementary skillsets, the FoF chooses to hire consultants on a temporary basis. Examples include the production of a video and the collection of information for the elaboration of this Roadmap.

As mentioned earlier, the staff is informally augmented by a network of beneficiaries and partners dedicated to the cause of Women's Leadership and, more broadly, Gender Equality. Motivated by passion and commitment to the cause, the staff consistently exceeds expectations, pushing harder to achieve milestones—a behavior akin to that of activists.

> "**The FoF staff are not working, that is not work, that is something else**. They have an unparalleled devotion to the cause." – AM, expert with the MENA Project.

14

Being a lean team has instilled a sense of self-reliance in the staff, encouraging them to take on diverse roles within a project and learn through hands-on experience. The positive and collaborative environment, prioritizing collaboration over competition and collectivism over individualism, fosters a culture of willingness to help and share knowledge. The coexistence of both vertical and horizontal organizational structures, coupled with regular meetings, ensures alignment and provides a space for listening, sharing, and reinforcing teamwork.

The staff operates as a cohesive unit, recognizing that each member complements the others. A spirit of continuous learning permeates the project, driving a proactive approach to seeking external expertise, whether by hiring consultants or accessing relevant studies, to bridge any knowledge gaps.

> "Staff are productive, well informed and collaborate well. **A spirit of continuous learning permeates the project**." – RM, consultant with the GAC.

Exposure to diverse team backgrounds, nationalities, cultures, localities, languages, genders, ages, and races has taught the staff not to take anything for granted. Solutions are thoroughly brainstormed and discussed, recognizing that what works well in one country may not necessarily be effective in others. Similarly, what may be clear to one person may not make sense to another. Revisiting solutions to explain concepts that may seem obvious ensures greater clarity and refinement in the process. Employing a single model for different countries in various regions compels the staff to think creatively and navigate challenging conditions regularly.

> "The success of the MENA Project in each country is rooted in shared values that unite the entire FOF team, from Ottawa to Tunisia, Morocco, and Jordan. These common values drive positive and meaningful change, showcasing the strength of a cohesive vision." – TK, MENA Project country director.

2.13 The hiring of inspiring leaders, with solid background and experience on Gender Equality

A pivotal factor contributing to the success of the MENA Project was the strategic hiring of robust country leadership possessing not only a profound understanding of Gender Equality but also expertise in change management. These leaders played a crucial role in defining the direction of Gender Equality within their specific contexts, incorporating diverse perspectives and ensuring a nuanced approach to tailoring the program to each country's unique circumstances. Importantly, the program fosters a collective national feminist transformational leadership, emphasizing a collaborative rather than individualistic perspective. At its core, the initiative amplifies the voices of local women championing the cause, initiating a profound and widespread social change that unfolds in a dynamic spiral, expanding its reach and impact with each successive cycle.

> "**Highly knowledgeable and experienced directors** who are experts not only in Gender Equality but also in managing change. Where did the FoF find these women?!" – RM, consultant with the GAC.

In addition to their individual contributions, the country leaders brought a valuable asset to the MENA Project: an extensive network of relationships. Their connections with local activists and experts played a pivotal role in propelling the program forward. These country leaders are widely acknowledged in the local society, recognized for their active involvement and steadfast commitment to the cause of Gender Equality, particularly within the context of Women's Leadership in the MENA Project.

> "The FoF came and visited our rural commune in our remote region, far from central regions, and established communal councils. **The leaders of the FoF are truly inspiring."** – NK, expert with the MENA Project.

> "The country directors are very competent to run the national plans, and the senior director is very present, highly engaged and active in her managerial role." – CC, FoF executive committee member.

2.14 The program adaptability to new environmental conditions, finding innovative solutions

From its inception, the MENA Project has embodied a pioneering spirit, starting with the selection of the specific theme of Women's Leadership within the broader context of Gender Equality. The program has undertaken the development of robust Logic Model and Theory of Change (ToC) methodologies, evolving them into processes and tools. More recently, it has incorporated the use of the Most Significant Changes (MSC) qualitative approach to showcase results. Every aspect of the program had to be constructed from the ground up; there were no pre-existing recipes, formulas, or references to copy and paste. This is the inherent cost that innovative programs must bear.

The program maintains a continuous collective learning attitude, strengthened by constant exposure and openness to diverse perspectives from both the internal and external environment. The FoF learns from every program cycle at the country, regional, and global levels when analyzing results and generating reports. It also learns from and with beneficiaries, implementing partners, academia, NGOs/CSOs, government, and the private sector during Steering Committees and other meetings organized at the beginning of each new year or whenever deemed necessary.

Furthermore, there is a fearless attitude towards embracing change, persisting through crises, and consistently seeking improved ways to deliver and tackle the program. It requires a high degree of courage not only to accept change but, more importantly, to initiate it, particularly given the multiple layers involved (three countries, regional, global) and the significant workload it demands. To foster innovation and devise ingenious solutions, the FoF seeks studies to frame and substantiate ideas, consults with experts, and only then, based on this thorough examination, proposes alternatives. The FoF is in a constant state of learning and adaptation, employing both results-oriented and process-oriented approaches.

> "While funding mechanisms tend to be very results-oriented, **the FoF program is process-oriented,** like the best projects are, i.e., it allows for constant thinking and learning and adjusting and adapting and sharing." – AC, international expert with the MENA Project.

"Over the years, our journey has been enlightening. We've recognized the importance of centering on youth, of expanding our reach to rural areas. We've understood the digital literacy's pivotal role, the intertwined threads between gender equality and violence, the pressing call to address climate change. At each cycle's close, we scrutinize our progress, anchoring the forthcoming year's plan in the lessons of the past. Our approach is ever evolving, while our strategy, dynamic and responsive, draws strength from the insights gathered on this transformative path." – LH, MENA Project country director.

A crucial facet of adaptability lies in assessing the extent to which the program can be flexible without compromising its integrity. For instance, the FoF faced the challenge of reconciling the stringent financial reporting standards in Canada's headquarters with the more dynamic economies in the MENA region. It required accurate interpretation of the rules to establish suitable auditing controls.

"**Adaptability is certainly a key enabler** of the MENA Project." – NG, member of the Canadian Embassy in the MENA Region.

2.15   The transformational leadership style, understanding that cultural change takes time

In the introductory text detailing the fifteen unique aspects of the MENA Project, it was emphasized that the transformational leadership style is likely the most pivotal factor, akin to the DNA that influences all other elements. Transformational leadership revolves around recognizing that the Women's Leadership cause transcends a transactional model of delivering training once and considering the job done. Instead, it embodies an enduring process of training and sensitization, akin to engaging actors as nodes in an expanding network. These connections are periodically revitalized, acknowledging that societies require an extended period to assimilate cultural changes. The FoF remains steadfastly committed to achieving sustainable results through this ongoing and transformative approach.

"**Gender Equality involves a cultural change, a slow process** that demands many experiences with the same people, not just once, and the FoF understood that." – AC, international expert with the MENA Project.

The well-defined methodology, encapsulated in the Logic Model and Theory of Change (ToC), serves as a sustainable product that can be easily embraced and perpetuated by local stakeholders. The FoF prioritizes fostering change over creating something proprietary and challenging to replicate, as such an approach would limit its broader impact. This program feature becomes particularly crucial to ensure continuity, especially as the MENA Project approaches its conclusion in a country.

"Other organizations employ actions on a point-by-point basis, in an *ad hoc* manner; **FoF is more strategic, tackles many aspects of the issue**, follows-up on progress, mentors young women." – AK, partner with the MENA Project.

The FoF's strategic vision serves as a guiding force, directing coordinated actions through a transformational leadership style that actively engages and empowers individuals. Employing this leadership approach, the FoF has cultivated an inclusive environment built on trust, not only externally to the organization to nurture a network of beneficiaries and other stakeholders but also internally, fostering connections among staff members.

17

The FoF upholds values such as transparency, openness, honesty, and respect, prioritizing teamwork and collaboration over competition. Employees place trust in the FoF's purpose and their team members, facilitating open peer-to-peer communication and knowledge sharing. The organization encourages a diverse range of perspectives, embracing a complementary approach that disregards hierarchical organizational positions, gender, race, age, and background. When team members are assured that their voices will be heard, they are more likely to contribute. Creativity is amplified when knowledge is incrementally built upon the insights of others.

"Being part of the FoF team, we sense our voices matter. This inclusive approach fuels a culture of collaboration, in which every individual's input contributes to the fulfillment of our shared mission." – OA, MENA Project RBM manager.

Just as the FoF views beneficiaries as crucial contributors, it similarly regards its employees as leaders within the organization. Staff members feel entrusted and empowered to self-manage, responding with heightened engagement, a sense of ownership, and increased productivity. The same collective spirit that unites external actors around a shared cause also binds internal stakeholders together.

Co-leadership is evident at both the team and management levels, with decisions reached through consensus after thorough discussions involving headquarters and the three countries, respecting the jurisdiction of each group. Regularly scheduled meetings and brainstorming sessions serve as opportunities for open dialogue and alignment. Even between formal meetings, a continuous connection and consultation persist, transcending working hours and time zone differences. Leaders within the organization remain approachable, available, and lead by example, consistently demonstrating the principles they advocate

"Online meetings take place on a weekly basis, facilitating communication and collaboration between the headquarters and the three countries involved. These meetings span across various key levels, including country directors, monitoring and evaluation teams, and finance departments. This deliberate approach fosters a seamless flow of information and a synchronized approach to the program." – TK, MENA Project country director.

"Enabling the transition of regional activities into national initiatives requires extensive upfront strategizing, meticulous planning, and thorough organization. It's important to recognize the complexity of forward-thinking and strategic deliberation, as these initiatives must seamlessly fit into national plans." – SE, MENA Project senior director.

The MENA Project Organizational Chart provided below illustrates the intricate coordination of all the components within the program. It is noteworthy that while maintaining autonomous country cells is essential for tailoring plans to local realities and executing them proficiently, the role of headquarters is equally crucial in orchestrating actions among the countries. This includes strategic planning, harmonizing stakeholders' goals, prioritizing and budgeting agreed-upon actions, and synchronizing and adjusting pace, among other responsibilities. This dual approach ensures that all program components work together harmoniously, resulting in a cohesive and effective program.

MENA Project Organizational Chart

The MENA Project adheres to the three principles of complexity defined by Edgar Morin:

1) The dialogical principle, emphasizing interactive engagement, is evident in the continuous alignment and interaction among team members in all directions throughout every phase of the program, from strategic planning to execution.

2) The recursive principle, highlighting the dual nature of shaping and being shaped, is manifested in the iterative process of unfolding one program, with a singular strategy, set of goals, and methodology, into the MENA regional plan. This regional plan is then tailored to integrate into national plans, and the nested plans reciprocally shape the MENA regional plan, ultimately contributing to the consolidation of a cohesive global plan.

3) The hologrammatic principle, the third and final principle, underscores the condition of having the whole present in every part. Much like the DNA imprinted in every body cell, in the case of the MENA Project, this principle is demonstrated through the presence of the transformational approach component embedded in each of the other factors.

3   WHAT ARE THE TOP LESSONS LEARNED?

3.1   COVID-19 and the rise of remote meetings

Amid the pandemic lockdowns, the suspension of in-person meetings necessitated adherence to safety measures. To sustain the program during this period, the Forum of Federations (FoF) partially substituted face-to-face interactions with online sessions. This circumstance served as a wake-up call for the FoF, emphasizing the risks posed by crises potentially diverting attention from Women's Leadership. It underscored the necessity of a flexible methodology capable of adapting to contextual changes and illuminated the urgent need for accessible knowledge materials empowering women in both ordinary and crisis situations.

The challenges encountered included limited access to communication tools for beneficiaries and partners grappling with the learning curve associated with these tools. Following global trends during the pandemic, the FoF, like other organizations, gradually normalized and integrated remote tools into its operations post-COVID-19. This shift proved instrumental in expanding program outreach, eliminating transportation and accommodation costs after lockdowns were lifted. For instance, the partners' regional meeting became feasible solely through remote collaboration.

An unintended positive consequence of increased digital platform usage was the enhanced digital literacy of women participating in the program. It is crucial to acknowledge that, given the nature of the initiative, face-to-face sessions remain essential. Consequently, the FoF adopted a hybrid approach, combining in-person sessions with online training reinforcements. This approach ensures the program's continuity while leveraging the advantages of digital tools.

3.2   Time spent setting up processes and tools at the beginning saves more time later

The Forum of Federations (FoF) invested significant time and effort in the project's initial phases to establish streamlined processes and design effective monitoring instruments. This proactive approach aimed to enhance operational efficiency and mitigate potential challenges.Key measures were implemented to save time and optimize various aspects of the project. Partnership agreement templates, aligning with national regulations, were pre-approved in collaboration with the legal department, resulting in time savings during negotiations. The standardization of financial reports, incorporating rigorous controls, proved instrumental in expediting audits.

A cornerstone of the program's success lies in the development of a robust Logic Model and Theory of Change (ToC). These frameworks not only provided a solid foundation for defining measurements but also contributed to time savings during the reporting period. Partners across the three countries follow a unified approach, collecting identical sets of indicators and outcomes, and utilizing standardized report/worksheet templates, streamlining processes during regional consolidation.

