

Good and Bad Practices in Advocating for the Prevention of Gender Based Violence (GBV): Documenting the Experiences of SIHA Members in Northern Sudan

This part of study covers three SIHA's organizations members in Northern Sudan, namely Mutawinat Group, Babiker Badri Scientific Association for Women Studies and the Gender Centre for Research and Training. The objective of this study is to identify good and bad practices in lobbying and advocating for changes to the national law and policies which help to prevent gender based violence (GBV).

Two main methodologies have been used AS follows:

- Direct interviews with key actors/staff, policy-makers and legislators and some selected beneficiaries.
- Review and analysis of all relevant data and documents (reports, (Published & unpublished materials), strategic plans report, evaluation/ capacity assessment reports, annual reports and other relevant documents).

Back ground on Sudan:

The Sudan is the largest country in Africa with a territory covering about 2.5 million square kilometres bordering Egypt in the North, the Red Sea, Eritrea and Ethiopia in the East, Uganda, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the South, and the Central African Republic, Chad and Libya in the West. The Sudan has an estimated population of 39 million inhabitants. About 32% of the population are urban, 68% rural, and about 7% nomads. Islam is the predominant religion, particularly in the North, while Christianity and animist traditional religions are more prevalent in the South and some areas in Southern Blue Nile and western Sudan. The Sudan is a republic with a federal system of government. There are multiple levels of administration, with 26 States (Wilayaat) subdivided into approximately 120 localities (Mahaliyaat)

The elements that constitute national identity in the Sudan are complex. The population of the Sudan is made up of a multitude of tribes and its inhabitants speak more than 130 languages and dialects. An Islamic-African-Arab culture has emerged over the years and has become predominant in the North of the country. The Arabic language is now spoken throughout most of the country.

The Sudan is considered a Least Developed Country (LDC), and ranks 139 in the 2004 UNDP's Human Development Index. Sudan relies on an agricultural and pastoral subsistence economy; however, commercial agriculture, industrial development as well as limited exploitation of natural resources, in particular following the discovery of oil in the central/southern part of the country, have developed in recent years. From the time of British colonization to date the focus of

attention has been on both the central region where the Blue and White Niles meet, since development and construction are centred in Khartoum, and on the fertile region of El Jezzira where long-fiber cotton has been cultivated as the country's main crop. With the exception of these regions, the rest of the Sudan's wide territories have remained largely marginalized and neglected, including Darfur and other regions like Kordofan, the Nuba mountains, the East of the Sudan and the South. Even the Northern region between the border with Egypt and Khartoum has remained a desolate, desert area.

Women's Situations

Women's and girl-child's rights in Sudan have been subjected to and affected by different factors, including national policies, legislation orientations, tradition and norms as well as ethnical and socio-economic factors.

Educational opportunities for women and girls are very limited, the rate of enrollment ranges between 86% in Khartoum state and between 21% and 30% in other states, particularly Darfur state. Dropout rates amongst girls in primary school are high. Curriculum is gender biased and does not consider the cultural diversity; it perpetrates stereotype roles of women. The illiteracy rate amongst women is also very high.

Women have very little access to financial services and credit facilities. They also experience unfair competition in labor market and hardly ever get into lead positions in different sectors. This discrepancy is brought about by existing biases in existing legislation as well as state policies. Very few women own or control access to land. Business is seen as men's domain requiring a significant investment of capital.

Women lack appropriate health services, maternal and mortality rates are about 600 per 100,000 live births, and the infant mortality rate is about 115 per 1000 live births. In addition, Sudanese women have very little access to reproductive health care, due to the lack of adequately trained staff and proper infrastructure to meet current and future reproductive health needs, besides cultural and religious barriers. Sudan is characterized by a high prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). According to *Sudan Health Demographic Survey* (1989/1990), the rate of prevalence is 89% which tends to increase incidences of sexuality-transmitted disease (STDs), HIV/AIDS. FGM had been prohibited by Sudan's penal code from 1946 (during colonial era) until 1983. The offense was punishable by imprisonment of maximum five years and / or a fine. The law was initially enacted under British colonial rule and was ratified again in 1957 and 1974; this provision was apparently repealed with the promulgation of the 1983 penal code which included no provision on infibulations. The 1991 penal code also contains no provisions explicitly prohibiting F.C.

