

Advancing the institutionalization of a gender approach in the Ministries of Labor of the Americas

Lessons learned, findings and recommendations
from three Participatory Gender Audits

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Foreword

This Report presents the latest and certainly most innovative effort in strengthening gender mainstreaming in the Ministries of Labor of the Americas. It is part of a process that originated within the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML) of the OAS, in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), to support labor administrations and to make tools available to them in order to move towards full equality between men and women in the world of work.

This effort is the Participatory Gender Audit, first developed in the region in the Ministries of Labor of Barbados, El Salvador and Peru, which provides an overview of progress and challenges in mainstreaming gender in different institutional and programmatic processes and promotes organizational learning. The audits were based on the methodology developed by the ILO, which was enhanced during the process with new elements, such as the development of Plans of Action, to carry out their recommendations.

By analyzing the experience of three audits and highlighting the main lessons learned, findings and recommendations, this report aims to support the development of new exercises of this nature with concrete tools to support government efforts to institutionalize a gender perspective.

The Audits were carried out with the financial support of the Canadian Labour Program through the OAS, which was complemented by significant human and financial resources from the ILO. The project was coordinated in the OAS by Evelyn Jacir de Lovo, Director of the Department of Social Development and Employment, and María Claudia Camacho, Labor Specialist; and in the ILO by María Elena Valenzuela, Senior Gender Specialist. Lylian Mires, Principal OAS Consultant for the project, participated in all audits, directed the development of Plans of Action and prepared this report. Specialists and consultants of the ILO Regional Offices for Central America, the Caribbean, the Southern Cone and the Andean Countries were part of the Audit teams.

The positive results of these audits and essentially all that can be gathered from them have been a result of high political and technical commitment and hard work by the staff of the Ministries of Labor in the region. We express our appreciation to all of them.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

BEC	Barbados Employers' Confederation
BVTB	Barbados Vocational Training Board
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIM	Inter-American Commission of Women (Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres)
CONAMYPE	National Commission for Micro and Small Enterprises (Comisión Nacional de la Micro y Pequeña Empresa)
HRSDC	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
IACML	Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor
ILO	International Labour Organization
INSAFORP	Salvadoran Institute for Professional Training (Instituto Salvadoreño de Formación Profesional)
ISDEMU	Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women (Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo de la Mujer)
MLS	Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Barbados
MTPE	Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion of Peru (Ministerio de Trabajo y Promoción del Empleo)
MTPS	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of El Salvador (Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social de El Salvador)
NEB	National Employment Bureau of Barbados
PGA	Participatory Gender Audit
RENACEMPLEO	National Employment Opportunity Network of El Salvador (Red Nacional de Oportunidades de Empleo)
RIAL	Inter-American Network for Labor Administration
RENACEMPLEO	Red Nacional de Oportunidades de Empleo

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participatory gender audit

Introduction and Background



The commitment of the OAS Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor and its partnership with CIM and ILO

In the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) in 2000, Member States agreed to integrate a gender perspective into their policies and projects as a means to achieve the full and equal participation of women and men in all spheres of public and private life. Since then, the commitment of the OAS has been reaffirmed at the hemispheric level with respect to gender equity and equality.

Later, in 2005, at the XIV Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML) held in Mexico City, the Ministers of Labor of the OAS Member States agreed to the inclusion of a gender perspective within the context of decent work, engaging with the articulation and promotion of active policies in this regard. This mandate was reaffirmed by the IV Summit of the Americas (Mar del Plata, 2005), where the Heads of State and Government agreed to increase women's access to decent work by combating gender discrimination in the workplace, promoting equal opportunity, eliminating gender gaps in employment, and mainstreaming gender in labor and employment policies.

To support the process, the XIV IACML agreed to conduct studies, formulate proposals and promote the exchange of best practices for mainstreaming gender in labor and employment policies.

To fulfill this mandate, the Department of Social Development and Employment (DSDE) of the OAS, Technical Secretariat of the IACML, together with the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM/OAS) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) established an alliance to define the ongoing strategy. They agreed to start this process with the development of a document that would track the state of the inclusion of a gender perspective in labor policies and identify capacity-building needs to advance this field.

The result of this effort was the document “Gender Equality for Decent Work,” which, along with the “Strategic Guidelines for advancing gender equality and gender non-discrimination in the context of decent work,” was adopted by the XV IACML in 2007. This paper proposes strategic hemispheric guidelines with the immediate aim to institutionally strengthen Ministries of Labor to ensure effective gender mainstreaming in their policies, plans and programs, with an end goal of access to decent work with gender equality.

The institutionalization of a gender approach in the Ministries of Labor of the Americas and the Gender Audit initiative

Considering the different levels of progress and the heterogeneity of the initiatives taken by the Ministries in this regard, it was recommended that a study be done that would collect knowledge on the existence of specialized gender units in the Ministries of Labor, their characteristics, if they exist, and the rationale for deficiencies, if that were the case. The aim was to provide the IACML with a hemispheric overview of progress in mainstreaming gender in the Ministries of Labor in the Americas by recording the strengths and weaknesses of the various processes, along with the most outstanding results, in order to identify strategic areas of intervention, particularly through the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL).

The study, “The Institutionalization of a Gender Approach in the Ministries of Labor of the Americas” was coordinated by the DSDE/OAS, with the active participation of the CIM and contributions from the ILO. After consultation with the specialized gender units in the Ministries and the National Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women of the Americas, the study was able to diagnose the existence, location, strengths, weaknesses and needs of the units created; with the aim of permeating the internal and external actions of Ministries of Labor with a gender focus.