The adoption of consistent templates and standards ensures uniformity across the region, contributing to an elevated maturity level when introducing the program to new countries. This approach sets a high standard, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. The program is committed to an ongoing process of re-evaluating tools, with a focus on enhancing implementation or, if necessary, replacing them for optimal efficiency.

3.3   Reporting burden softened by standardization

To enhance efficiency and reduce team energy expenditure, the reporting process was designed in compliance with Canadian government requirements. Standardization of reports was implemented across the region, and certain data collection responsibilities were delegated to partners. Additionally, in some cases, the collection of post-session questionnaires was assigned to informal coordinators among the beneficiaries.

Internally, the team underwent a learning curve to effectively collaborate online, utilizing productivity and collaborative applications. This facilitated keeping files up to date and mitigated versioning challenges. A noticeable improvement in the efficiency of reporting can be observed over time, with the process becoming less time-consuming when comparing the first year with subsequent years.

3.4   Lean staff augmented by experts and consultants

To fit within the budget limit, the FoF has a lean team of employees with no surpluses. Whenever there is a major knowledge gap, the FoF brings in experts and consultants to complement *ad hoc* activities. With this rotating seasonal team, what would be a heavy and expensive fixed cost to the organization, turns out to be a variable cost, incurred when necessary. Besides the cost perspective, the employees are given the opportunity to learn from the interaction with senior co-workers.

3.5   Time management and focus to ensure work-life balance

The MENA Project spans multiple countries with varying time zones, calendars, and workdays, often requiring team members to work outside standard hours. Managing communication in three languages further adds to the workload, challenging work-life balance and necessitating occasional overtime.

Despite these challenges, implementing effective time management and process optimization has reduced the need for after-hours work. However, flexibility and occasional sacrifices are still necessary. The project offers invaluable opportunities for professional growth and international experience, enhancing career advancement and professional maturity. Therefore, a passion for gender equality is a key hiring criterion, reflecting our commitment to the project's objectives.

3.6   Reuse enables the program to gain traction

The FoF established a knowledge base of external-facing training materials to expedite the rollout of similar trainings across the region. This collection encompasses research, position papers, audiovisual resources, and guidelines. In addition to interactive sessions, knowledge sharing is facilitated through documents, allowing for continuous review, improvement, and repurposing of content to address evolving goals.

3.7 Long-term partnerships are not always the best approach

In many cases programs gain traction with long-term partnership, avoiding onboarding and other costs associated with its operationalization. In other cases, partners take partnerships for granted, and the best would probably be to re-validate the contract scope and re-sign every year. Another alternative is to launch a Request for Proposal (RFP) and down select the best submissions.

3.8 Prioritization of engagements while gaining more recognition and attracting more parties

As the MENA Project gain more recognition, more partners, ministries, and other stakeholders want to engage. Engagements have to be prioritized having in mind the goals to be attained and desired outcomes, as the program has a limited staff and funds. Analogously, since the women's trainings are free of charge and therefore with potential to attract many beneficiaries, it is important to be selective and invite those who will, in fact, continue the fight for Gender Equality.

3.9 Engagement via local social media groups is effective because that's where to find people

Corporate communications publish program updates and collateral in English and were instrumental in building credibility at the institutional level; however, it does not suffice. It is also important to develop local channels, as many local actors will only be proficient and reachable in their mother languages. Word-of-mouth publicity is powerful; however, it does not suffice either. An option is to use partners' channels to post publications and promote events; another option is to create or join thematic groups on social media and invite potential stakeholders. The country staff also use collaboration tools to interact with partners and to follow up on beneficiaries' progress. Actors will be kept engaged and participative by the constant posts and contacts on these platforms, places where people frequent on a regular basis these days.

3.10 Countries together compose one single picture that represent the program

The Mena project was implemented across three countries but operated under a unified logic model and theory of change (toc) to achieve its goals. recently, the FoF decided to consolidate operations regionally in Tunisia, highlighting the project's synergy. While each country or zone may adopt changes at varying paces due to societal differences, the project remains singular. to ensure clarity in progress and results reports, it's essential to reflect this unified approach.

How to implement a complex multi-dimensional
Women's Leadership Program
Click on the icons to explore the steps and come back using the road icon.

1-Assess Socio-Political & Programming Context

2-Plan & Set up the Multi-Dimensional Program

INITIATING

PLANNING

ADJUSTING

4-Build & Manage Partnerships

3-Understand Challenges & Needs

EXECUTION LOOP

CLOSING

5-Enable & Influence Stakeholders

6-Evaluate Trends & Results

7-Own & Continue Efforts

MONITORING AND CONTROLLING
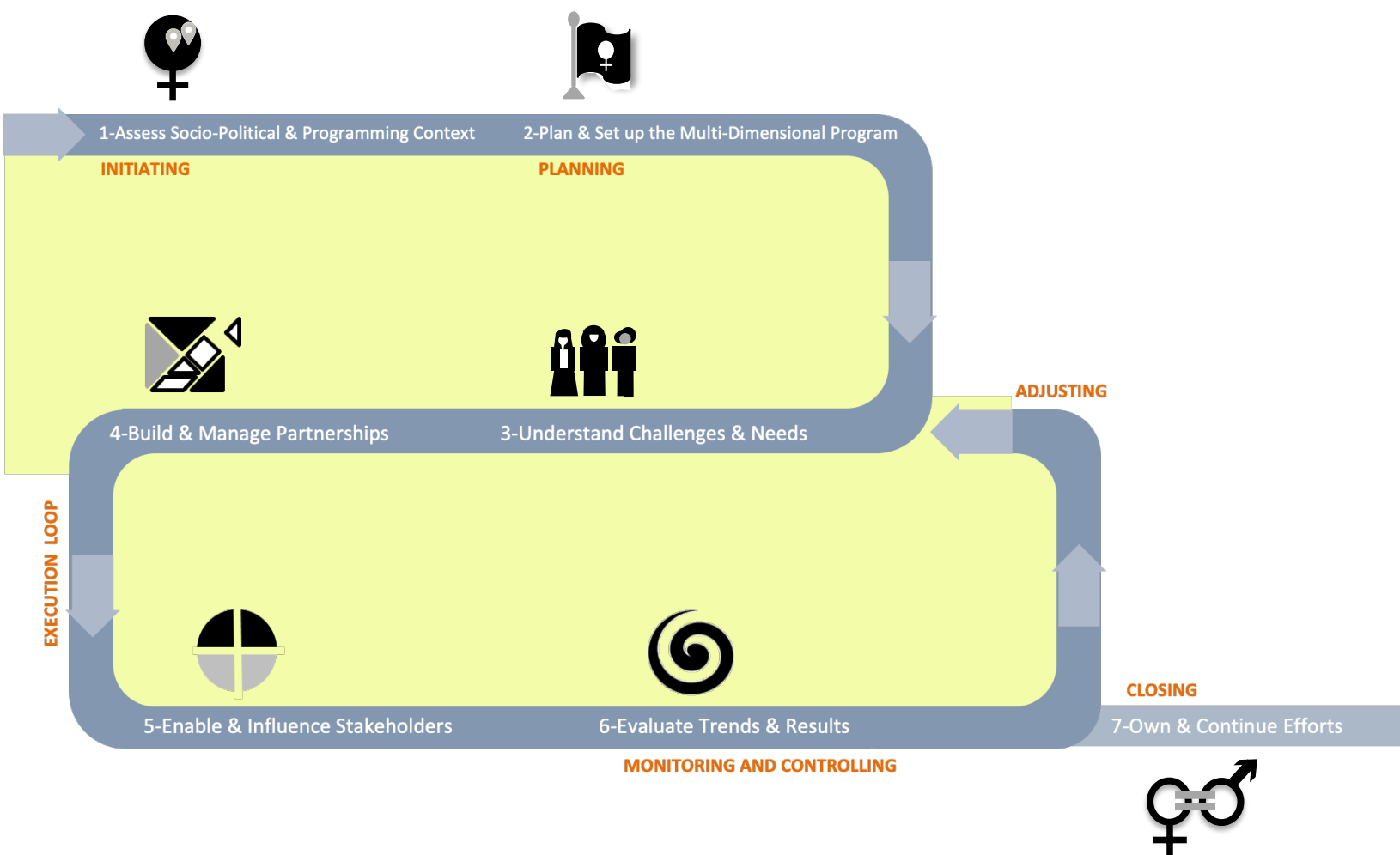
4.1   Step 1: **Assess Socio-Political & Programming Context**

DESCRIPTION

The socio-political context and the assessment of the current state-of-play on Gender Equality determine which actions work best in the selected countries and region, as well as measurements that need to be put in place to conduct to the desired results. The findings from the initial analysis will expose the target areas of interventions and their interdependencies. The program plan should comprehensively address the theme of the Women's Leadership, ensuring relevance and responsiveness to local needs while at the same time aligning with the goals of the donor and the executive agency (FoF's.)

SUGGESTED PROCESS

- Use studies and involve experts and potential partners to discuss countries' readiness for the project.
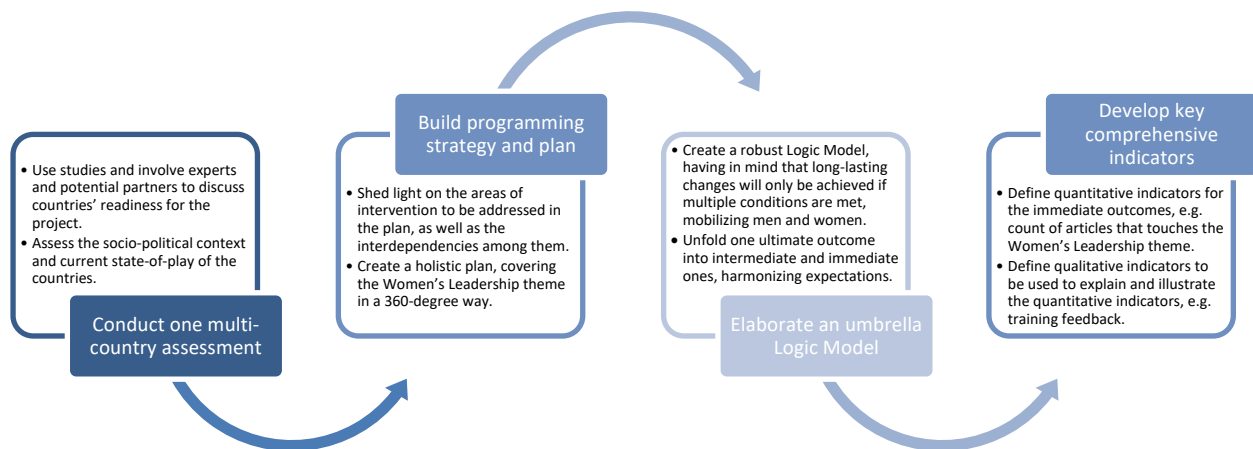- Assess the socio-political context and current state-of-play of the countries.

Conduct one multi-country assessment

Build programming strategy and plan
- Shed light on the areas of intervention to be addressed in the plan, as well as the interdependencies among them.
- Create a holistic plan, covering the Women's Leadership theme in a 360-degree way.

- Create a robust Logic Model, having in mind that long-lasting changes will only be achieved if multiple conditions are met, mobilizing men and women.
- Unfold one ultimate outcome into intermediate and immediate ones, harmonizing expectations.

Elaborate an umbrella Logic Model

Develop key comprehensive indicators
- Define quantitative indicators for the immediate outcomes, e.g. count of articles that touches the Women's Leadership theme.
- Define qualitative indicators to be used to explain and illustrate the quantitative indicators, e.g. training feedback.

PRIMARY REMINDERS

- Assess the socio-political context and current state-of-play of the countries answering these initial questions: what is the percentage of women in leadership positions? How does the legislation protect women's rights? Are there existing measurements available?
- Create indicators that can be measured, and that can be collected within the period needed for monitoring and reporting purposes. Determine sources, method, deadline, and owners to collect data. Do not belittle regional consolidation efforts.
- Examine sustainability, as resources are not unlimited, and the program won't last forever. Include a continuity plan explaining how the practices will be incorporated nationally after program closure.
- Focus on the youth, as they are the cultural change propagators. They will influence their families and their communities.
- Consider developing women's hard and soft skills, from political and law backgrounds to how to speak in public, how to reinforce self-esteem. Offer revenue generation-related themes too, such as project management, to help them achieve financial independence and eventually attain full autonomy.

EXPANDED REMINDERS

This section serves as a cross-reference based on Success Factors and Lessons Learned, so anticipate some repetition. For more details, please refer to the item number in parentheses at the end of each sentence.