In 1981, a national workshop was held on F.C¹ issues and solid recommended strategies were set. The major achievement of the 1981 workshop was the

¹ The conference was supported by WHO and the Ministry of Health.

establishment of the Sudanese National Committee for the Eradication of Female Circumcision (SNCEFC), it was established by decree of the Minister of the interior and social welfare in 1984. Regarding the injection of F.C. information within the educational curricula, it was meant to be introduced at primary school level (8th class), and secondary school (1st and 2nd class). But the idea was widely resisted by General Assembly members; accordingly, the textbook was withdrawn in 1999, and then resumed in 2000.

However, the state has taken steps back from its commitment. In May 2002, a large conference was held on FGM issues the main outcomes of the conference was “legalizations” of FGM as part of Islamic practice” and it was concluded that “the state [has] to encourage such a recommendation”. According to this conference Sudanese government was faced by international pressure. In an appeal, special reporter on Harmful Traditional Practices, Ms Halima Embarek, has drawn the government’s attention towards its commitments to several human rights instruments, in particular the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Article 24(3), requiring the “abolition of traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children”. NGO’s and some human rights organization organized a one-day anti-FGM campaign to lobby the government-concerned bodies for law initiation.

Political Participation:

Women’s participation in Politics is minimal and meager. Up to date the rate of women ministers at federal levels is only 6.8% compared to the male rate at states level, which stands at 8.6%.² The rate of women in parliament is 19.7% and until 2003 the participation of women in higher ranks of public service in different government bodies did not exceed 11%. The number of women in senior civil service posts in Khartoum was 343 out of a total of 1642 posts. In the states, the number is 3241 posts out of 10448 posts. There were only 67 female judges in Sudan, 2 ambassadors and 17 diplomats. In the public sector, women’s participation is 35% and in the private sector it is 10% in the state of Khartoum. Although women participate by 80% in food production contribution in the national economy is counted 26% the effort they exert in performing household duties; is not counted with the national economy.³

The promotion of women’s legal rights is affected by the lack of legal awareness, inaccessibility and lack of availability of legal services for women. Legislation is written in technical language which excludes laypersons from understanding and exercising their rights. Furthermore, prevalence of discriminatory laws and Acts restricts women, cripples their status and restricts their freedom and mobility.⁴ Examples of these laws include the Labor Law, Nationality Law, Criminal Act, the Public Orders Law, Land Ownership, Personal Status Law and Customary Laws, amongst others. According to the passport and emigration regulations and rules, woman (apart from women MPs and high-ranking members of government) are

² *National Policy for Women Empowerment* document, Ministry of social welfare, women and child welfare, March, 2007

³ Study on: *Capacity Assessment of the GCRT* (Final report) March, 2006

⁴ Mutawinat report on discriminatory laws and articles, 2001

not allowed to travel outside the country without her male guardians consent This rule also influences travel within the country, as the consent of the guardian is often perceived to be necessary for women to move within the Sudan⁵.. In addition, the approval of the guardian is required in the case of the non-married women.

The Public Orders Law for Khartoum state 1996 raised controversial discussions and dialogue about its articles that control the freedom According 1995 Public Service Regulations the family is only recognized when headed by a male, definition of the family is “The worker’s wife (not exceeding four) and his dependent children”.. Article 43 from the same regulations, states that women may “be committed to work uniform, whether it is general or specific, only if such uniform is suitable, decorous and (in accordance with sharia)”.The Labour Law for 1997, Article 19 states that “women are not allowed to work night shifts with the exception of women working in administrative, professional and technical works”. This article deprives other women to practice work during the night period even if they are able to perform such work. The Social Insurance Act of 1990 insures the retirement age for males at 60 years while females are to retire at 55 years.