The study provided knowledge of the progress and difficulties facing the specialized gender units and areas requiring further support. The draft document was presented at the RIAL Workshop on Gender Mainstreaming in the Ministries of Labor of the Americas, held in Buenos Aires in 2009. Twenty-five Ministries of Labor, most of which were represented by their highest authorities on gender, enriched the conference with their contributions. Various agreements were also reached to advance proposals arising from the analysis of the status of specialized units for gender of the Ministries presented in the study. Highlights in the proposals included the implementation of Gender Audits, a methodology for determining the extent of the institutionalization of gender equality, the identification of best practices, and effective and efficient processes in advancing the goal of gender mainstreaming.

It was decided that the methodology developed by the ILO should be used. However, taking into consideration that the it had never been implemented in the Ministries of Labor in the region, valuable adjustments and additions to this methodology were made during the three Audits conducted. The ILO methodology emerged in 2008 in response to the need for a tool for accountability on gender mainstreaming in the organization, and has also been implemented by their constituents and organs of the United Nations, although it should be noted that other international agencies have developed similar methodologies.¹

In this regard, the latest and certainly most innovative effort of OAS–ILO collaboration to develop and further strengthen a gender focus in the Ministries of Labor is that of Participatory Gender Audits discussed in this document. Since 2011 the ILO and the OAS, with financial support from the Labor Program of Human Resources and Social Development Canada, have allocated human and financial resources to perform the first three PGAs in Ministries of Labor in the Americas.

Barbados was the first country in the continent that expressed a willingness to undergo a PGA exercise. The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of El Salvador is the second in the region and the first in Latin America to do so. In 2012, the third PGA was undertaken in the Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion of Peru, extending this experience in the region.

1. Inter alia:

Manual for the gender self-assessment (Gender and development Training Centre, The Hague/Haarlem, September 2001 and adapted June 2003 by Annette Evertzen).

Guía para la transversalización de género en el PNUD- Chile (PNUD, Chile, ISBN Santiago de Chile 2006, elaborado por el Área de estudios de Género, FLACSO).

Transversalización del enfoque de género en la gestión integrada de los recursos hídricos. Paquete de capacitación para capacitadores. (Gender and Water Alliance, CWA, PNUD, Versión 2.1, Noviembre, 2006).

Guía para Realizar Auditorías de Género en Empresas (Elaborada por AIMPEI Subvenciona: El Servicio Extremeño Público de Empleo, la Consejería de Economía y Trabajo de la Junta de Extremadura y el Fondo Social Europeo. Marzo 2007).

La transversalidad de género en la administración local. (Dirección General de la Mujer, Consejería de Empleo y Mujer, Comunidad de Madrid, Fondo Social Europeo).

Auditorías de género, metodología aplicada, proceso seguido y resultados obtenidos. KIDEITU, País Vasco. Equal, Fondo Social Europeo

What is a Participatory Gender Audit?



In general, gender audits have similar characteristics to social audits in that they assess documents, manuals and policies of an institution to know how they are applied and with what results, allowing the introduction of improvements.

In particular, an audit on gender mainstreaming is based on the review of available documentation (document analysis) and the use of qualitative and participatory methodologies (for example, personal and group interviews, workshops, etc.). It provides information on the extent to which a gender equality perspective is incorporated by the actors normally involved in the functioning of the institution into the various organizational processes. These actors include, in addition to policy and program areas, the administrative areas, finance and human resources.

The purpose of a Gender Audit is to promote organizational learning on how to incorporate the mainstreaming of gender in policies, programs and structures and to assess the extent to which they have been institutionalized at the level of the organization, work units and individuals.

Gender mainstreaming refers to the fact that gender equality issues are integrated into all public policies, rather than being considered marginal issues or associated only with certain traditional social policies (like family, for example) and presents itself as a complementary strategy to “national women’s policies” or “policies aimed specifically at women.” These directly address certain problems of gender inequality, but alone are not enough to counteract the effects that inequality may have as general policies.²

In the institutional context, the mainstreaming of a gender perspective consists of incorporating a focus on gender equality in all policies, strategies, programs, and administrative and economic activities; and includes the corporate culture of the organization to truly contribute to a change in the situation of gender inequality.³

In short, Gender Audits allow for a detailed analysis of progress in integrating a gender perspective and defining actions towards strengthening the capacity of institutions to integrate gender into operations, policies and programs.

The Participatory Gender Audits (PGAs) methodology developed by the ILO identifies twelve key areas that make up the focus of the analysis, which have been reviewed in light of the context of each country.

- A. Current issues and debates surrounding gender in the national/international field affecting the unit audited; interaction of the unit with women’s structures and organizations that address gender issues at the national level.
- B. Strategy of mainstreaming gender in the organization, as reflected in the objectives, program and budget of the work unit.
- C. Incorporation of gender equality in the implementation of programs and technical cooperation activities.
- D. Existing specialist knowledge on gender and strategy to generate competencies in this area.
- E. Managing information and competencies.
- F. Systems and instruments in use for monitoring and evaluation.
- G. Selection of partner organizations.
- H. Products and public image.
- I. Adoption of decisions regarding the incorporation of a focus on gender.
- J. Staffing and human resources.
- K. Institutional culture.
- L. Perception of gains in gender equality.

An analysis of these twelve key areas begins with a thorough documentary analysis covering a good number of documents from the ministries—usually provided by a counterpart designated by the highest ministerial authority—relevant websites and other indirect sources. This preliminary analysis allows the facilitating team to reach a relatively robust knowledge about the characteristics of the institution.

Once on the ground, interviews and workshops with staff and external institutions are planned and conducted, promoting maximum participation of the personnel involved. In this sense, the main function of the team is centered on facilitating self-assessment by personnel on their progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective, in a manner that achieves the articulation of their own recommendations to

2. Género y políticas de cohesión social. Conceptos y experiencias de transversalización. Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas (FIIAPP), 2007.