- **Maintain Clear Focus and Meaningful Outcomes:** Choose a distinct theme for the program to ensure a clear focus, achieve meaningful outcomes, and minimize distractions (2.1).
- **Enhance Impact through Central Theme:** Embrace one central theme for the program and integrate relevant topics to amplify its impact (2.1).
- **Create a Multifaceted Program:** Surround the central theme with diverse dimensions, including political, legal, social, financial, and cultural aspects, for a content-rich program (2.2).
- **Empower with Comprehensive Training:** Extend women training programs beyond hard skills. Provide sections that encompass essential soft skills. Emphasize self-exploration within a training-action framework to boost self-esteem and enable gender-integrated leadership (2.2).
- **Foster Open Collaboration:** Build an open and collaborative relationship with donors and hosts, harmonizing visions (2.10).
- **Serve Interests:** Address interests of hosts, donors, and the FoF while maintaining a broader regional focus within the program (2.10).
- **Strengthen Alignment through Reports:** Enhance alignment through periodical reports detailing outputs, outcomes, and impact with a blend of quantitative and qualitative indicators (2.10).
- **Common Measurements for Regional Focus:** Use a common set of measurements across all countries to enable regional consolidation (2.10).
- **Implement Results-Based Management (RBM):** Use RBM methodology to monitor indicators, measure outcomes, and assess the impact of program activities (2.11).
- **Assess Quantitatively and Qualitatively:** Employ both quantitative and qualitative assessment methods, utilizing qualitative reports to understand program impact beyond activities and figures (2.11).
- **Embrace a Transformational Leadership Style**: Recognize the power of transformational leadership, fostering ongoing engagement and sustainable change (2.15).
- **Understand Cultural Change Takes Time**: Acknowledge the gradual nature of cultural change and commit to sustainable results through ongoing training and sensitization (2.15).
- **Strategize Upfront:** Invest significant time and effort early on to establish efficient processes and design effective monitoring instruments (3.2).
- **Streamline Financial Oversight:** Standardize financial reports with proper controls to facilitate audits and reduce time spent on financial reporting (3.2).
- **Leverage Logic Model and ToC:** Create a robust Logic Model and Theory of Change (ToC) to define measurements and streamline reporting efforts (3.2).
- **Enhance Consistency and Maturity:** Adopt the same templates and standards to ensure consistency across the region and raise the program's maturity level in new countries (3.2).
- **Elevate Unified Nature of the Program:** Convey the singular program nature that spans across diverse countries, each with its own pace of progress, yet united under a shared Logic Model and Theory of Change umbrella. Showcase this cohesive approach in all communications and reports to prevent misunderstandings and achieve clarity (3.10).
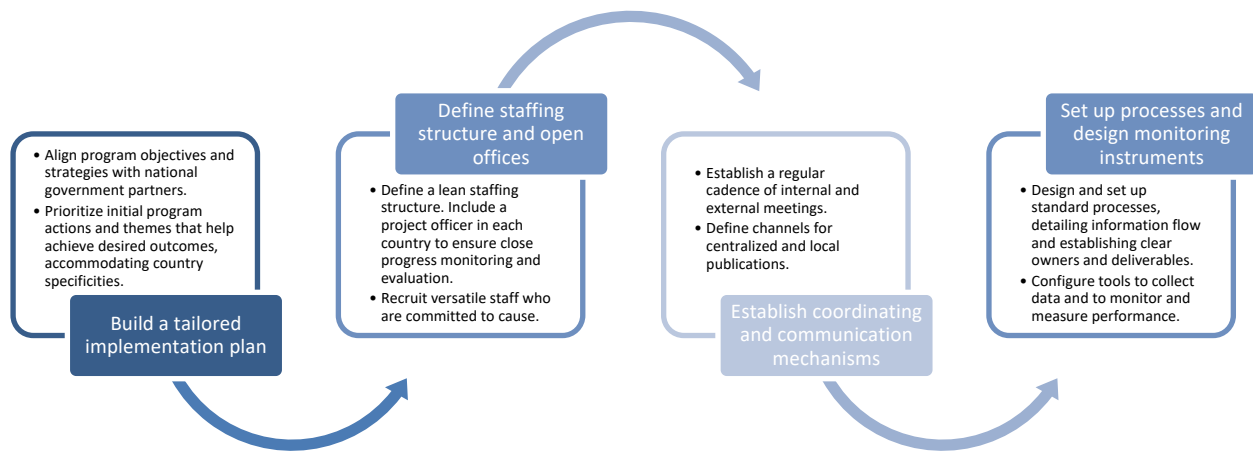
DESCRIPTION

When developing an implementation plan, it is crucial to derive inspiration from existing country data and assessments produced by other organizations, while also adapting them to the specificities of the program context in each target location. A participatory approach involving actors at all levels helps define meaningful measures and encourages their effective implementation. Ensuring alignment between the plan and local government objectives and strategies is vital as it promotes institutionalization of gender-sensitive procedures. Building alliances and garnering stakeholder support are essential for successful implementation. The plan should set achievable goals and establish clear measures to enable progress tracking, incorporating a realistic timeframe and implementation timeline as well as corresponding monitoring periods, taking into account the workload of the allocated resources in the program.

SUGGESTED PROCESS

- Align program objectives and strategies with national government partners.
- Prioritize initial program actions and themes that help achieve desired outcomes, accommodating country specificities.

Build a tailored implementation plan

Define staffing structure and open offices
- Define a lean staffing structure. Include a project officer in each country to ensure close progress monitoring and evaluation.
- Recruit versatile staff who are committed to cause.

- Establish a regular cadence of internal and external meetings.
- Define channels for centralized and local publications.

Establish coordinating and communication mechanisms

Set up processes and design monitoring instruments
- Design and set up standard processes, detailing information flow and establishing clear owners and deliverables.
- Configure tools to collect data and to monitor and measure performance.

PRIMARY REMINDERS

- Recruit versatile staff members who have the ability to handle different tasks and to be creative even in resource-limited situations. It is highly recommended to assemble a team that is deeply committed to the cause, willing to go the extra mile to ensure the successful completion of tasks.

- Define the external communication strategy, identifying channels for both centralized and distributed publications. The nature of the program involving several governments demands extra caution in publishing texts. Given the streamlined country staff, the MENA Project does not count on a dedicated communication expert in each location. As a result, the program adopted a centralized approach, managing corporate communications from the headquarters and utilizing English as the primary language. This approach combines news from the countries, ensuring a critical mass and regularity of posts to effectively engage and retain a wide range of followers. To connect with individuals who may not be proficient in English, the program has identified local communication channels in their respective languages and has also joined existing thematic social media groups.

EXPANDED REMINDERS

This section serves as a cross-reference based on Success Factors and Lessons Learned, so anticipate some repetition. For more details, please refer to the item number in parentheses at the end of each sentence.

- **Foster Open Collaboration:** Build an open and collaborative relationship with donors and hosts, harmonizing visions (2.10).
- **Serve Interests:** Address interests of hosts, donors, and the FoF while maintaining a broader regional focus within the program (2.10).
- **Establish Steering Committees:** Form country Steering Committees comprising representatives from the parties involved, donors, hosts, FoF leadership, and relevant experts for strategic alignment (2.10).
- **Optimize Resource Allocation:** Maintain a lean staff structure within budget constraints, optimizing resources for program operations and information consolidation (2.12).
- **Strategic Human Resource Allocation:** Allocate human resources strategically, retaining essential roles while contracting consultants for specific initiatives requiring diverse skillsets (2.12).
- **Leverage Network Power:** Harness the power of a network of beneficiaries and partners to extend the team's capabilities and infuse shared passion for Women's Leadership (2.12).
- **Foster Team Commitment:** Cultivate a passionate and committed team, fostering a collective spirit that drives them to exceed expectations and act as advocates for change (2.12).
- **Develop Versatile Team Members:** Develop versatile team members who assume multiple roles and embrace a learning-by-doing approach within a positive and collaborative environment (2.12).
- **Promote Collaboration:** Emphasize collaboration over competition, leveraging both vertical and horizontal structures, with regular meetings to foster teamwork and knowledge sharing (2.12).
- **Nurture Unity:** Nurture a sense of unity among team members, recognizing each individual's unique contribution to the collective success (2.12).
- **Cultivate Continuous Learning:** Cultivate a culture of continuous learning, seeking external expertise and refining solutions to address diverse backgrounds and contexts (2.12).
- **Encourage Exhaustive Brainstorming:** Brainstorm and discuss solutions exhaustively, fostering lucidity and refinement, while acknowledging the need for context-specific adaptations (2.12).
- **Promote Creative Thinking:** Encourage creative thinking by adapting a single model for different countries, prompting innovative approaches to overcome regular challenges (2.12).
- **Strategic Country Leadership:** Elevate the project's success by strategically hiring strong country leadership, well-versed in Gender Equality and change management (2.13).
- **Empower Local Contextualization:** Empower country leaders to define the nuanced meaning of Gender Equality within their contexts, tailoring the program to local perspectives without imposing a singular vision (2.13).
- **Cultivate Feminist Leadership:** Cultivate collective national feminist transformational leadership, centering on local women's voices and igniting broad, deep, and impactful social change (2.13).
- **Leverage Relationship Assets:** Capitalize on the relationship assets brought by country leaders, leveraging their extensive networks of local activists and experts (2.13).
- **Active Involvement of Local Experts:** Encourage the active involvement of local activists and experts to bolster the program's momentum and effectiveness (2.13).
- **Embrace a Transformational Leadership Style**: Recognize the power of transformational leadership, fostering ongoing engagement and sustainable change (2.15).

- **Understand Cultural Change Takes Time**: Acknowledge the gradual nature of cultural change and commit to sustainable results through ongoing training and sensitization (2.15).
- **Foster Inclusive Environments**: Embody the values of transparency, openness, and respect, creating a culture of collaboration and trust among both external collaborators and internal staff (2.15).
- **Nurture Collective Spirit**: Disseminate a sense of unity and shared purpose among external actors and internal team members (2.15).
- **Empower Employees as Leaders**: Regard employees as leaders, encouraging self-management, engagement, ownership, and productivity (2.15).
- **Demonstrate Co-Leadership**: Facilitate co-leadership at team and management levels, making decisions through consensus and alignment (2.15).
- **Streamline Reporting:** Soften the reporting burden by implementing standardized reporting processes across the region (3.3).
- **Optimize Online Collaboration:** Learn and implement efficient online collaboration tools for seamless teamwork and version control (3.3).
- **Enhance File Management:** Use productivity and collaborative applications to keep files up to date and prevent versioning issues (3.3).
- **Promote Consistency:** Implement standardized reporting practices to ensure consistency and accuracy across the reporting period (3.3).
- **Optimize Resource Allocation**: Efficiently allocate human resources, ensuring essential roles are maintained for ongoing program management, and supplementing with experts and consultants as needed (3.4).
- **Leverage External Expertise**: Tap into specialized knowledge by involving experts and consultants to bridge critical knowledge gaps and enhance program effectiveness (3.4).
- **Flexibly Augment Staff**: Bolster the lean staff with a rotating team of experts and consultants, transforming fixed costs into variable costs while addressing specific needs (3.4).
- **Promote Knowledge Sharing**: Encourage teams to learn from interaction with senior experts and consultants, fostering a culture of continuous learning and growth (3.4).
- **Embrace Adaptive Staffing**: Emphasize the benefit of a seasonal team approach, allowing the FoF to adapt staffing levels to fluctuating demands without excess overhead (3.4).
- **Prioritize Time Management:** Implement effective time management strategies to navigate multi-country complexities and varying time zones (3.5).
- **Strategically Standardize Processes:** Gradually standardize and optimize processes to streamline operations and reduce after-hours work requirements (3.5).
- **Offer Professional Development:** Leverage the exposure to diverse experiences as a pathway for staff professional growth and advancement (3.5).
- **Cultivate Passionate Team Members:** Seek team members who are genuinely passionate about the Gender Equality cause to maintain motivation and dedication (3.5).
- **Create Flexible Work Arrangements:** Explore flexible work arrangements that accommodate team members across different time zones (3.5).
- **Embrace Virtual Collaboration Tools:** Leverage technology and virtual collaboration tools to facilitate seamless communication and reduce time constraints (3.5).
- **Assess Partnership Dynamics:** Regularly evaluate the effectiveness and mutual benefit of long-term partnerships to ensure alignment with evolving program goals (3.7).