Although Sharia law should only apply to Muslim citizens, women belonging to religious persuasions other than Islam have to adopt an Islamic dress code. This includes the requirement for women to cover their heads with veils and prosecutions for those found brewing alcohol. Women are often convicted and their business merchandize confiscated.

Women’s Positioning Visa Vise the Sudanese Constitutions:

Sudan’s first constitution promulgated in 1956 after political independence and was amended in 1964; Article 4 of the constitution expressly guaranteed equality of all people. Articles 17 (1) and (12) of the 1973 Permanent Constitution, articulates the following; ‘The equality of all people before the law and equality of all citizens in duties, rights, and employment opportunities without discrimination on the basis of place of birth, race, color, sex, religious, or political stand.’ This article was disregarded when Sharia law was applied in 1983. The Transitional Constitution of 1985, which likewise granted equality, was not invoked to strike down discriminatory provisions in important legislation, such as the Civil Procedure Act and the Evidence Act, enacted in 1983.

Within the constitution of 1998, women are only recognized when they are married or are mothers. Women’s rights are dealt with only in the preliminary chapter, which is only an introductory statement, but not specifically legislated. There is only one article in the Constitution, Article 15, which refers directly to women but in a very general manner, without addressing in details or/ and various forms of discriminations to which women are subjected, particularly when it comes to their public role.

⁵ Passports and emigrations regulations and rules, 1995

Discriminations against women in terms of career access and development are extremely frequent and the current legal framework does not adequately allow women to defend their cases in court. This has been further accelerated by the decree issued by the Governor of Khartoum State on September 2000. The content of the decree was “to maintain Sudanese women’s dignity and with accordance to new trends and religious valuable norms women are not allowed to work in public restraints, petrol stations, and hotel room services. All women working in the stated places have to be transferred to other places.” As a reaction to this decree Sudanese women’s organizations and other civil society groups have taken immediate actions to secure their rights through an emergency plan for the protection of women’s rights in the public life, including their right for work. Women Solidarity Network has come to existence as a quick reaction to the decree. The network which comprises more than 30 organizations moved to protect women’s rights in order to maintain what has been secured.

In Sudan, women’s rights are stipulated in Sharia law and customs rather than in international norms. The culture and attitudes of the people have a very significant influence on interpretations of the law and general functioning of the legal system.

Legal awareness is not part of the legal system; there are no official legal awareness programs for both men and women. The only service that is provided by the government is legal aid (representations in courts). There is a department of legal aid within the Attorney General Chamber representing some citizens before courts free of charge; the department however is working inefficiently due to the small numbers of legal personnel against great numbers of services demanders.

There is a lack in legal awareness courses in the current education system. However, issues of human rights, peace building and displacement and migration studies have been recently endorsed within universities educational system.

Women and Conflict:

Sudan has been hardly attested by long civil wars and conflicts, accordingly women’s situations have been altered to cope with the war situation. They are the most affected by armed conflicts; they always end up shouldering the burden of loss of family members, displacement, fragmentation, identity crisis, insecurity and end up heading households. Also, their accessibility to food, shelter, resources, markets and income becomes increasingly limited. Sudanese women’s efforts to contribute in the Sudan Peace talks and negotiations have been largely sidelined.

The prevailing situation (atrocities committed against women and girls) resulted from the latest conflict in Darfur and has created a wide spectrum of issues; yet, women are not powerless or victims to their circumstance. On the contrary, they

are heads of households and community keepers; they struggle to keep their families, communities and their identity intact to surpass any armed struggle. The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005 followed by the Interim National Constitution (INC), envisaged new realities for the Sudan. The INC provides equality; "equal rights of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights, social, cultural and economic rights, including the right to equal pay, shall be ensured"(Art. 32). It also provides that men and women are equal before the law (Art. 31), authorizes affirmative action (Art. 32.2), and commits the State to eradicating all harmful traditional practices (Art. 32.3). The INC made international human rights treaties and integral part of the Constitution (Bill of Rights). The constitution called for an independent advisory Human Rights Commission and law reform commission to harmonize domestic laws with an international legal standard.