3. Strategic Regional Framework for Gender of UNEP in Latin America and the Caribbean 2005-2009

remedy deficiencies. Along with facilitating this process of self-assessment, the team examines the nature of management and budget systems, information management, monitoring and evaluation systems, and organizational culture—all elements that play a particular role in both progress in and the difficulty of promoting gender equality in the ministries.

As progress is made in gathering information through interviews and workshops, the facilitation team outlines conclu-

sions on the principal findings and best practices, so that at the end of the two weeks of intervention on the ground, it is able to make recommendations and present them to the ministerial authorities.

The preliminary recommendations are discussed with technical teams from the Ministry and presented to the senior-level authorities, and form part of the report that is delivered to the institution in an agreed-upon period for discussion and approval.

The experience of gender audits in three countries in the Americas



In response to the invitation issued jointly by the OAS and the ILO, Ministries of Labor requested Gender Audits, with which their highest authorities pledged to provide facilities for carrying out this exercise, as well as to implement the recommendations arising from it.

The invitation and selection of countries was achieved taking into account the progress and the political and technical commitment of the Ministries to the subject, which was identified in the studies and workshops conducted. It also covered a wide geographical spectrum, including a Caribbean country (Barbados), one in Central America (El Salvador) and another in South America (Peru).

In addition to differences arising as a result of the selection criteria, in each of these countries the treatment and adoption of the subject of gender also presents important differences, as discussed below. Furthermore, facilitating teams also differed in their constitution and origin, and only a facilitator (OAS consultant) remained constant in all three interventions.

It is the variety of settings that could be perceived to offer a challenge in creating criteria for measurement and balancing the implementation of the Audits. When it comes to a pioneering and experimental intervention, a richness is awarded to the process, from which valuable conclusions and recommendations can be extracted.

While PGAs are guided by an established methodology and embodied in a guide,⁴ experience showed that each country had a different reality in which it was necessary to make adjustments in some cases on the spot. This flexibility, of course, is a challenge for the teams, but at the same time enables teams to better address the specific characteristics of ministries.

The common denominator of all three audited ministries is that they have ratified the main international instruments for promoting gender equality and combating discrimination in employment and occupation, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). With respect to the instruments seeking equality between women and men in the workplace, they have also ratified three major International Labor Standards: Convention 100 on equal remuneration, Convention 111 on discrimination in employment and occupation, and convention 156 on workers with family responsibilities.

The analysis of the regulatory framework in each country also demonstrates a favorable situation in that national mechanisms for the advancement of women have experienced significant development regarding the subject of labor and gender. To some extent, the Audit's objectives complement the existence of national plans for equal opportunity that have gender mainstreaming as an objective for women's mechanisms. Therefore, the initial involvement of national mechanisms for the advancement of women is important in the development of the Gender Audit.

4. A manual for gender audit facilitators. The ILO participatory gender audit methodology. Geneva, ILO, 2008.

On the other hand, in the three ministries there have been various initiatives to incorporate a gender perspective in their work, and it is therefore not a foreign issue to any of them. A basic knowledge of gender issues was found in each of the three institutions among staff, as well as a fairly advanced level of knowledge on the subject by a number of staff and officials. But above all, the Audit revealed the willingness of staff to incorporate gender as a crosscutting theme in their work.

A great willingness among staff to provide the required information could also be seen in the three ministries. Last but certainly not least, it should be noted that the attitude of the highest ministerial authorities from the start—instructing the staff to open their doors to the facilitating team—and throughout, showed a commitment to the recommendations of the Audit.

Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Barbados

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Barbados, responding to the invitation, requested a Gender Audit. A team was formed, consisting of four people from the ILO and one from the OAS. The facilitating team, made up of four women and one man, traveled to Barbados where it remained between October 3rd and 14th, 2011 to carry out the audit. Interestingly, this was the first audit conducted in a Ministry of Labor in the Americas.

The document analysis, initiated before the mission through electronic means, and continued throughout the period of the team's stay in Barbados and after its conclusion. Many respondents provided additional materials.



The guidelines for the conduct of the audit exercise were faithfully inspired by the ILO methodology for participatory gender audits, in which the whole team had been trained beforehand.⁵ Later stages, concerning the development of a Plan of Action and monitoring, were not part of the ILO methodology and are one of the major contributions of this experience.

The audit examined the twelve key areas as proposed by the Manual, which served to prepare for the interviews as well as the data analysis, the development of a diagnostic and the preparation of findings.

In accordance with proper protocol for this type of exercise, an initial briefing and a final exchange and feedback took place with the management of the Ministry. The team was welcomed and able to sit with the Minister who expressed a keen interest to meet the recommendations of the audit, ensuring the intention to mainstream gender in the Ministry.

There were individual and group interviews in all units of the Ministry, its agencies, partners, and related public institutions (Bureau of Gender Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, Ministry of Social Care, Rural and Urban Development, Ministry for Family, Youth and Sports), as well as private organizations (Men's Educational Support Association [MESA] and Catalyst) and organizations of employers and workers (Barbados Employer Confederation [BEC], Barbados Workers' Confederation, CTUSAB, Barbados Workers Union [BWU]).