- **Embrace Flexibility:** Consider adopting a flexible approach to partnerships, allowing for periodic contract re-evaluation and adjustment (3.7).
- **Facilitate Regular Communication:** Maintain open and transparent communication with partners to discuss expectations, outcomes, and potential contract modifications (3.7).
- **Strengthen Accountability:** Develop clear performance metrics and regular reporting mechanisms to ensure partners remain committed and accountable (3.7).
- **Diversify Partnership Models:** Explore hybrid partnership models that combine long-term relationships with periodic re-validation to strike a balance (3.7).
- **Implement Performance Reviews:** Conduct annual or biennial partnership performance reviews to objectively assess contributions and identify areas for improvement (3.7).
- **Explore Competitive Approaches:** Periodically introduce competitive mechanisms, such as Request for Proposals (RFPs), to attract fresh perspectives and innovative ideas (3.7).
- **Prioritize Value Alignment:** Seek partners who align closely with program values and objectives, fostering meaningful collaboration and shared commitment (3.7).
- **Promote Shared Responsibilities:** Define clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations within partnerships to ensure both parties actively contribute to program success (3.7).
- **Reaffirm Shared Vision:** Regularly revisit and reconfirm the shared vision and goals with long-term partners to maintain a strong sense of purpose and motivation (3.7).
- **Strategize Communication Approach:** Deliberate on whether to centralize or distribute communication efforts, prioritizing expertise to maintain the delicate balance to prevent potential political sensitivities that could impact FoF's relations with donors and host governments (3.9).
- **Strengthen Corporate Communications:** Harness the power of effective corporate communications to enhance program credibility and expand reach, targeting a broader audience for increased impact (3.9).
- **Facilitate Online Communities:** Create and nurture online communities or groups centered around key program themes, encouraging discussion and knowledge sharing (3.9).
- **Emphasize Regular Updates:** Maintain a consistent posting schedule to keep stakeholders informed, interested, and connected to the program's progress (3.9).
- **Respond and Engage:** Actively respond to comments, questions, and messages on social media to foster two-way communication and strengthen relationships (3.9).
- **Elevate Unified Nature of the Program:** Convey the singular program nature that spans across diverse countries, each with its own pace of progress, yet united under a shared Logic Model and Theory of Change umbrella. Showcase this cohesive approach in all communications and reports to prevent misunderstandings and achieve clarity (3.10).
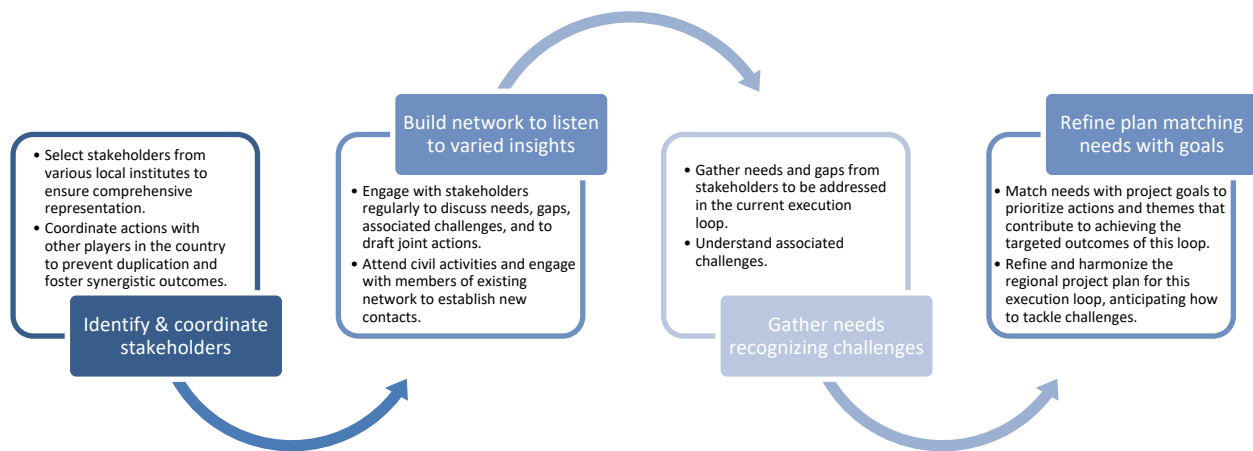
DESCRIPTION

Steps 3, 4, 5, and 6 are integral part of the Roadmap *Execution Loop* and will be continuously repeated throughout the program duration. In Step 3, the program dedicates time to understand what the current execution loop (or cycle) should address in order to maximize adherence to local needs and thereby improve the effectiveness of the program. The careful selection of stakeholders from diverse institutes ensures a comprehensive representation. Coordinating plans with other national and international organizations in the countries prevents duplication of efforts and fosters synergistic outcomes. Regular engagement with stakeholders facilitates discussions on joint actions and keeps all parties informed of progress and updates. Participating in civil activities leverages existing networks to establish new contacts and expand the program's reach, enabling active listening and the incorporation of diverse perspectives. Once insights on needs, gaps, and challenges are gathered from each country, they need to be harmonized and prioritized for the region, considering actions and themes that will contribute to the achievement of desired outcomes in the current execution loop.

SUGGESTED PROCESS

Identify & coordinate stakeholders
- Select stakeholders from various local institutes to ensure comprehensive representation.
- Coordinate actions with other players in the country to prevent duplication and foster synergistic outcomes.

Build network to listen to varied insights
- Engage with stakeholders regularly to discuss needs, gaps, associated challenges, and to draft joint actions.
- Attend civil activities and engage with members of existing network to establish new contacts.

Gather needs recognizing challenges
- Gather needs and gaps from stakeholders to be addressed in the current execution loop.
- Understand associated challenges.

Refine plan matching needs with goals
- Match needs with project goals to prioritize actions and themes that contribute to achieving the targeted outcomes of this loop.
- Refine and harmonize the regional project plan for this execution loop, anticipating how to tackle challenges.

PRIMARY REMINDERS

- Build bridges and find common ground to solve common problems during sessions. Convey a clear message that there is no competition between men and women, but rather a focus on collaborative work and equal opportunities.
- Maintain a diplomatic approach when explaining to stakeholders why certain requests may be declined, ensuring ongoing engagement, and preserving relationships. Networks should be safeguarded at all times.

EXPANDED REMINDERS

This section serves as a cross-reference based on Success Factors and Lessons Learned, so anticipate some repetition. For more details, please refer to the item number in parentheses at the end of each sentence.

- **Follow Pioneers of Gender Equality**: Embrace an approach championed by advocates of gender equality and pioneers in the field, ensuring that women are equipped with the necessary tools to assert their rights and drive positive change (2.4).
- **Encourage Open Dialogue:** Promote open dialogue among women, allowing them to share thoughts and strategies for positive change without hesitation. Encouraging externalized thoughts enhances advantages and mitigates disadvantages (2.5).
- **Demonstrate Genuine Commitment:** Display genuine dedication to beneficiaries' success by offering personalized attention through evaluations, interviews, mentorship, and ongoing support. This commitment fosters positive participant engagement (2.5).
- **Foster Belonging and Engagement:** Cultivate a sense of belonging and engagement, emphasizing collective efforts and a shared purpose among participants to create a strong and unified learning community (2.5).
- **Embrace Beneficiary Diversity:** While many agencies target homogenous groups, the FoF's beneficiaries are heterogeneous, representing varying education levels and social classes across different locations (2.6).
- **Nurture Long-Term Relationships:** Foster long-term connections with beneficiaries, starting from training and extending indefinitely. Accompaniment enhances program effectiveness, providing support within real-world contexts (2.6).
- **Empower Future Leaders:** Prioritize youth engagement, offering post-training mentorship to equip young leaders with practical tools for application in their unique realities (2.6).
- **Cultivate Networking Opportunities:** Provide networking platforms for beneficiaries to connect, fostering synergies among like-minded individuals across countries. Grant access to established women whose success stories inspire and unite (2.6).
- **Sustain Beneficiary Engagement:** Maintain beneficiary engagement through organized encounters, continuous follow-ups, and social media promotion, ensuring an active and energized network (2.6).
- **Leverage Regional Representatives:** In informal economies, involve trained women as unofficial regional representatives. They act as volunteer coordinators, extending program reach and augmenting the lean team (2.6).
- **Harness Representative Feedback:** Utilize these representatives of involved parties to enhance program awareness, track progress, and gather valuable feedback through post-session questionnaires and training evaluations (2.6).
- **Collaborate with Coordinating Bodies:** Collaborate closely with government coordinating bodies and local implementing partners in each country for successful program delivery (2.7).
- **Forge Strategic Partnerships:** Establish strategic partnerships with NGOs/CSOs, regional, and international experts, aligning activities with program goals (2.7).
- **Empower Local Contextualization:** Empower country leaders to define the nuanced meaning of Gender Equality within their contexts, tailoring the program to local perspectives without imposing a singular vision (2.13).

- **Cultivate Feminist Leadership:** Cultivate collective national feminist transformational leadership, centering on local women's voices and igniting broad, deep, and impactful social change (2.13).
- **Expand Reach and Engagement:** Foster a spiral of growth and engagement, expanding the program's reach with each new cycle and involving an increasing number of participants (2.13).
- **Leverage Relationship Assets:** Capitalize on the relationship assets brought by country leaders, leveraging their extensive networks of local activists and experts (2.13).
- **Amplify Local Influence:** Harness the influence of country leaders within the local society, amplifying their recognition and engagement in advancing Gender Equality and Women's Leadership (2.13).
- **Active Involvement of Local Experts:** Encourage the active involvement of local activists and experts to bolster the program's momentum and effectiveness (2.13).
- **Build Trust and Impact:** Utilize country leaders' reputation and commitment to build trust and gain traction, further enhancing the program's impact (2.13).
- **Embrace a Transformational Leadership Style**: Recognize the power of transformational leadership, fostering ongoing engagement and sustainable change (2.15).
- **Understand Cultural Change Takes Time**: Acknowledge the gradual nature of cultural change and commit to sustainable results through ongoing training and sensitization (2.15).
- **Foster Inclusive Environments**: Embody the values of transparency, openness, and respect, creating a culture of collaboration and trust among both external collaborators and internal staff (2.15).
- **Nurture Collective Spirit**: Disseminate a sense of unity and shared purpose among external actors and internal team members (2.15).
- **Leverage Remote Tools:** Utilize remote tools as a natural and cost-effective means to expand program outreach and engagement (3.1).
- **Enhance Digital Literacy:** Capitalize on intensified digital platform usage to educate women on becoming digitally literate (3.1).
- **Review Existing Commitments:** Periodically review ongoing engagements to ensure they remain relevant, effective, and aligned with evolving program needs (3.8).
- **Promote Transparent Communication:** Clearly communicate the prioritization process to all stakeholders, fostering understanding and support (3.8).
- **Prioritize Strategic Engagements**: With growing recognition, various stakeholders seek involvement. Select engagements wisely, aligning with the goals to be attained and desired outcomes, given limited resources (3.8).
- **Prioritize Committed Beneficiaries**: Given the no-cost nature of women's trainings and their potential for broad participation, exercise careful selection to prioritize those deeply engaged in sustaining the cause (3.8).
- **Strengthen Corporate Communications:** Harness the power of effective corporate communications to enhance program credibility and expand reach, targeting a broader audience for increased impact (3.9).
- **Leverage Local Social Media:** Establish and maintain active profiles on local social media platforms to effectively engage with target audiences in their preferred languages (3.9).
- **Customize Local Content**: Craft culturally relevant and context-specific material for local social media audiences, catering to their distinct needs and interests (3.9).

- **Facilitate Online Communities:** Create and nurture online communities or groups centered around key program themes, encouraging discussion and knowledge sharing (3.9).
- **Harness Word-of-Mouth:** Encourage program beneficiaries and advocates to share their experiences and insights on social media, leveraging the power of word-of-mouth (3.9).
- **Track Engagement Metrics:** Regularly monitor social media analytics to assess engagement levels, reach, and audience demographics, adjusting strategies accordingly (3.9).
- **Incorporate Visual Storytelling:** Utilize visuals, infographics, and videos to effectively communicate program impact and success stories on social media (3.9).
- **Emphasize Regular Updates:** Maintain a consistent posting schedule to keep stakeholders informed, interested, and connected to the program's progress (3.9).
- **Respond and Engage:** Actively respond to comments, questions, and messages on social media to foster two-way communication and strengthen relationships (3.9).
- **Elevate Unified Nature of the Program:** Convey the singular program nature that spans across diverse countries, each with its own pace of progress, yet united under a shared Logic Model and Theory of Change umbrella. Showcase this cohesive approach in all communications and reports to prevent misunderstandings and achieve clarity (3.10).

4.4   Step 4: **Build & Manage Partnerships**

DESCRIPTION

Steps 4, along with 3, 5, and 6, are part of the Roadmap *Execution Loop*, and will be repeated over and over again until the end of the program. In Step 4, the purpose is to build partnerships that will enable the resolution of the prioritized needs and gaps, ultimately leading to the achievement of the desired outcomes within the current execution loop. Government partnerships are formed or strengthened with newly elected and existing leaders to ensure their active engagement and mutual collaboration with the FoF program. A steering committee, comprising representatives from both the host and doner governments, is established to ensure alignment, transparency, and accountability for the program. The FoF shares previous loop trends and results and presents the plan for the next loop, allowing for inputs and recommendations. After identifying and agreeing on the required pool of expertise for this execution loop, implementing partners are engaged in the specific activities. The FoF carefully selects reputable implementing partners and experts in the sector. Using a participative approach, these partners actively contribute to the design of training initiatives, utilizing materials from previous courses conducted in the region. Synergies among countries are identified, and academies are replicated whenever applicable.

SUGGESTED PROCESS
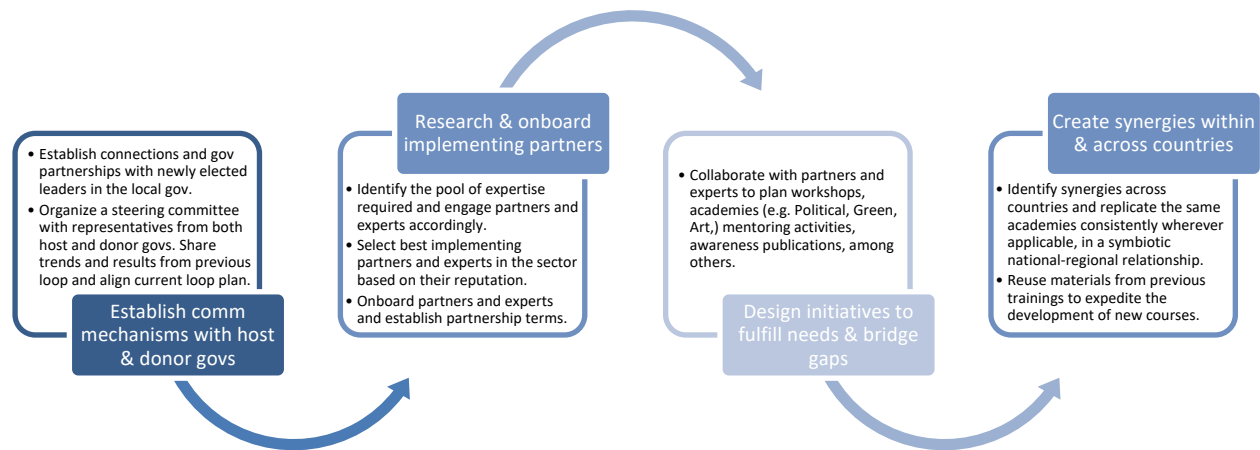
PRIMARY REMINDERS

- Allow implementing partners to fully utilize their potential through a participatory approach, welcoming them as an extension of the staff.
- Promote knowledge sharing and leverage experiences across countries to accelerate program maturity. Reuse and repurpose existing materials to accelerate the training design phase.
- Adopt a Training of Trainers (ToT) approach with partners to swiftly engage more stakeholders.
- Standardize agreements in the local language to expedite contract processes and ensure compliance with donor policies, while also allowing for customization to comply with country policies.