Good and Bad Practices in Advocating for the Prevention of Gender Based Violence (GBV):

1- Mutawinat Group:

Mutawinat "women in cooperating," was established in 1988 by a group of women lawyers with the goal of creating a better system to ensure women and children legal rights in Sudan. Mutawinat mission is working for women's and children's rights through the provision of human rights education, legal services and advocacy for the protection of their rights. Mutawinat has been increasingly involved in advocacy work on legal reform and women and child protection.

Advocacy policy (Strategies/approaches):

To advocate for and build support for issues related to child and women rights Juvenile Justice, Mutawinat deploys a number of strategies that include:

- Continue focus on teaching civic education to defuse principles of democracy i.e. gender equality values, Human rights principles,
- Building the local CBO's and NGO's capacities so as to help in diffusing information on CRC and maintaining child basic rights through direct legal aid, counseling, rehabilitation and combating harmful practices affecting children ;
- Addressing women human rights and democracy issues such as Discriminating laws against women, customary laws and leadership.
- Promoting the concept of paralegals and creating paralegals to facilitate the legal education programmes and the legal counseling services.
- Developing effective monitoring documentation, and reporting system to protect children rights particularly during war and disasters;
- Continuing provision of technical assistances for judiciary apparatus, police, prisons and all institutions that deal with women and children in conflict with law; and

Mutawinat succeeded in establishing a strong alliance between active actors and women's rights and human rights organizations on "legislation reform", Mutawinat is putting a humble contribution on laws reform as an instrument of development. It developed the purpose of intervention due to the women's and human rights groups in Sudan calling for urgent intervention to stop all forms of violence against women dictating by newly initiated laws and regulations, such as the public order act for all Sudan states, Nationality Act, Criminal Act and other discriminatory laws and regulations.

In September, 2000 Mutawinat acted as spear head in the solidarity campaign against Khartoum wali decree banning women working in public restaurants, hotels and fuel stations. The campaign included more than 100 NGOs, CBOs and academic institutions.

In January 2004, Mutawinat with collaboration of the Sudanese Women Solidarity Network convened series of seminars on Sudanese Women's right and constitutional arrangement in post Conflict period.

The lobbying activities took place (2000-2005) in regard of legislation reform, came as a response to women's contemporary demand and reaction to the Wali's decree. The process is highly supported at all levels particularly at international levels when these encouraged donors to contribute to the activities related to the legislation reform in favor of women. The process entirely depends on the knowledge and capacities of women working with leading organizations, and women working with international organizations and UN agencies. Sudanese women activists living in Diaspora had great roles in translation all relevant document into English language and try to send to great numbers of international organizations and UN agencies.

Some target groups (government officials, at the ministry of justice) and beneficiaries, are highly recognizing Mutawinat roles as one of the pioneer organizations working in the field of legal literacy and involves in, offering direct legal aid and services, harmonizing Sudanese legislation with international instruments, through changing the attitudes of the judiciary, attorney, police, prisons and all others concerned bodies. They identify the gap of Mutawinat's lobbying activities in two main points: comprehensive review and evolutions for the whole situation of the women's legal status did not take place. The second point is that there was no laws proposals to be submitted as alternatives of the discriminatory laws, such kind of proposal will help in convening the legislators and encourage them to take the issue of the legislation reform as seriously.

Lessons Learned:

- The advocacy process, against the Khartoum State Wali decree was stuck at certain points and levels, the activities were not well planned, the

directly affected groups (women working in restaurants, hotels and fuel stations) were not included. They were treated as respondents for the quick questionnaire conducted to assess the impact on women who have lost their jobs. A memorandum, drafted by the allied organizations representatives has been sent to the president, UN representatives and workers trade unions and the case was filed to the Constitutional Court without any follow up of the responses. No plan has been set for what is the next step to be taken.