During the second week two workshops were organized, the content and exercises of which were determined by the whole team, taking into account the information that was

5. Linda Wirth, former Director of the Office for Gender Equality of the ILO and Susan Maybud, a member of the office in charge of the implementation of PGAs, were the facilitators of the PGA Training Workshop held at the Subregional Office of the ILO in Santiago in August 2011. Trained at that time were Lylian Mires, OAS consultant and Eric Carlson, an expert on HIV/AIDS at the ILO, both members of the team. Also participating was Luesette Howell, specialist in Activities for Employers, ILO Caribbean, who in 2003 participated in the gender audit of the Caribbean office and in 2008, in the ILO Training Program for Gender Audit facilitators to develop internal capacity in gender.

gathered and the needs of Ministry staff. The first was directed toward the professional and management team and focused on treatment of one of the main problems identified, by which further information was obtained for better feedback for the formulation of recommendations in that regard. The second workshop, half a day in length, was held with the participation of administrative and support staff. Finally, on the last day, findings, conclusions and preliminary recommendations were presented at a three-hour session directed toward management.

In the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Barbados the issue of gender is assigned to one person with great ability and knowledge of the subject, a task which she has generously assumed without sacrificing the completion of her duties in their work unit. In fact, it is this unity that is taking the initiative to coordinate and promote gender mainstreaming in the Ministry.

Although the PGA methodology does not incorporate the development of an plan of action for implementation of the recommendations, in May 2012, a team was formed consisting of an ILO official who had taken part in the Audit, an OAS consultant and a gender expert from Barbados, with the mission of developing a plan that would help strengthen the commitments made by the Ministry.

The modality of providing a local consultant showed great benefits, both from the point of view of knowledge of certain realities, as well as being an opening for officials to verbalize their strengths and weaknesses when making gender commitments. This is an element that is addressed among the recommendations regarding the adequacy of the methodology.

The Plan of Action sets out six strategic objectives that include the main recommendations of the PGA. The objectives are to:

- Ensure the introduction of a gender perspective in policies, programs and projects in the MLS
- Strengthen knowledge, competencies and skills in gender issues in all MLS personnel
- Promote the incorporation of a gender focus in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of all activities in the units of the Ministry
- Produce and disseminate information and knowledge about the labor market from a gender perspective
- Promote institutional communication on gender within and outside the Ministry
- Build a culture of equality and non-discrimination in the MLS

Each of these objectives establishes what is to be achieved in each area with the implementation of the Plan of Action and were grouped into the following lines of action:

- Institutionalizing gender mainstreaming
- Legislation
- Policymaking
- Training
- Planning and monitoring
- Research
- Production/adaptation of instruments
- Information production

Among the activities carried out, the preparation of the Plan of Action for implementation of the recommendations of the gender audit also includes a consultation with partner organizations, which was attended by union representatives (CTUSAB), employers (BEC), the Bureau of Gender Affairs, the National Organization for Women (NOW), and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (Economic Affairs Division).

At this meeting, representatives of these institutions gave their views on the process of adopting a gender perspective in the Ministry of Labour, offered their support and expressed their desire to work with the Ministry in this regard. It should be mentioned that the presence of the Bureau of Gender Affairs of Barbados (BGA) during the preparation of the Plan was an important point and their willingness to engage in the process should be noted.

In Barbados it was possible to organize a third mission to monitor the Plan of Action, which took place from February 18th to 20th, 2013. A team consisting of a consultant to the OAS and the expert from the ILO who serves as the Gender Focal Point in the Regional Office conducted the monitoring of the implementation of the Plan of Action, six months after it was sent to the Ministry. The objectives of the mission were to:

- Document the status of implementation of the Plan of Action agreed upon to incorporate a gender perspective in the Ministry of Labour;
- Identify best practices and/or challenges to the implementation of the Plan of Action;
- Make recommendations on how to improve its application and identify the needs identified by the resources.

The team met with representatives of the Ministry, the Barbados Vocational Training Board (BVTB), the Bureau of Gender Affairs and other external partners, including UN Women. These meetings focused on the progress made to date and which results had been achieved along the designated lines of action.

It was observed that the greatest challenge to the implementation of the Plan of Action lies in the creation of a Gender Team, an activity that figured prominently and urgently in the recommendations.

As for other observations, the monitoring team recommended paying special attention to the lines of action related to the institutionalization of a gender perspective, training and planning to facilitate the implementation of other lines of action as defined in the Plan. Gender training is a male and female staff request for achieving the capacity to take responsibility for their work. On this point, there is a recommendation for the Bureau of Gender Affairs to carry out an assessment of staff training needs.

This activity identified the challenges highlighted by the Ministry in implementing the recommendations embodied in the Plan of Action, and is considered a very valuable experience because it allows for the design of complementary strategies for achieving the objectives.

Monitoring carried out in Barbados is part of the comprehensive strengthening of Ministries of Labor in gender mainstreaming and it is hoped that the experience will be replicated in the countries carrying out the Audits.

Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of El Salvador

Between February 27th and March 9th, 2012, a Participatory Gender Audit took place in the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of El Salvador (MTPS) under the theme “Leading by example,” a innovative activity in Latin America.

The Audit was conducted by a facilitation team consisting of four people, who were responsible for gender in Central America at the ILO office in Costa Rica, and three people also trained at the course held in Santiago in 2011: two women and two men, maintaining men’s participation to convey the message to institutions that gender is an issue that affects both men and women.⁶ Furthermore, they had the support of the Director of Social Development and Employment of the OAS, whose participation helped define some of the conclusions and recommendations.

It is also important to note that in addition to the participation of identified persons responsible for gender, there had already been extensive work in the Ministry in promoting gender issues with the participation of another person from the ILO who was working in the Ministry. This assessment is of great interest, since interesting results were extracted based on expert knowledge of the motivation behind the implementation of MTPS actions and the impact on gender mainstreaming which had already been

promoted. Arising from this participation are valuable recommendations for the development of future audits, which are mentioned below.

Applying the methodology designed for this type of exercise, the Facilitating Team began the interviews and workshops. However, some adjustments were made, taking into consideration the need anticipated before the start of the audit for the incorporation of a Plan of Action as a result of the PGA to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations.