EXPANDED REMINDERS

This section serves as a cross-reference based on Success Factors and Lessons Learned, so anticipate some repetition. For more details, please refer to the item number in parentheses at the end of each sentence.

- **Champion Practical Empowerment**: Adopt a pragmatic training approach that directly addresses participants' needs and resonates with their real-life challenges. The content of the trainings equips women with practical tools to navigate their immediate environments, aligning with local requirements (2.4).
- **Empower with Purpose**: Do not only bridges gaps but also builds on women's strengths, providing them with actionable knowledge that empowers them to make a positive impact in their communities. The program encourages women to assert themselves in discussions, navigate crises, and engage in various roles within society (2.4).
- **Equip for Change**: Empower women with the skills they need to navigate various aspects of public life, from advocating for themselves and approaching voters to crafting policies and handling budgets. Help women find their roles in society and become active agents of change (2.4).
- **Tailor Training for Impact**: Embrace a customized training approach that recognizes the diverse needs of participants. By tailoring the training sessions, you ensure that women are equipped with the tools and knowledge necessary to drive meaningful change (2.4).
- **Engage Women in Decision-Making**: Implement training sessions that integrate women into decision-making processes, equipping them with the mechanisms to actively participate and contribute effectively (2.4).
- **Cultivate Empowerment**: Progress women through empowerment phases that culminate in identifying risks and achieving goals. Foster self-awareness to recognize areas for growth and development (2.4).
- **Follow Pioneers of Gender Equality**: Embrace an approach championed by advocates of gender equality and pioneers in the field, ensuring that women are equipped with the necessary tools to assert their rights and drive positive change (2.4).
- **Collaborate with Coordinating Bodies:** Collaborate closely with government coordinating bodies and local implementing partners in each country for successful program delivery (2.7).
- **Forge Strategic Partnerships:** Establish strategic partnerships with NGOs/CSOs, regional, and international experts, aligning activities with program goals (2.7).
- **Leverage Partner Expertise:** Enhance program effectiveness by integrating tailored activities into partners' existing programs, leveraging their expertise when appropriate (2.7).
- **Select Partners Wisely:** Carefully choose committed partners and experts based on convictions and complementary skills, fostering long-term, mutually beneficial relationships (2.7).
- **Prioritize Competence:** Ensure selection of competent professionals as experts, recognizing their role in representing and building stakeholder trust (2.7).
- **Foster Collaborative Approach:** Cultivate a participative approach with partners and experts, creating a culture of collaboration and enthusiasm for working as a team (2.7).
- **Promote Continuous Learning:** Facilitate ongoing learning among partners and experts, allowing them to customize trainings, share experiences, and contribute to amplified group learning (2.7).

- **Maximize Collateral Use:** Repurpose existing materials to accelerate production and enhance the quality of similar resources across different countries (2.7).
- **Provide Ongoing Technical Support:** Offer partners continuous technical support and engage in joint reflection to align activities with defined objectives (2.7).
- **Implement Results-Based Management (RBM):** Use RBM methodology to monitor indicators, measure outcomes, and assess the impact of program activities (2.11).
- **Analyze Trends for Improvement:** Analyze trends and results to inform programmatic decisions and strategic planning, ensuring continuous improvement (2.11).
- **Maintain Focused Goals:** Maintain clear and focused goals to minimize distractions and facilitate progress towards desired outcomes (2.11).
- **Refresh Measurements Periodically:** Periodically refresh measurements for reports to stay on track, promptly address deviations, and manage timeframe and budget constraints (2.11).
- **Collaborate for Data Collection:** Collaborate with implementing partners to collect data, populate standard performance parameters, and generate comprehensive reports (2.11).
- **Streamline Consolidation Process:** Streamline the consolidation process through diligent coordination, optimized processes, and gradually automated monitoring instruments (2.11).
- **Guide for Data Collection:** Provide guidance and close support to partners to ensure high-quality and consistent data collection across countries (2.11).
- **Develop Flexible Financial Model:** Develop a flexible financial model compliant with diverse country policies and donor requirements, encompassing employment, payment, reimbursement, and commercial aspects (2.11).
- **Enhance Communication with Multilingual Accountant:** Enhance communication by hiring a multilingual accountant proficient in languages spoken in the program region (2.11).
- **Assess Quantitatively and Qualitatively:** Employ both quantitative and qualitative assessment methods, utilizing qualitative reports to understand program impact beyond activities and figures (2.11).
- **Gauge Satisfaction and Testimonials:** Gauge beneficiaries' satisfaction through questionnaires and collect and analyze testimonials to evaluate program impact (2.11).
- **Capture Transformation Stories:** Utilize the Most Significant Changes (MSC) approach to capture and narrate beneficiaries' transformation stories, focusing on various levels of change (2.11).
- **Focus on Impactful Outcomes:** Foster long-lasting results for beneficiaries by emphasizing impactful outcomes rather than solely delivering activities (2.11).
- **Empower Local Contextualization:** Empower country leaders to define the nuanced meaning of Gender Equality within their contexts, tailoring the program to local perspectives without imposing a singular vision (2.13).
- **Cultivate Feminist Leadership:** Cultivate collective national feminist transformational leadership, centering on local women's voices and igniting broad, deep, and impactful social change (2.13).
- **Expand Reach and Engagement:** Foster a spiral of growth and engagement, expanding the program's reach with each new cycle and involving an increasing number of participants (2.13).
- **Leverage Relationship Assets:** Capitalize on the relationship assets brought by country leaders, leveraging their extensive networks of local activists and experts (2.13).

- **Amplify Local Influence:** Harness the influence of country leaders within the local society, amplifying their recognition and engagement in advancing Gender Equality and Women's Leadership (2.13).
- **Active Involvement of Local Experts:** Encourage the active involvement of local activists and experts to bolster the program's momentum and effectiveness (2.13).
- **Build Trust and Impact:** Utilize country leaders' reputation and commitment to build trust and gain traction, further enhancing the program's impact (2.13).
- **Embrace a Transformational Leadership Style**: Recognize the power of transformational leadership, fostering ongoing engagement and sustainable change (2.15).
- **Understand Cultural Change Takes Time**: Acknowledge the gradual nature of cultural change and commit to sustainable results through ongoing training and sensitization (2.15).
- **Foster Inclusive Environments**: Embody the values of transparency, openness, and respect, creating a culture of collaboration and trust among both external collaborators and internal staff (2.15).
- **Nurture Collective Spirit**: Disseminate a sense of unity and shared purpose among external actors and internal team members (2.15).
- **Empower Employees as Leaders**: Regard employees as leaders, encouraging self-management, engagement, ownership, and productivity (2.15).
- **Demonstrate Co-Leadership**: Facilitate co-leadership at team and management levels, making decisions through consensus and alignment (2.15).
- **Leverage Remote Tools:** Utilize remote tools as a natural and cost-effective means to expand program outreach and engagement (3.1).
- **Enhance Digital Literacy:** Capitalize on intensified digital platform usage to educate women on becoming digitally literate (3.1).
- **Pre-Approve Templates for Efficiency:** Save time during negotiations by pre-approving partnership agreement templates compliant with national rules (3.2).
- **Streamline Financial Oversight:** Standardize financial reports with proper controls to facilitate audits and reduce time spent on financial reporting (3.2).
- **Ensure Consistent Reporting:** Request partners to collect the same set of indicators and outcomes using standardized templates, saving time during regional consolidation (3.2).
- **Enhance Consistency and Maturity:** Adopt the same templates and standards to ensure consistency across the region and raise the program's maturity level in new countries (3.2).
- **Promote Continuous Improvement:** Implement a continuous improvement process to regularly re-evaluate tools and enhance program implementation (3.2).
- **Streamline Reporting:** Soften the reporting burden by implementing standardized reporting processes across the region (3.3).
- **Share Data Collection Responsibility:** Transfer some data collection responsibilities to partners to distribute the workload and improve accuracy (3.3).
- **Optimize Online Collaboration:** Learn and implement efficient online collaboration tools for seamless teamwork and version control (3.3).
- **Enhance File Management:** Use productivity and collaborative applications to keep files up to date and prevent versioning issues (3.3).
- **Monitor Progress:** Track reporting efficiency over time to observe the reduction in reporting time from the first year to subsequent years (3.3).

- **Ensure Reporting Continuous Improvement:** Maintain a focus on continuous improvement in reporting processes based on lessons learned (3.3).
- **Promote Consistency:** Implement standardized reporting practices to ensure consistency and accuracy across the reporting period (3.3).
- **Leverage Knowledge Base:** Harness the potential of the knowledge base by actively using and updating external-facing training collateral (3.6).
- **Maximize Content Repurposing:** Strategically repurpose existing materials to serve evolving needs and expand the program's impact (3.6).
- **Encourage Continuous Learning:** Foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement by revisiting and enhancing training content regularly (3.6).
- **Promote Document Accessibility:** Ensure easy access to the knowledge base for beneficiaries and partners to facilitate self-paced learning and growth (3.6).
- **Enhance Content Quality:** Implement a feedback loop to gather insights from users and experts, refining content for greater effectiveness (3.6).
- **Diversify Content Formats:** Explore innovative ways to present content, such as interactive modules or multimedia resources, to engage learners (3.6).
- **Expand Collaborative Contributions:** Encourage partners and beneficiaries to contribute to the knowledge base, enriching it with diverse perspectives (3.6).
- **Integrate Local Context:** Tailor existing materials to suit local contexts, enhancing relevance and resonance with beneficiaries (3.6).
- **Track Content Utilization:** Monitor the usage and impact of knowledge base resources to inform future content development strategies (3.6).
- **Engage in Collaborative Planning:** Collaborate with partners to co-create engagement plans that maximize their contributions and align with program objectives (3.8).
- **Leverage Synergies:** Prioritize engagements that foster synergies between partners, enhancing their collective ability to create lasting impact (3.8).
- **Review Existing Commitments:** Periodically review ongoing engagements to ensure they remain relevant, effective, and aligned with evolving program needs (3.8).
- **Promote Transparent Communication:** Clearly communicate the prioritization process to all stakeholders, fostering understanding and support (3.8).
- **Prioritize Strategic Engagements**: With growing recognition, various stakeholders seek involvement. Select engagements wisely, aligning with the goals to be attained and desired outcomes, given limited resources (3.8).
- **Cultivate Communication Partnerships:** Collaborate with local partners to amplify program messages and materials through their established social media channels (3.9).
- **Customize Local Content**: Craft culturally relevant and context-specific material for local social media audiences, catering to their distinct needs and interests (3.9).
- **Harness Word-of-Mouth:** Encourage program beneficiaries and advocates to share their experiences and insights on social media, leveraging the power of word-of-mouth (3.9).
- **Track Engagement Metrics:** Regularly monitor social media analytics to assess engagement levels, reach, and audience demographics, adjusting strategies accordingly (3.9).