- Disability to deliver well analyzed documentation the good experience. Reports are mostly descriptive and lacking analytical perspectives that identify problems, needs, suggested interventions as well as some success stories and lessons learned.
- The activities were implemented with existing capacities of Mutawinat and its allied organizations; there were no approaches that would enhance impact and sustainability by more exposure to other organizations experiences and compiling lessons such as Ethiopian women lawyer association (EWLA) in legislation reform and Moroccan's experience in changing the personal status laws.
- Lack of information regarding the legal status of women in Sudan relating to types of injustice, discriminatory articles, and legal situation in general.

Recommendations:

- Use of innovative ways such as visual and pictures to pass the information and messages.
- Diversifying of fund sources to overcome the limited budget/ reallocation of budget is crucial; Mutawinat need to review the functions of legislation reform programme and ensure adequate human resources is placed at the relevant levels.
- A research on Sudanese legal status is highly recommended to act as strong advocacy tools.
- Legal reform is a dynamic because of the change of power between advocates and authority people. If the authority has the power today, over the advocates, it does not mean they will have the power over them tomorrow, this why the changes should be achieved through persistent to struggle and resistance.

- The strength of the advocacy drawn from people /affected groups (creating space for public arguments) from where the advocates gain strength and access to the decision making institutions, so as to change the power among these institutions and place the policy issue on political and policy-making agenda

2- Babiker Badri Scientific Association for Women Studies (BBSAWS):

BBSAWS is voluntary organization-established in 1979 to enhancing the women's status towards equality, empowerment, development and full realization of their human capacity. The association uses different approaches of cooperation, integration, and solidarity at local, national and international levels.

The objectives of the association are:

- To encourage and undertake researches
- To undertake projects that contributes to the integration of women in development
- To contribute effectively in regional, national and international programme, conferences and meetings those foster the development of humanity in general and women in particular.

BBSAWS is a pioneer organization advocating for combating FGM targeting different segments in societies such as (community leaders, students, religious leaders, teachers, midwives.....etc). BBSAWS is one of the pioneer organizations working towards combating Female Circumcision (FC) since the -seventies-by using different approaches.

BBSAWS has good relations as well as strong networking relation with relevant national and local organizations; it was participating in all national policies and strategies making regarding the FC issues. It is a founding member of the Inter-Africa Committee (IAC).

The campaign led by the association tries to influence the national policies, particularly the health policy and legislation process. The different programmes designed to combat F.C are targeting different communities' groups as follows:

- Midwives;-/Rural women;
- Community leaders;
- Religious leader;
- Youth;
- School's and universities' students
- Legal professional;
- Policy and legislation makes;

- Relevant health cadres;
- Media people;
- NGO's & Coos' affiliates';
- Teachers;
- High official personnel.

Strategies & approaches:

Three types of strategies (reconciled strategies) have been used: integrating health with development efforts, forming alliances between modern and traditional healers and tackling the F.C as a deeply rooted cultural practice. The logic behind these reconciling strategies is to develop methodology that coup with distinctive features for each culture (as Sudan is highly culturally diversified country). It is based on practical experiences and reality that FC is heavily practiced in Sudan. Two main approaches have been used: health risk approach (focusing on changing practitioners' behaviours) and raising awareness using different types of materials)

Recently the association has adopted innovative approach by injecting relevant information on FGM within the curriculum of the Ahfad University for women (AUW). AUW is main partners of the association on its efforts on combating F.C as the university curriculum is focuses on areas of learning, researches, community related studies, FGM issues are integrated within the education curricula. The findings of the research convened on "the impact of the AUW curriculum for eradicating FGM revealed that 96% of the respondents-(two groups of graduates' students who are graduated 10 years and five years ago, married and have daughters)-will never circumcise their daughters. The interviews with respondents revealed that they are admitting FGM as a harmful practice and should be eradicated.