Firstly, the key thematic areas have eight crosscutting lines of action:

- Institutionalizing a gender perspective in the MTPS
- Strengthening institutional relations
- Planning and monitoring
- Production/adaptation of tools and processes
- Training and awareness
- Information and knowledge management
- Dissemination
- Reconciliation policies for people with work and family responsibilities

Progress was also made in this regard through establishing recommendations by work unit, aimed at focusing the recommendations for each unit in the Plan of Action.



Thus, the analysis of the information collected accelerated the design of a Plan of Action to facilitate the fulfillment of the commitments recommended by the PGA.

As a result of the systematization and analysis of information, principal findings were identified, and best practices and recommendations were found to achieve the main-

6. On this occasion the facilitating team consisted of María José Chamorro, Gender Specialist at the ILO Office for Central America; Fernando García, Specialist at the ILO Office for Central America; Javier Varela, ILO Consultant; and Lylian Mires, Principal Consultant in Gender and Employment at the OAS.

streaming of gender in the Ministry of Labor and Social Security of El Salvador, both institutionally and in each specific area.

It should be noted that the Gender Audit served a dual purpose. In addition to establishing a baseline and exploring actions aimed at mainstreaming a gender focus in the institution, it was an accompaniment to personnel of the Unit for Gender Equality - recently designated by the Ministry - opening roads to facilitate subsequent work in coordinating the actions of each of the units of the MTPS for gender mainstreaming. Thus, there was a special emphasis on developing lines of action with view of preparing a Plan of Action to guide the achievement of gender mainstreaming in institutional culture and in all actions and services provided by the MTPS. For this reason, the development of the Action Plan was envisioned as a strategic measure to facilitate the work of the Unit for Gender Equity, already in operation since 2012 in the MTPS of El Salvador.



Indeed, the subsequent visit to the MTPS to develop the Plan of Action (July 23rd to 27th, 2012), undertaken by the official responsible for gender at the ILO and the OAS consultant, yielded very good results. It was possible to develop a Plan of Action with two versions: by dependency, which facilitates identification of the commitments from every Directorate, Unit or Office of the MTPS; and by line of action, which maintains comprehensiveness of actions, according to gender objectives to be achieved for effective gender mainstreaming in the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare.

In the Plan, the following gender objectives were constructed for units:

- Incorporate a gender focus in social dialogue.
- Adopt a gender approach to the analysis of the minimum wage.
- Promote gender mainstreaming in planning, monitoring and evaluation of the activities of all agencies of the MTPS.

- Incorporate in legal advisory work MTPS legal principles and the international regulatory framework of human rights and gender.
- Generate statistical information from a gender perspective.
- Promote internal and external corporate communications, broadcasting the commitment of the Ministry of Labor and Social to equal opportunities for women and men in the labor market.
- Contribute to the fulfillment of labor rights by incorporating a gender approach in inspection activities.
- Ensure compliance with laws to ensure respect for the labor rights of men and women, punishing any act of discrimination, particularly on grounds of sex.
- Develop strategies that foster job placement nationwide, including equal opportunities between women and men.
- Strengthen actions that verify and promote conditions of health and safety in the workplace, taking into account gender differences of the workers.
- Building a culture of equality and non-discrimination at the MTPS.
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Conventions ratified by El Salvador, ensuring the incorporation of a gender focus.

The monitoring of the Plan of Action for implementation of the recommendations of the Participatory Gender Audit is the responsibility of the Unit for Gender Equity of the MTPS. For this purpose management and outcome indicators have been constructed, which constitute a valuable contribution to the work of the MTPS.

Although to date there has been no follow-up mission to the MTPS, other actions have been organized such as a field trip for the three people who make up the Unit for Gender Equity to gain the experience of their counterparts in the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security of Argentina. This activity was organized and funded by the RIAL in December 2012 and reported excellent results, including the identification of lessons learned and strengths that will support the future development of the Plan of Action in El Salvador. The ILO monitors the project from its office in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion of Peru

In Peru, the Gender Audit in the Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion of Peru (MTPE) was held on November 13th and 23rd, 2012.

Following the experience already accumulated, the team took on a local consultant. The team comprised three wom-

en (an OAS consultant, ILO gender specialist, and local consultant) and a man (an ILO consultant).⁷

Activities began when the Minister of Labor, Deputy Minister for Employment Promotion, Deputy Minister of Labor and Secretary General received the team in an initial meeting in which they expressed their commitment to the conduct of the Audit. Nonetheless, there was a request that the name be changed from Participatory Gender Audit to Participatory Gender Diagnostic, given the negative prejudices often associated with an audit.

The MTPE had already taken action aimed at gender mainstreaming in policies and programs in isolation by different units under the two deputy ministers: Labor and Employment Promotion. These initiatives ranged from periodical publications on the situation of women in the labor market, which were interrupted for several years, to the establishment of the subject of gender at the Directorate General of Fundamental Rights and Safety and Health at Work.

On this occasion, along with the key areas that provide guidance in the process of collecting and analyzing information, six lines of action were identified for the processing of information relating to the actions developed by each of the units of the Ministry. These lines are:

- Promotion of equal opportunities between men and women through policies and programs of the Ministry
- Work, family and personal life
- Institutional Environment
- Strengthening institutional capacities on the subject of gender
- Information production
- Incorporation of a gender focus in spaces for social dialogue

With a view to prepare the subsequent Plan of Action, a workshop was designed to serve the dual purpose of, on the one hand, achieving a collective presentation of the proposals made by the various units and, on the other hand, attaining consensus among management and technical staff in achieving gender goals. This was directed toward management and technical personnel at the MTPE.

