Empowering women for sustainable and inclusive growth

Labelled in 2015 with a budget of €4.5 million, the first phase of UNIDO’s project, Promoting Women’s Empowerment for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development in the MENA Region, finished this year and achieved successful results.

Two initial studies were carried out in seven Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries to support the identification of areas for national policy reform and, on this basis, determine priorities for each of the countries to help boost female entrepreneurship.

Through this innovative methodology, the project contributed to enhancing women’s economic inclusion and harnessing the great potential of female entrepreneurs to create growth. The UfM Secretariat hosted a meeting in May 2018 to discuss the launch of a second phase of the project, with a special focus on women in agriculture and rural areas, and two new partners: UN Women and FAO.

Ensuring healthy lives for all

The growing mortality rates from cervical and breast cancer in the 15 Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries are a major concern.

The UfM partnered with the World Health Organization and the Centre for Epidemiology and Prevention of Cancer in Piedmont (Italy) to develop the WoRTH: Women’s Right to Health project. It aims to improve cancer screening policies and introduce a new approach to cervical and breast cancer prevention into exiting policies and services.

With a budget of €4.16 million over four years, WoRTH will train over 300 professionals and will benefit more than 45,000 disadvantaged women in Albania, Montenegro and Morocco.

Women’s empowerment

All over the world, an unprecedented upsurge of movements has marked a historic turning point in the fight for women’s rights and equality, and the Euro-Mediterranean region is no exception.

In support of this momentum, the UfM launched a shared Euro-Mediterranean agenda at the Ministerial Conference in Cairo (November, 2017). The agenda aims to increase women’s leadership and political participation, enhance women’s economic empowerment, combat all forms of violence against women and girls, and end gender stereotypes.

In 2018, the UfM Secretariat gathered key stakeholders from the region to outline the next steps for implementing these ambitious commitments, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

4th UfM Women Conference: building inclusive societies

In partnership with the Portuguese government, the UfM Secretariat organised the 4th UfM Women Conference, one of today’s major regional platforms for exchanging experiences on gender equality. With the attendance of the President of Malta, Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, the event brought together more than 450 participants from over 30 UfM countries to discuss women’s roles as change-makers and leaders in the region. More concretely, it examined the contributions of the media, the private sector and youth in overcoming cultural and social barriers towards more inclusive societies.

The need to further invest in sexual and reproductive health and to empower women in the fields of science and agriculture were highlighted during dedicated workshops. Meanwhile, a study on women’s participation in rural societies was published during the conference, in partnership with CIHEAM.

“Women Entrepreneurs’ Forum: Promoting Women’s Economic Empowerment provides an overview of main donors and key Euro-Mediterranean stakeholders’ contributions towards gender equality and women’s empowerment.

HELD TO THEIR WORD: KEEPING TRACK OF PROGRESS ON GENDER EQUALITY

The UfM Secretariat has been mandated to establish a regional mechanism to monitor progress on gender equality, aiming to provide recommendations to policy-makers and regional stakeholders on the gender gap. A proposal of methodology and indicators is now under preparation and will be discussed with UfM member states and stakeholders during the Regional Dialogue Platform meeting in July 2019.

ALSO ON THE AGENDA...

• Roundtable on Behavioural Insights as a Tool for Fostering Women’s Economic Empowerment in the Region, with UNIDO
• Meeting of the Women of the Mediterranean (WOMED) project

EXPERTS’ CORNER

• Strengthening the Role of Women in Rural and Agricultural Areas, in partnership with CIHEAM, focuses on the obstacles and opportunities of women’s participation in rural areas.

• Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment provides an overview of main donors and key Euro-Mediterranean stakeholders’ contributions towards gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Source: World Health Organisation (WHO)