- **Incorporate Visual Storytelling:** Utilize visuals, infographics, and videos to effectively communicate program impact and success stories on social media (3.9).
- **Emphasize Regular Updates:** Maintain a consistent posting schedule to keep stakeholders informed, interested, and connected to the program's progress (3.9).
- **Respond and Engage:** Actively respond to comments, questions, and messages on social media to foster two-way communication and strengthen relationships (3.9).
- **Elevate Unified Nature of the Program:** Convey the singular program nature that spans across diverse countries, each with its own pace of progress, yet united under a shared Logic Model and Theory of Change umbrella. Showcase this cohesive approach in all communications and reports to prevent misunderstandings and achieve clarity (3.10).
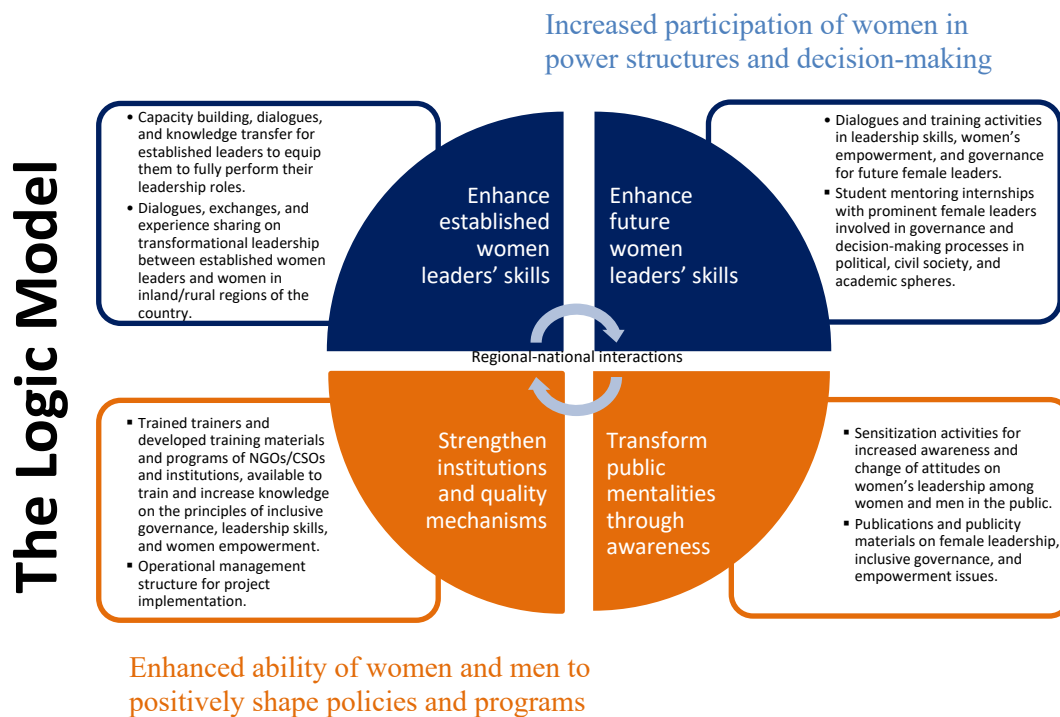
DESCRIPTION

Step 5, in conjunction with steps 3, 4, and 6, constitute the iterative Roadmap *Execution Loop*, continuing throughout the program until its completion. Steps 3, 4, and 6 encase Step 5, which is purely the Logic Model execution. The figure below was created based on the Logic Model and illustrates the four dimensions of activities that the MENA Project adopted to advance women's inclusiveness in governance: the first and second concentrate on enhancing the leadership skills of both established and future leaders; the third focuses on the transformation of public mentality through awareness initiatives; and the fourth centers on the strengthening of institutions and quality mechanisms. The four dimensions in the Logic Model whirl are incessantly being executed, as indicated by the arrows at the center of the figure, and national-regional back-and-forth interaction constantly stimulated. Regional activities create a space for meaningful discussions and the sharing of experiences and knowledge. This, in turn, fosters mutual learning at the regional level, which contributes to building capacity at the national level.

SUGGESTED PROCESS

The Logic Model

Increased participation of women in power structures and decision-making

- Capacity building, dialogues, and knowledge transfer for established leaders to equip them to fully perform their leadership roles.
- Dialogues, exchanges, and experience sharing on transformational leadership between established women leaders and women in inland/rural regions of the country.

Enhance established women leaders' skills

Enhance future women leaders' skills

- Dialogues and training activities in leadership skills, women's empowerment, and governance for future female leaders.
- Student mentoring internships with prominent female leaders involved in governance and decision-making processes in political, civil society, and academic spheres.

Regional-national interactions

- Trained trainers and developed training materials and programs of NGOs/CSOs and institutions, available to train and increase knowledge on the principles of inclusive governance, leadership skills, and women empowerment.
- Operational management structure for project implementation.

Strengthen institutions and quality mechanisms

Transform public mentalities through awareness

- Sensitization activities for increased awareness and change of attitudes on women's leadership among women and men in the public.
- Publications and publicity materials on female leadership, inclusive governance, and empowerment issues.

Enhanced ability of women and men to positively shape policies and programs

PRIMARY REMINDERS

- Select future female leaders from unions, civil service, political parties, students… Prioritize those who are willing to run for election, impactful women, and elected women.
- Nurture relationships with beneficiaries by following up on progress, collecting feedback from training and mentoring sessions. As beneficiaries transition into leadership roles, they become valuable allies,

and many may require ongoing support. Extend invitations to previously trained beneficiaries for additional trainings, either at the national or international level, to keep them on the move in a continuous learning and development cycle.

- Catalyze networking and create a trustworthy space for dialogue. In certain cultures, women may not have the opportunity to establish networks and make essential contacts for politics and leadership.

- Adopt an engaging approach in trainings by leveraging a diverse range of audiovisual media, including theatre, testimonials, podcasts, broadcasts, cartoons, short movies, conferences at universities, and local folklore. Utilize these resources to effectively convey culturally sensitive information on Gender Equality, making it accessible to diverse audiences.

- Launch academies, which is a methodology for training aspiring women leaders on leadership themes such as Political, Green, and Arts. The Political Academy, for example, initiated by the FoF in the three countries and targeting women members of political parties, enhances their capacities, and equips them with the skills and means to contribute to and influence partisan activities in a profound political sense. This initiative also aims to institutionalize equality at the territorial level, proving timely and encouraging women's participation in the political sphere.

- Create awareness by promoting papers authored by universities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or civil society organizations (CSOs,) as part of the influencing mix. Also utilize social media platforms to promote program activities, success stories, productions. Implement various communication strategies to amplify visibility on the program outcomes. Without awareness of the program results and impact, people are unable to recognize its true value.

- Use both top-down and bottom-up approaches to sensitize institutions. Start by obtaining endorsement from top management to facilitate engagement at all levels. For instance, highlight the program's benefits to the academic institution's dean, such as increased credibility, accountability, and potential improvement in university rankings. Then invite a small group of administrative beneficiaries and leverage their positive feedback to persuade managers to involve others in subsequent trainings, thus creating a ripple effect of participation and engagement.

- Find common ground amidst geographical, cultural, ideological differences. Interactions can become strained and confrontational when people hold different perspectives. That poses one of the most significant challenges in politics, reason why dialogue and negotiation skills are essential. By having the ability to argue and a willingness to listen, people can come, if not to a consensus, at least to an agreement. Understand the underlying reasons for resistance to Gender Equality and address them with persuasive rationale. Avoid overwhelming people with vanguard ideas that they may not be prepared to accept, and in which they do not believe.

- Consolidate educational tools and materials to leverage the knowledge acquired throughout the program's lifespan, ensuring sustainability.

EXPANDED REMINDERS

This section serves as a cross-reference based on Success Factors and Lessons Learned, so anticipate some repetition. For more details, please refer to the item number in parentheses at the end of each sentence.

- **Create a Multifaceted Program:** Surround the central theme with diverse dimensions, including political, legal, social, financial, and cultural aspects, for a content-rich program (2.2).
- **Promote Positive Change through Capacity Building:** Highlight noteworthy examples of capacity building, such as the Political Academy and Transformational Leadership, to foster positive change across stakeholders (2.2).
- **Empower with Comprehensive Training:** Extend women training programs beyond hard skills. Provide sections that encompass essential soft skills. Emphasize self-exploration within a training-action framework to boost self-esteem and enable gender-integrated leadership (2.2).
- **Enhance Accessibility of Trainings:** Ensure trainings utilize simple language and content that all beneficiaries, including youngsters, can easily comprehend. Use everyday language in the local dialect and avoid complex vocabulary to engage a wider audience (2.3).
- **Promote Interactive Learning:** Adopt a participatory training approach that fosters equality between trainers and trainees. Encourage lively and interactive sessions resembling friendly coffee shop conversations. Integrate techniques like brainstorming, group discussions, case studies, and peer-to-peer learning (2.3).
- **Celebrate Local Culture:** Embrace and showcase local culture by integrating regional productions. Leverage women's interests, such as singing or acting in theater, to create a diverse and engaging learning experience. Encourage artistic expression to foster connections and camaraderie among participants (2.3).
- **Champion Practical Empowerment**: Adopt a pragmatic training approach that directly addresses participants' needs and resonates with their real-life challenges. The content of the trainings equips women with practical tools to navigate their immediate environments, aligning with local requirements (2.4).
- **Empower with Purpose**: Do not only bridges gaps but also builds on women's strengths, providing them with actionable knowledge that empowers them to make a positive impact in their communities. The program encourages women to assert themselves in discussions, navigate crises, and engage in various roles within society (2.4).
- **Equip for Change**: Empower women with the skills they need to navigate various aspects of public life, from advocating for themselves and approaching voters to crafting policies and handling budgets. Help women find their roles in society and become active agents of change (2.4).
- **Tailor Training for Impact**: Embrace a customized training approach that recognizes the diverse needs of participants. By tailoring the training sessions, you ensure that women are equipped with the tools and knowledge necessary to drive meaningful change (2.4).
- **Engage Women in Decision-Making**: Implement training sessions that integrate women into decision-making processes, equipping them with the mechanisms to actively participate and contribute effectively (2.4).
- **Cultivate Empowerment**: Progress women through empowerment phases that culminate in identifying risks and achieving goals. Foster self-awareness to recognize areas for growth and development (2.4).

- **Follow Pioneers of Gender Equality**: Embrace an approach championed by advocates of gender equality and pioneers in the field, ensuring that women are equipped with the necessary tools to assert their rights and drive positive change (2.4).
- **Cultivate Inclusive Learning Environment:** Foster an inclusive learning environment, free from student-teacher barriers. Embrace equality regardless of age, gender, titles, social positions, or academic backgrounds (2.5).
- **Establish Safe and Supportive Spaces:** Create a secure oasis-like setting, particularly in traditional societies where women lack private platforms for gender discussions. This safe space inspires women to freely share feelings, thoughts, and ideas for positive change (2.5).
- **Encourage Open Dialogue:** Promote open dialogue among women, allowing them to share thoughts and strategies for positive change without hesitation. Encouraging externalized thoughts enhances advantages and mitigates disadvantages (2.5).
- **Demonstrate Genuine Commitment:** Display genuine dedication to beneficiaries' success by offering personalized attention through evaluations, interviews, mentorship, and ongoing support. This commitment fosters positive participant engagement (2.5).
- **Foster Belonging and Engagement:** Cultivate a sense of belonging and engagement, emphasizing collective efforts and a shared purpose among participants to create a strong and unified learning community (2.5).
- **Embrace Beneficiary Diversity:** While many agencies target homogenous groups, the FoF's beneficiaries are heterogeneous, representing varying education levels and social classes across different locations (2.6).
- **Nurture Long-Term Relationships:** Foster long-term connections with beneficiaries, starting from training and extending indefinitely. Accompaniment enhances program effectiveness, providing support within real-world contexts (2.6).
- **Empower Future Leaders:** Prioritize youth engagement, offering post-training mentorship to equip young leaders with practical tools for application in their unique realities (2.6).
- **Cultivate Networking Opportunities:** Provide networking platforms for beneficiaries to connect, fostering synergies among like-minded individuals across countries. Grant access to established women whose success stories inspire and unite (2.6).
- **Sustain Beneficiary Engagement:** Maintain beneficiary engagement through organized encounters, continuous follow-ups, and social media promotion, ensuring an active and energized network (2.6).
- **Leverage Regional Representatives:** In informal economies, involve trained women as unofficial regional representatives. They act as volunteer coordinators, extending program reach and augmenting the lean team (2.6).
- **Harness Representative Feedback:** Utilize these representatives of involved parties to enhance program awareness, track progress, and gather valuable feedback through post-session questionnaires and training evaluations (2.6).
- **Implement Results-Based Management (RBM):** Use RBM methodology to monitor indicators, measure outcomes, and assess the impact of program activities (2.11).
- **Analyze Trends for Improvement:** Analyze trends and results to inform programmatic decisions and strategic planning, ensuring continuous improvement (2.11).

- **Maintain Focused Goals:** Maintain clear and focused goals to minimize distractions and facilitate progress towards desired outcomes (2.11).
- **Refresh Measurements Periodically:** Periodically refresh measurements for reports to stay on track, promptly address deviations, and manage timeframe and budget constraints (2.11).
- **Collaborate for Data Collection:** Collaborate with implementing partners to collect data, populate standard performance parameters, and generate comprehensive reports (2.11).
- **Streamline Consolidation Process:** Streamline the consolidation process through diligent coordination, optimized processes, and gradually automated monitoring instruments (2.11).
- **Guide for Data Collection:** Provide guidance and close support to partners to ensure high-quality and consistent data collection across countries (2.11).
- **Assess Quantitatively and Qualitatively:** Employ both quantitative and qualitative assessment methods, utilizing qualitative reports to understand program impact beyond activities and figures (2.11).
- **Gauge Satisfaction and Testimonials:** Gauge beneficiaries' satisfaction through questionnaires and collect and analyze testimonials to evaluate program impact (2.11).
- **Capture Transformation Stories:** Utilize the Most Significant Changes (MSC) approach to capture and narrate beneficiaries' transformation stories, focusing on various levels of change (2.11).
- **Focus on Impactful Outcomes:** Foster long-lasting results for beneficiaries by emphasizing impactful outcomes rather than solely delivering activities (2.11).
- **Cultivate Feminist Leadership:** Cultivate collective national feminist transformational leadership, centering on local women's voices and igniting broad, deep, and impactful social change (2.13).
- **Expand Reach and Engagement:** Foster a spiral of growth and engagement, expanding the program's reach with each new cycle and involving an increasing number of participants (2.13).
- **Embrace a Transformational Leadership Style**: Recognize the power of transformational leadership, fostering ongoing engagement and sustainable change (2.15).
- **Understand Cultural Change Takes Time**: Acknowledge the gradual nature of cultural change and commit to sustainable results through ongoing training and sensitization (2.15).
- **Foster Inclusive Environments**: Embody the values of transparency, openness, and respect, creating a culture of collaboration and trust among both external collaborators and internal staff (2.15).
- **Nurture Collective Spirit**: Disseminate a sense of unity and shared purpose among external actors and internal team members (2.15).
- **Empower Employees as Leaders**: Regard employees as leaders, encouraging self-management, engagement, ownership, and productivity (2.15).
- **Demonstrate Co-Leadership**: Facilitate co-leadership at team and management levels, making decisions through consensus and alignment (2.15).
- **Adapt to Changing Circumstances:** Replace in-person meetings with online sessions to ensure program continuity during adversities and adhere to safety measures (3.1).
- **Highlight Flexibility for Resilience:** Recognize the risk of crises diverting focus and emphasize the importance of a malleable methodology to navigate contextual changes effectively (3.1).
- **Empower Through Accessible Knowledge:** Address urgent needs by providing accessible knowledge materials for women's empowerment in both regular times and crises (3.1).