To this end, the recommendations were presented and developed by the facilitation team based on document analysis, interviews, and observation. Each unit, represented by its managers and technicians, was asked by the team to identify other actions to achieve the mainstreaming of gender in work units. Each group discussed its recommendations, which were included in the final recommendations of the PGA.

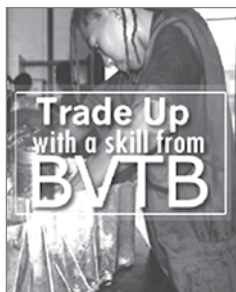
A peculiarity of the PGA in the Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion of Peru is the modernization of the State, which the country is currently undergoing. This process was considered by the facilitation team as a great opportunity for the institutionalization of the theme of gender in the Ministry, which focused much of its efforts on obtaining information about the process and the development of a proposed plan of implementation that would ensure gender mainstreaming at the highest level in the new structure. This issue was discussed with the relevant ministerial authorities and was presented as a concrete proposal in the recommendations given.

Although at the time this report was prepared, the second part, consisting of supporting the development of the Plan of Action, has not yet been addressed, the recommendations arising from the work teams ensure that it will collect the proposals of the MTPE officials themselves. The experience gained from previous PGAs suggests that the first intervention aimed at the development of a final plan is key to the success of subsequent implementation.

7. The facilitation team included the participation of María Elena Valenzuela, Regional Specialist in Gender and Employment; Fernando Baizán, Technical Coordinator of the Program for the Application of Decent Work in Countries of MERCOSUR; María Bastidas, local ILO consultant and Lylian Mires, Senior Consultant on Gender and Employment at the OAS.

Major findings

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As already noted, the audits begin with a document analysis that allows the team to have information on the national context, the regulatory framework, as well as on progress on gender nationally and within the institution. This first attempts to identify some hurdles and also some strengths on which to design the

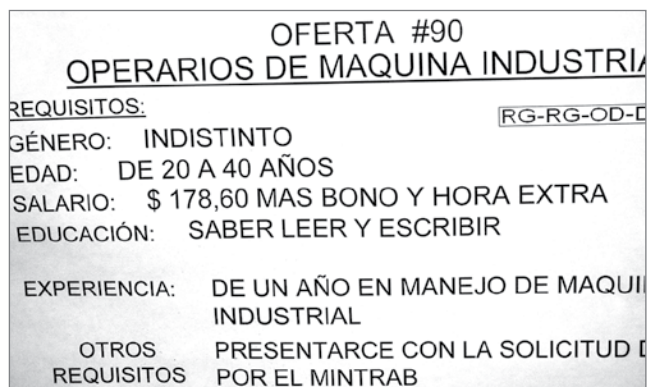
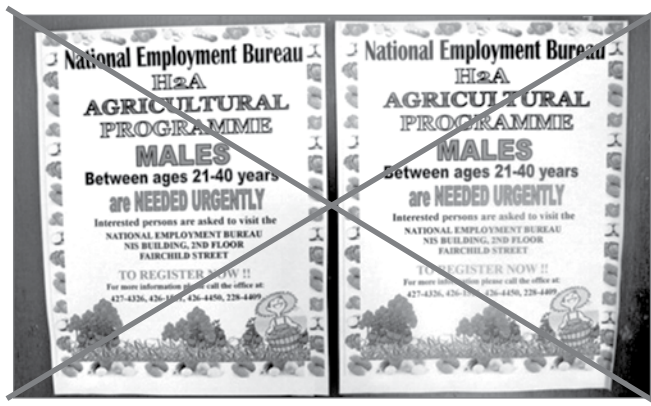
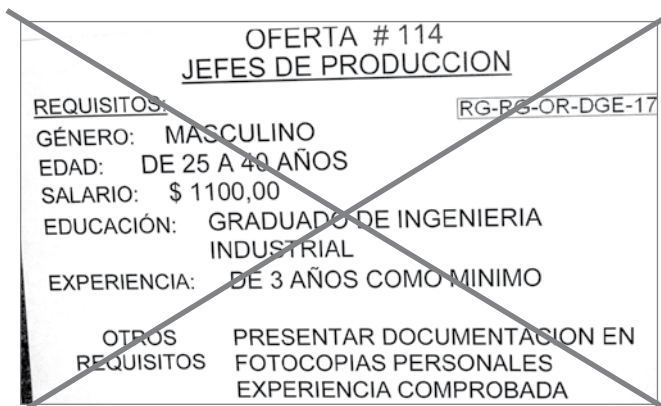
interviews and other activities. However, interaction with officials of ministries through various methodological tools is what delivers the greatest amount of information that can be contrasted with that obtained from the analysis of documents.

For this reason, it is important to note the findings of each intervention, both positive—which is generally categorized as a best practice—and those actions whose practice may be a barrier to the achievement of equality between women and men in the workplace of the country in question.

Usually gender malpractices are not deliberate, but are due to a lack of knowledge on the subject or the tendency to “keep doing what we’ve always done” without considering the different impacts that certain actions could have on women and men.

A common practice in the region is the lack of deliberate policies that tend to break the gender segmentation of the labor market; that is, the concentration of women in female-dominated sectors of the economy, such as informal trade and services—sectors that usually offer lower wages or more precarious employment conditions. This deficiency affects both achieving economic autonomy for women and their vulnerability to falling into poverty.

Among the factors that influence the breaking of gender segmentation in the market, training plays an important role—especially if it focuses its efforts on ensuring that women and men have equal access, but also any type of training provided, regardless of sex. In this regard, adopting a dissemination strategy from a gender perspective is key.



On the other hand, labor mediation is also emerging as an effective tool for achieving equitable access to different positions that the market offers. In this regard, the way in which the dissemination of information is done is also crucial to opening up possibilities to applicants without exception.

Usually, the ads in employment boards or offices are aimed at men or women, skewing entry into certain occupations. A recommendation in the sense of making job postings “gender blind” has been common to all audits.

Nevertheless, high-value initiatives coexist in countries. Such is the case in El Salvador, where in the area of eco-

nomic empowerment of Ciudad Mujer (Women’s City), the employment exchange of the MTPS provides employment counseling, training and production, and works in coordination with the Salvadoran Institute for Professional Training (INSAFORP) for training, with Training and Production Centers of the Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women (ISDEMU) and with the National Commission for Micro and Small Enterprises (CONAMYPE) for businesses.

In El Salvador, the job notice boards of the RENACEMPLEO Program show figures of men and women doing “heavy” work as motorists, forklift operators and users of technology.

The “Ciudad Mujer” Program in El Salvador

“Ciudad Mujer” is a presidential program coordinated by the Secretariat of Social Inclusion of El Salvador. It aims to improve the lives of Salvadoran women by providing services that meet their basic needs and strategic interests. It is a comprehensive care center that was designed to “address the specific needs of women and ensure the realization of a worthwhile life, promoting respect for their rights.” In this center located in Colón, in the La Libertad Department, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection provides job placement services, which are coordinated with services and vocational training, technical assistance for the promotion of entrepreneurship (development of micro and small companies) and other institutions providing microcredit. To raise awareness among employers about the abilities of women in non-traditional occupations, talks and meetings are organized in conjunction with the Salvadoran Institute for Professional Training (INSAFORP) and, moreover, empower women in jobs considered “masculine”. A transport company has already hired three women as trailer drivers after training in labor rights, assistance in self-esteem workshops and specific training provided by the company. In coordination with INSAFORP 35 women are being trained as production operatives with a commitment that the company will hire another 20.

Source: Gender Audit Report of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of El Salvador

With respect to gender participation in the various ministries, it was found that in the three institutions there is a positive balance between women and men. Peru excels in the number of women in decision-making positions (currently the Minister and Deputy Minister are women), and has a good representation of female Directors. A similar situation occurs in Barbados, where a woman heads the Ministry. In El Salvador the overall payroll is balanced, albeit with a slight imbalance of women in management positions.

Regarding childcare initiatives, the Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion of Peru excels, with a nursery (URPI WASI) for officials’ children of 2 to 5 years of age. This is a front line service in reconciling work and family responsibilities, like maintaining a lactation room for working mothers at the MTPE.

Since 2011, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of El Salvador has had a Care Room for Children (nursery),

which serves users while they do paperwork, accompanied by children under the age of 12. The original purpose of the Care Room is to provide better care to mothers and fathers attending the reconciliations of the Directorate General of Labor, as in the case of women it is very common to arrive in an already very vulnerable psychological state. Women are also often accompanied by their children, whose care is an additional heavy burden on them, as well as for female staff. It is also used as a space in which MTPS users who come to do paperwork can leave their children while performing their efforts. It operates during the same office hours as the Ministry.

Important activities were found in the ministries relating to the production of sex-disaggregated data. The Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion of Peru excels, where mandated by the Equality Act, the General Statistics Office is obliged to collect all the information disaggregated by sex, which complies with all of its products.

Measurement of Time Use in Peru

In 2008 the Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion of Peru, through the Program for Statistics and Labor Studies of the National Directorate of Promotion of Employment and Professional Training, incorporated in the Specialized Household Survey on Employment Levels a module on Time Use in order to measure the time spent by people on different types of activities, such as work activities (paid or unpaid), household chores, and time spent on leisure and entertainment, among others. This measurement is considered a powerful tool for raising awareness of the extent of the unpaid work women do who would otherwise remain invisible, and thus the contribution of women to the economy.

This initiative was developed in the framework of the National Plan for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, 2006-2010, whose Guideline 2, stated as a goal of the state that, “50% of the regional governments and 25% of localities have promoted co-responsibility between men and women in household tasks, decision-making, provision, access and enjoyment of resources.”

Source: Gender Audit Report of the Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion of Peru

In Barbados there are a lot of sex-disaggregated data systematically and regularly collected through the Ministry and its agencies.

With regard to human resources policies, sufficient information was collected to allow the formulation of important recommendations to improve the balance between work and family life for workers. In Barbados, the Ministry's organizational

culture is respectful and equality is valued. There are good working conditions and established schedules are usually met. In Peru, however, long hours for civil servants in senior positions is worrisome since the extension of working hours, beside representing little long-term sustainability without affecting the health of the workers, has different implications both on productivity and the quality of life, particularly exacerbating the conflict between fulfilling work and family responsibilities.

Disaggregation of Data by Sex in Barbados

In Barbados the National Employment Bureau (NEB) maintains information disaggregated by sex, age and industry. Job seekers are recorded and put into a database. These data are disaggregated by sex, and are divided into age groups of younger than and older than 25 years. Statistics are done manually on a monthly and quarterly basis and are inserted into the annual report where occupations are broken down by sex. The occupations are: legislators, professionals, technicians, clerks, service workers, skilled agricultural and fishery workers, craft and related workers, plant and machine operators, and elementary occupations.

For its part, the Barbados Vocational Training Board (BVTB) collects data disaggregated by sex from applications, certifications and dropout rates, as well as on the retention of apprentices in businesses and participation in evening courses. It regularly conducts studies to determine how many get jobs and has begun to make an analysis of dropout rates.

Source: Gender Audit Report of the Barbados Ministry of Labour

Finally, the existence of measures regarding sexual harassment was also investigated, and it was found that in all cases this is an issue that has been addressed. In El Salvador the General Law on the Prevention of Risk in the Workplace establishes as a guiding principle the principle of equality, by which “every worker has the right to effective equality of opportunity and treatment in the course of their work, without being dis-

criminated against,” and incorporates the psychosocial risks of sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination against women. Besides the above, the Directorate General of Labor Inspection has a Protocol for action in cases of sexual harassment. In Barbados there is a bill on sexual harassment in Parliament and in Peru, the MTPE has a directive on sexual harassment and the theme is incorporated into the induction process.