- **Overcome Challenges:** Address challenges such as limited beneficiary access to communication tools and partners' learning curve (3.1).
- **Leverage Remote Tools:** Utilize remote tools as a natural and cost-effective means to expand program outreach and engagement (3.1).
- **Enhance Digital Literacy:** Capitalize on intensified digital platform usage to educate women on becoming digitally literate (3.1).
- **Hybrid Approach for Comprehensive Learning:** Adopt a hybrid approach that combines in-person sessions with online training reinforcements, recognizing the continued need for face-to-face interactions (3.1).
- **Enhance Consistency and Maturity:** Adopt the same templates and standards to ensure consistency across the region and raise the program's maturity level in new countries (3.2).
- **Promote Continuous Improvement:** Implement a continuous improvement process to regularly re-evaluate tools and enhance program implementation (3.2).
- **Empower Beneficiaries' Coordinators:** Delegate post-session questionnaire data collection to beneficiaries' informal coordinators to alleviate reporting challenges, if allowed (3.3).
- **Optimize Online Collaboration:** Learn and implement efficient online collaboration tools for seamless teamwork and version control (3.3).
- **Enhance File Management:** Use productivity and collaborative applications to keep files up to date and prevent versioning issues (3.3).
- **Leverage Knowledge Base:** Harness the potential of the knowledge base by actively using and updating external-facing training collateral (3.6).
- **Promote Document Accessibility:** Ensure easy access to the knowledge base for beneficiaries and partners to facilitate self-paced learning and growth (3.6).
- **Enhance Content Quality:** Implement a feedback loop to gather insights from users and experts, refining content for greater effectiveness (3.6).
- **Diversify Content Formats:** Explore innovative ways to present content, such as interactive modules or multimedia resources, to engage learners (3.6).
- **Expand Collaborative Contributions:** Encourage partners and beneficiaries to contribute to the knowledge base, enriching it with diverse perspectives (3.6).
- **Integrate Local Context:** Tailor existing materials to suit local contexts, enhancing relevance and resonance with beneficiaries (3.6).
- **Track Content Utilization:** Monitor the usage and impact of knowledge base resources to inform future content development strategies (3.6).
- **Strengthen Corporate Communications:** Harness the power of effective corporate communications to enhance program credibility and expand reach, targeting a broader audience for increased impact (3.9).
- **Customize Local Content**: Craft culturally relevant and context-specific material for local social media audiences, catering to their distinct needs and interests (3.9).
- **Harness Word-of-Mouth:** Encourage program beneficiaries and advocates to share their experiences and insights on social media, leveraging the power of word-of-mouth (3.9).
- **Track Engagement Metrics:** Regularly monitor social media analytics to assess engagement levels, reach, and audience demographics, adjusting strategies accordingly (3.9).

- **Incorporate Visual Storytelling:** Utilize visuals, infographics, and videos to effectively communicate program impact and success stories on social media (3.9).
- **Emphasize Regular Updates:** Maintain a consistent posting schedule to keep stakeholders informed, interested, and connected to the program's progress (3.9).
- **Respond and Engage:** Actively respond to comments, questions, and messages on social media to foster two-way communication and strengthen relationships (3.9).
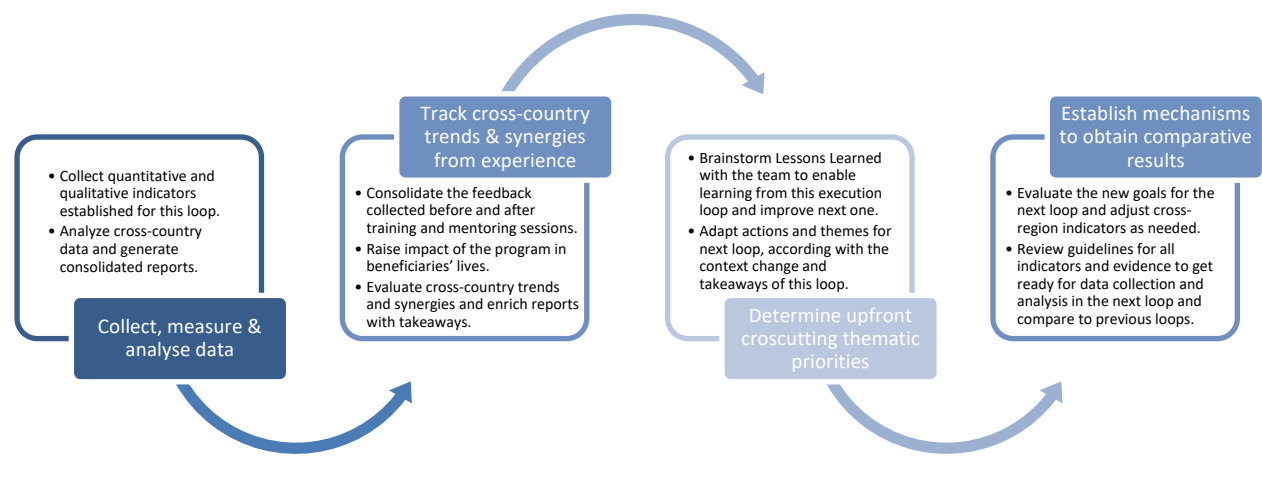
4.6 Step 6: **Evaluate Trends & Results**

DESCRIPTION

Steps 3 to 6 are continuously repeated during the program duration. In Step 6, the organization learns from the experience of the previous loop and strives to improve for the next iteration, embodying a progressive spiral. Based on the assessment of both quantitative and qualitative indicators and the change in context, the FoF evaluates the program impact and adjusts goals and themes. This iterative process is further reinforced in the new spiral spin, where needs are confirmed with stakeholders (Step 3,) and the revised plan is aligned with government partners and donor for their recommendations (Step 4.)

SUGGESTED PROCESS

Collect, measure & analyse data
- Collect quantitative and qualitative indicators established for this loop.
- Analyze cross-country data and generate consolidated reports.

Track cross-country trends & synergies from experience
- Consolidate the feedback collected before and after training and mentoring sessions.
- Raise impact of the program in beneficiaries' lives.
- Evaluate cross-country trends and synergies and enrich reports with takeaways.

Determine upfront croscutting thematic priorities
- Brainstorm Lessons Learned with the team to enable learning from this execution loop and improve next one.
- Adapt actions and themes for next loop, according with the context change and takeaways of this loop.

Establish mechanisms to obtain comparative results
- Evaluate the new goals for the next loop and adjust cross-region indicators as needed.
- Review guidelines for all indicators and evidence to get ready for data collection and analysis in the next loop and compare to previous loops.

PRIMARY REMINDERS

- Establish multiple levels of outcomes to aid in the process of clarifying what the program needs to accomplish. The table below shows the MENA Project outcomes, defined in the Logic Model:

MENA Project Logic Model Outcomes

ULTIMATE OUTCOME	Advanced inclusiveness in governance in the targeted MENA region			
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES	Increased participation of women in social, cultural, and political power structures and decision making.		Enhanced ability of women and men to positively shape governmental and non-governmental policies, programs, and activities that affect women's inclusion in social, cultural, and political spheres.	
IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES	Enhanced skills among existing women leaders to reinforce their capacity to support mechanisms for institutionalizing equality and increase their influence in decision-making processes.	Developed skills among the future generation of female leaders to assume leadership roles and participate in decision-making processes.	Increased awareness of Women's Leadership and empowerment among men and women.	Strengthened capacity of NGOs/CSOs and institutions to positively influence policies and programs for Women's Leadership to achieve inclusive governance.

- Gather testimonials from beneficiaries to capture the program's impact across different levels (individual, institutional, environmental, and collective.) While indicators focus on immediate outcomes, testimonials shed light on the intermediate outcomes, showcasing the broader results.
- Gather feedback and assess participants satisfaction to evaluate how the newly acquired skills and experience benefited their lives. Feedback is essential for shaping future activities, since the program ultimately aims to advance women's inclusion and empowerment in governance.

EXPANDED REMINDERS

This section serves as a cross-reference based on Success Factors and Lessons Learned, so anticipate some repetition. For more details, please refer to the item number in parentheses at the end of each sentence.

- **Foster Open Collaboration:** Build an open and collaborative relationship with donors and hosts, harmonizing visions (2.10).
- **Serve Interests:** Address interests of hosts, donors, and the FoF while maintaining a broader regional focus within the program (2.10).
- **Utilize Committees for Communication:** Use Steering Committees to communicate past results, share future plans, and gather recommendations for collaborative decision-making (2.10).
- **Strengthen Alignment through Reports:** Enhance alignment through periodical reports detailing outputs, outcomes, and impact with a blend of quantitative and qualitative indicators (2.10).
- **Common Measurements for Regional Focus:** Use a common set of measurements across all countries to enable regional consolidation (2.10).
- **Implement Results-Based Management (RBM):** Use RBM methodology to monitor indicators, measure outcomes, and assess the impact of program activities (2.11).
- **Analyze Trends for Improvement:** Analyze trends and results to inform programmatic decisions and strategic planning, ensuring continuous improvement (2.11).
- **Maintain Focused Goals:** Maintain clear and focused goals to minimize distractions and facilitate progress towards desired outcomes (2.11).
- **Refresh Measurements Periodically:** Periodically refresh measurements for reports to stay on track, promptly address deviations, and manage timeframe and budget constraints (2.11).
- **Collaborate for Data Collection:** Collaborate with implementing partners to collect data, populate standard performance parameters, and generate comprehensive reports (2.11).
- **Streamline Consolidation Process:** Streamline the consolidation process through diligent coordination, optimized processes, and gradually automated monitoring instruments (2.11).
- **Guide for Data Collection:** Provide guidance and close support to partners to ensure high-quality and consistent data collection across countries (2.11).
- **Develop Flexible Model:** Develop a flexible business model compliant with diverse country policies and donor requirements, encompassing employment, payment, reimbursement, and commercial aspects (2.11).
- **Enhance Communication with Multilingual Accountant:** Enhance communication by hiring a multilingual accountant proficient in languages spoken in the program region (2.11).
- **Assess Quantitatively and Qualitatively:** Employ both quantitative and qualitative assessment methods, utilizing qualitative reports to understand program impact beyond activities and figures (2.11).
- **Gauge Satisfaction and Testimonials:** Gauge beneficiaries' satisfaction through questionnaires and collect and analyze testimonials to evaluate program impact (2.11).
- **Capture Transformation Stories:** Utilize the Most Significant Changes (MSC) approach to capture and narrate beneficiaries' transformation stories, focusing on various levels of change (2.11).
- **Focus on Impactful Outcomes:** Foster long-lasting results for beneficiaries by emphasizing impactful outcomes rather than solely delivering activities (2.11).

- **Optimize Resource Allocation:** Maintain a lean staff structure within budget constraints, optimizing resources for program operations and information consolidation (2.12).
- **Strategic Human Resource Allocation:** Allocate human resources strategically, retaining essential roles while contracting consultants for specific initiatives requiring diverse skillsets (2.12).
- **Leverage Network Power:** Harness the power of a network of beneficiaries and partners to extend the team's capabilities and infuse shared passion for Women's Leadership (2.12).
- **Foster Team Commitment:** Cultivate a passionate and committed team, fostering a collective spirit that drives them to exceed expectations and act as advocates for change (2.12).
- **Develop Versatile Team Members:** Develop versatile team members who assume multiple roles and embrace a learning-by-doing approach within a positive and collaborative environment (2.12).
- **Promote Collaboration:** Emphasize collaboration over competition, leveraging both vertical and horizontal structures, with regular meetings to foster teamwork and knowledge sharing (2.12).
- **Nurture Unity:** Nurture a sense of unity among team members, recognizing each individual's unique contribution to the collective success (2.12).
- **Cultivate Continuous Learning:** Cultivate a culture of continuous learning, seeking external expertise and refining solutions to address diverse backgrounds and contexts (2.12).
- **Encourage Exhaustive Brainstorming:** Brainstorm and discuss solutions exhaustively, fostering lucidity and refinement, while acknowledging the need for context-specific adaptations (2.12).
- **Promote Creative Thinking:** Encourage creative thinking by adapting a single model for different countries, prompting innovative approaches to overcome regular challenges (2.12).
- **Embrace a Transformational Leadership Style**: Recognize the power of transformational leadership, fostering ongoing engagement and sustainable change (2.15).
- **Understand Cultural Change Takes Time**: Acknowledge the gradual nature of cultural change and commit to sustainable results through ongoing training and sensitization (2.15).
- **Foster Inclusive Environments**: Embody the values of transparency, openness, and respect, creating a culture of collaboration and trust among both external collaborators and internal staff (2.15).
- **Nurture Collective Spirit**: Disseminate a sense of unity and shared purpose among external actors and internal team members (2.15).
- **Empower Employees as Leaders**: Regard employees as leaders, encouraging self-management, engagement, ownership, and productivity (2.15).
- **Demonstrate Co-Leadership**: Facilitate co-leadership at team and management levels, making decisions through consensus and alignment (2.15).
- **Leverage Remote Tools:** Utilize remote tools as a natural and cost-effective means to expand program outreach and engagement (3.1).
- **Enhance Digital Literacy:** Capitalize on intensified digital platform usage to educate women on becoming digitally literate (3.1).
- **Streamline Financial Oversight:** Standardize financial reports with proper controls to facilitate audits and reduce time spent on financial reporting (3.2).
- **Ensure Consistent Reporting:** Request partners to collect the same set of indicators and outcomes using standardized templates, saving time during regional consolidation (3.2).
- **Enhance Consistency and Maturity:** Adopt the same templates and standards to ensure consistency across the region and raise the program's maturity level in new countries (3.2).