Lessons learned and recommendations



The methodology of Participatory Gender Audit has shown in all three applications a great richness insofar as it allows the unveiling of the reality of Labor Ministries in relation to advances in gender that they have experienced.

During this process, in each of the cases it was possible to achieve the objectives and expected for each intervention. Also, as noted above, showed great flexibility because without distorting its contents, it could be adapted to quite different realities. However, experience has also shown that there are aspects that must be considered to achieve the initial objectives.

Regarding the operations

It is important to consider the real timeframes of the Ministries of Labor in which internal communication usually goes through, a whole process which delays any response. This has been a constant in the three PGAs, in which the appointment of the liaison by the Minister takes some time that was not considered in planning the intervention, which necessarily results in miscommunication at first and eventual delay in sending requests for materials to begin the document analysis, as well as in the early construction of an agenda.

The report also argues for the importance of timely communication in what the Minister may communicate to management teams, and what these teams may communicate to their respective officers; tasked with conducting a PGA so that they can be aware of their function and comply with the facilitating team and what is expected of them. Otherwise, the interviewees do not know the extent of the PGA and whether their headquarters are aware of it, which can influence the depth of the responses given to the facilitation team. Another possible reaction is to take the interview as an opportunity to express all kinds of problems, not necessarily relevant to the PGA, which hinders the development of the interviews and workshops even though the facilitators expressed in every meeting the objectives to be pursued during the intervention.

Facilitation teams have comprised outstanding professionals and experts in gender, which in all applications have built a strong team that was complemented perfectly. However, experience has shown that the participation of a local expert has greatly facilitated the understanding of certain

situations and phenomena that might otherwise have gone unnoticed or misunderstood. Furthermore, their presence has facilitated communication with the people involved in the audit. Moreover, if a component is incorporated to monitor the implementation of the recommendations, it would be appropriate to have a consultant who has been involved from the start.

It is also appropriate that the people in charge of gender issues in the institution take part in some activities, first to involve them in subsequent monitoring activities and, second, as a training activity. Therefore, it is recommended that they play an important role in the process of data analysis, not in the process of data collection, because their involvement in it could distort some interviews, as they are part of the institution.

Both in PGA development and in the development of the Plan of Action, the national mechanisms for the advancement of women in the respective countries play an important role, particularly in supporting gender sensitization and training required in the Ministries; participation is also relevant throughout the follow-up. However, they were not consistently involved as a constituent as part of the process, but only as a mere key informant on the gender situation in the Ministry of Labor. If they are incorporated from the outset, officially reporting on action taking place in the Ministry, their participation may be charged with a much more active role in the process.

Regarding the content

First, it must be stated that, in general, Ministries of Labor have ventured into gender issues, but in isolated and sporadic activities not necessarily following a deliberate strategy of gender mainstreaming in policies, programs and projects, least of all in structure and human resources policies. However, “to audit” means to show what has been done and demonstrate progress in the matter as a continuum, which is present but may have certain weaknesses; particularly focusing on the areas to be evaluated that should have been modified in practice.

This same situation is what leads some to question the name of the Gender Audit, firstly because in practice there is not “auditing,” but rather “discovering” different gender initia-

tives that have taken place in the institutions and proposing new actions. Above all, it is also because the term “audit” has a negative connotation, mainly in the public sector. Fear, which is triggered for some staff at being audited, has manifested itself in trying to show progress beyond what has actually been made, probably out of fear of a downgrade. This certainly goes against the main spirit of the intervention, which is to show the way forward in a participatory manner toward the integration of a gender perspective in one’s work.

The methodology used does not include post-approval activities regarding the recommendations for the Ministry. However, in this experimental cycle, the organizations choose to continue providing support to countries in developing a Plan of Action to operationalize the recommendations and identify the units responsible for each of them, in order to meet strategic gender goals, preset timelines and potential, as well as indicators that show progress in the process of gender mainstreaming in Ministries of Labor. The experience showed that the development of this Plan of Action is of indisputable added value. However, in order to carry out this added step of the process, the methodology used in the workshops had to be adjusted so that their results serve as input to a future Plan of Action. The Plan has proved in practice to be a final product of the intervention in the Ministries of Labor and has been received with great enthusiasm by the authorities and officials in general. They feel further support that goes beyond the formulation of recommendations.

Based on the findings derived from the three applications the following recommendations can be made to:

- A. Establish work schedules consistent with the time-frames of the Ministries, and in general with the civil institutions of the countries of the region.
- B. Generate a prior communication with institutional counterparts to facilitate both the collection of timely information, as well as the preparation of agendas, in order to optimize time and efficiency of the facilitating team.
- C. Ensure that through institutional channels the commitment of the highest authorities of the Ministry with the intervention makes itself known.
- D. Involve the national mechanism for the advancement of women from the beginning of the intervention in a more active role as a natural ally in the process of searching for information and in supporting the implementation of the Plan of Action and follow-up.
- E. Engage local consultants in facilitating teams and, at the same time, involve the person responsible for gender in the Ministry to ensure follow-up.
- F. Review the methodology from the standpoint of its application to the reality of public institutions, thereby adapting to the key areas and the corresponding question guides.
- G. Incorporate the Plan of Action and monitoring as a component of the methodology and design activities in the course of the intervention to facilitate their subsequent implementation.
- H. Change the name of the “Audit” so as not to raise misconceptions about its scope and content.



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