- **Promote Continuous Improvement:** Implement a continuous improvement process to regularly re-evaluate tools and enhance program implementation (3.2).
- **Streamline Reporting:** Soften the reporting burden by implementing standardized reporting processes across the region (3.3).
- **Share Data Collection Responsibility:** Transfer some data collection responsibilities to partners to distribute the workload and improve accuracy (3.3).
- **Empower Beneficiaries' Coordinators:** Delegate post-session questionnaire data collection to beneficiaries' informal coordinators to alleviate reporting challenges, if allowed (3.3).
- **Optimize Online Collaboration:** Learn and implement efficient online collaboration tools for seamless teamwork and version control (3.3).
- **Enhance File Management:** Use productivity and collaborative applications to keep files up to date and prevent versioning issues (3.3).
- **Monitor Progress:** Track reporting efficiency over time to observe the reduction in reporting time from the first year to subsequent years (3.3).
- **Ensure Reporting Continuous Improvement:** Maintain a focus on continuous improvement in reporting processes based on lessons learned (3.3).
- **Promote Consistency:** Implement standardized reporting practices to ensure consistency and accuracy across the reporting period (3.3).
- **Optimize Resource Allocation**: Efficiently allocate human resources, ensuring essential roles are maintained for ongoing program management, and supplementing with experts and consultants as needed (3.4).
- **Leverage External Expertise**: Tap into specialized knowledge by involving experts and consultants to bridge critical knowledge gaps and enhance program effectiveness (3.4).
- **Flexibly Augment Staff**: Bolster the lean staff with a rotating team of experts and consultants, transforming fixed costs into variable costs while addressing specific needs (3.4).
- **Promote Knowledge Sharing**: Encourage teams to learn from interaction with senior experts and consultants, fostering a culture of continuous learning and growth (3.4).
- **Embrace Adaptive Staffing**: Emphasize the benefit of a seasonal team approach, allowing the FoF to adapt staffing levels to fluctuating demands without excess overhead (3.4).
- **Prioritize Time Management:** Implement effective time management strategies to navigate multi-country complexities and varying time zones (3.5).
- **Enhance Focus:** Develop techniques to enhance focus with objectivity and productivity, enabling efficient work across different languages and timeframes (3.5).
- **Promote Work-Life Balance:** Foster a culture that values work-life balance, allowing staff to maintain well-being while delivering impactful results (3.5).
- **Strategically Standardize Processes:** Gradually standardize and optimize processes to streamline operations and reduce after-hours work requirements (3.5).
- **Manage After-Hours Commitments:** Emphasize the importance of teamwork and shared responsibility as a means to alleviate the burden through combined efforts, ensuring after-hours work remains an exception (3.5).
- **Acknowledge Sacrifices:** Recognize and appreciate staff members' occasional sacrifices to maintain program effectiveness (3.5).

- **Offer Professional Development:** Leverage the exposure to diverse experiences as a pathway for staff professional growth and advancement (3.5).
- **Cultivate Passionate Team Members:** Seek team members who are genuinely passionate about the Gender Equality cause to maintain motivation and dedication (3.5).
- **Create Flexible Work Arrangements:** Explore flexible work arrangements that accommodate team members across different time zones (3.5).
- **Embrace Virtual Collaboration Tools:** Leverage technology and virtual collaboration tools to facilitate seamless communication and reduce time constraints (3.5).
- **Leverage Knowledge Base:** Harness the potential of the knowledge base by actively using and updating external-facing training collateral (3.6).
- **Maximize Content Repurposing:** Strategically repurpose existing materials to serve evolving needs and expand the program's impact (3.6).
- **Encourage Continuous Learning:** Foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement by revisiting and enhancing training content regularly (3.6).
- **Promote Document Accessibility:** Ensure easy access to the knowledge base for beneficiaries and partners to facilitate self-paced learning and growth (3.6).
- **Enhance Content Quality:** Implement a feedback loop to gather insights from users and experts, refining content for greater effectiveness (3.6).
- **Diversify Content Formats:** Explore innovative ways to present content, such as interactive modules or multimedia resources, to engage learners (3.6).
- **Expand Collaborative Contributions:** Encourage partners and beneficiaries to contribute to the knowledge base, enriching it with diverse perspectives (3.6).
- **Integrate Local Context:** Tailor existing materials to suit local contexts, enhancing relevance and resonance with beneficiaries (3.6).
- **Track Content Utilization:** Monitor the usage and impact of knowledge base resources to inform future content development strategies (3.6).
- **Promote Long-Term Sustainability:** Position the knowledge base as a sustainable resource that evolves alongside program needs and goals (3.6).
- **Track Engagement Metrics:** Regularly monitor social media analytics to assess engagement levels, reach, and audience demographics, adjusting strategies accordingly (3.9).
- **Elevate Unified Nature of the Program:** Convey the singular program nature that spans across diverse countries, each with its own pace of progress, yet united under a shared Logic Model and Theory of Change umbrella. Showcase this cohesive approach in all communications and reports to prevent misunderstandings and achieve clarity (3.10).
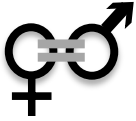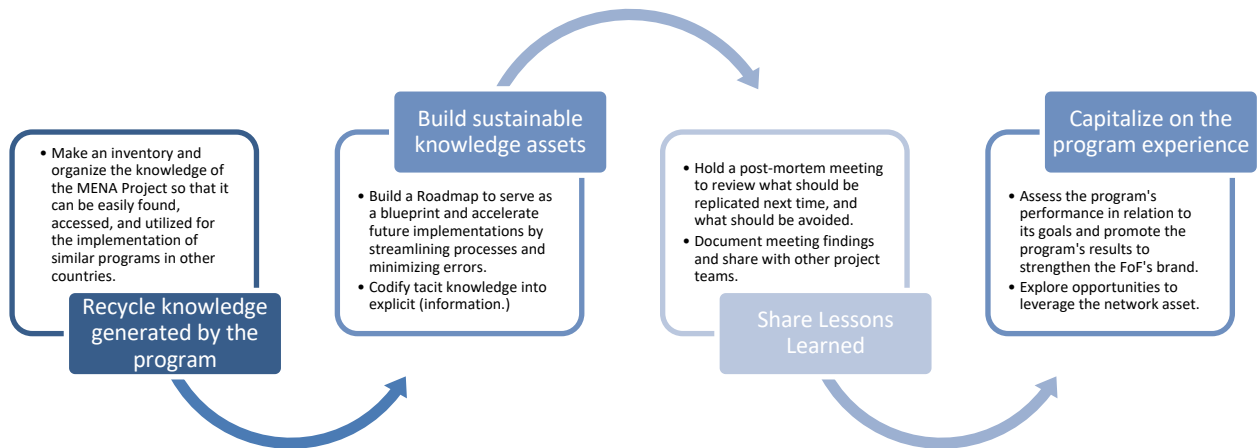
DESCRIPTION

The MENA Project will end at some point in time. However, this does not mean that the efforts towards Women's Leadership will also end. During the life of the program, many seeds have been planted, some of which have already flourished, while others are still germinating. The program will leave a significant legacy of women trained, the rock daisies, present or future leaders. Furthermore, the program will leave a lasting impact, having sensitized numerous stakeholders from universities, NGOs/CSOs, media outlets, trade unions, government administrations, and the public in general. Besides ensuring sustainability by changing people's mindset and forming activists, the program methodology itself is a sustainable product, because it can be appropriated by local partners and continued even without the involvement of the FoF. This empowers the locals to take ownership of similar programs and continue their efforts to defend women's rights. Perhaps even the FoF will build upon the progress made and decide to launch brand-new programs.

SUGGESTED PROCESS

Recycle knowledge generated by the program
- Make an inventory and organize the knowledge of the MENA Project so that it can be easily found, accessed, and utilized for the implementation of similar programs in other countries.

Build sustainable knowledge assets
- Build a Roadmap to serve as a blueprint and accelerate future implementations by streamlining processes and minimizing errors.
- Codify tacit knowledge into explicit (information.)

Share Lessons Learned
- Hold a post-mortem meeting to review what should be replicated next time, and what should be avoided.
- Document meeting findings and share with other project teams.

Capitalize on the program experience
- Assess the program's performance in relation to its goals and promote the program's results to strengthen the FoF's brand.
- Explore opportunities to leverage the network asset.

PRIMARY REMINDERS

- Review the program plan to tie up loose ends in order to make sure it is properly closed. Complete necessary administrative tasks to avoid any potential liabilities arising from outstanding payments, contracts, or deliverables.
- Communicate notes to beneficiaries, partners, and other stakeholders. They have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the country staff during the program's existence and deserve to know what comes next.

EXPANDED REMINDERS

This section serves as a cross-reference based on Success Factors and Lessons Learned, so anticipate some repetition. For more details, please refer to the item number in parentheses at the end of each sentence.

- **Embrace a Transformational Leadership Style**: Recognize the power of transformational leadership, fostering ongoing engagement and sustainable change (2.15).
- **Understand Cultural Change Takes Time**: Acknowledge the gradual nature of cultural change and commit to sustainable results through ongoing training and sensitization (2.15).
- **Optimize Online Collaboration:** Learn and implement efficient online collaboration tools for seamless teamwork and version control (3.3).
- **Ensure Reporting Continuous Improvement:** Maintain a focus on continuous improvement in reporting processes based on lessons learned (3.3).
- **Promote Long-Term Sustainability:** Position the knowledge base as a sustainable resource that evolves alongside program needs and goals (3.6).

5   DOCUMENT MAP INFOGRAPHIC

How to implement a complex multi-dimensional
Women's Leadership Program
Click on the elements of the Roadmap to explore in more details.

- Conduct one multi-country assessment
- Build programing strategy & plan
- Elaborate an umbrella Logic Model
- Develop key comprehensive indicators

- Build a tailored implementation plan
- Define staffing structure & open offices
- Establish coordinating & communication mechanisms
- Set up processes & design monitoring instruments

1-Assess Socio-Political & Programming Context   **2-Plan & Set up the Multi-Dimensional Program**

INITIATING   **PLANNING**

- Establish comm mechanisms with govs
- Research & onboard implementing partners
- Design initiatives to fulfill needs & bridge gaps
- Create synergies within & across countries

- Identify & coordinate stakeholders
- Build network to listen to varied insights
- Gather needs recognizing challenges
- Refine plan matching needs with goals

ADJUSTING

4-Build & Manage Partnerships   **3-Understand Challenges & Needs**

EXECUTION LOOP

- Enhance established women leaders' skills
- Enhance future women leaders' skills
- Transform public mentalities through awareness
- Strengthen institutions and quality mechanisms

- Collect, measure & analyse data
- Track cross-country trends & synergies from experience
- Determine upfront crosscutting thematic priorities
- Establish mechanisms to obtain comparative results

CLOSING

5-Enable & Influence Stakeholders   **6-Evaluate Trends & Results**   **7-Own & Continue Efforts**

MONITORING AND CONTROLLING

- Recycle knowledge generated by the program
- Build sustainable knowledge assets
- Share Lessons Learned
- Capitalize on the program experience

THEMATIC RELEVANCE AND RESPONSIVENESS TO LOCAL NEEDS

LOCAL PRESENCE, LOCAL NETWORK, LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

COMMITTED STAFF, INSPIRING LEADERS, EFFECTIVE MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS
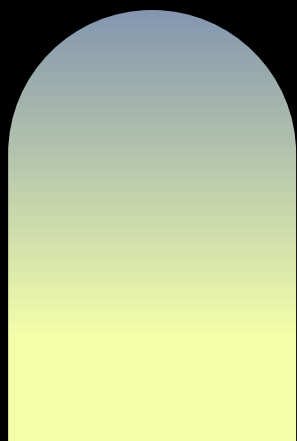
Rock daisies are wildflowers from desert habitats, where they may carpet miles and miles of badlands for months in a row. They have a morphology to anchor in rocks, which explains the name.

Rock daisies can bloom in the harshest and most arid environments. The adaptation to adverse conditions was possible because they were plants that evolved and learned to deal with such stresses. For example, they developed leaves covered with dense hair to block sunlight.

Rock daisies fighting for survival in the desert may symbolize the rock-solid women's resilience in more traditional societies, fighting for Gender Equality or, more specifically in the MENA Project, fighting for Women's Leadership.