Lessons Learned:

- The approaches used by the organizations are based on massive awareness activities amongst different segments of societies, and not based on understanding of the root causes of FGM as harmful practice, as well as the social, cultural and political context.
- The issue and for a long time, has been addressed as an "isolated harmful practice. FGM is a practice linked to and part of a complex rule and social construct, where women's positions and interests are totally excluded from such construct. The "right-based approach" was not appropriately handled, since FGM is a practice devised to control women's sexuality to ensure male dominance over women.
- Meeting donors and some target groups' expectations are resulting in lack of focus and sustainable work (long term activities) dealing with different topics, targeting various groups without links and concentrations, is typically reflected by the achievements report of 2006.

- Qualitative and quantitative indicators and impact indicators to measure the social changes not yet fully and clearly drafted by the association. No strategic plan was set the activities implementations highly depend on donation availability and recruitment of personnel according to the received fund. The drastic change taken place within the national policies (from high commitment in early eighties, to stepping back from this commitment in 2002, showed that the association did not include practical and strong measure to counter any problems or resistance.
- Creation of strong outreach through community levels organizations are most effective in understanding the viability and implementation of the awareness activities. In fact the experiences of NGO's in some African countries, developed outreach programme have proven successes in reducing the spread of FGM practice. In Senegal the social mobilization approach was applied for period of time (two years), in a village which a group of woman decided to abandon F.C. Those women succeeded to open up community dialogue and convinced their husbands and religious leaders and made "social/public declaration" never to practice FGM any more. The experience proved great success and transformed into a movement spread to a different villages. The social declaration identified as one of the most successful approach provoked national debate which led to the enactment of a national law prohibiting FGM.
- Women are the group mainly affected by female circumcision hazards, yet they are faced with all guilt and blame.⁶ Dr. Fahima pointed out that F.C, as sensitive and too intimate issue is not highlighted publicly. F.C is a kind of violence perpetrated against girls and it's closely related to gender issues, since it jeopardizes the already disadvantaged positions of the Sudanese women. Therefore men should be targeted and directly involved in combating F.C

3- Gender Centre for Research and Training (GCRT):

GCRT was established in 1997 to work towards raising the awareness on gender concepts, approaches for ensuring gender mainstreaming, in development work and government policies towards attaining and maintaining gender balance and bridging gender gaps.

GCRT was set up to address the gender issues through women empowerment strategies, as the result the GRCT program equipping women with the needed

⁶ Dr. Fahima zahir is head of the social science and anthropology Dept. faculty of economic and social studies , University of Khartoum

skills to enjoy equity in opportunities, choices, and decisions-making power. It also contributes to solidarity among active women organizations through networking. GCRT is proactive in field of research, human rights, training and advocacy, towards fulfilling gender equality and positive socio-economic changes. Research and training are the Centre's key strategies to raise awareness on gender imbalances and address the discrimination against women in the Sudanese society. Research is focused on gender and gender-related issues and on providing factual findings on women's situation and strategies to address such worries. GCRT works also for improving the socio-economic status of vulnerable women. It works on mutual respect of diversity and spread of active dialogue for social inclusion, peace and democracy. Through collaboration with other NGOs, the centre succeeded to addressing various issues such as gender and social exclusion, violence against women, gender and advocacy, gender role in agricultural production and land tenure system, concept of peace building & conflict resolution, gender and food security, and effectiveness of networking in Sudan.

The Strategic objectives:

- Creation and dissemination of knowledge related to issues of development, gender and rights;
- Creation of strong alliances to help influence policies consolidating the emerging democratic experiences;
- Enhancement of right-oriented movement to influence decisions and policies to protect interest of politically, economically, and socially excluded people.

Strategies & approaches:

GCRT has identified numbers of priorities and key issues, such as women and poverty, women and democracy and the impact of the economic structure on women. The thematic areas were developed over years through projects and activities. The publications are considered as value added and enriching the gender literature in Sudan.

Gaps with GCRT Advocacy activities:

Since its establishment and up to 2006 the centre activities were run on desk basis where there were four desks research, training, advocacy and networking and human rights. Such system creating some sort of incoherence of the projects and activities, each desk work with autonomy from other desks and activities for instance the research findings are not necessary used within the training, or even advocacy activities are not using the research results and findings as advocacy tools. One of the constraints of the desk system is that activities are not feeding into each others.

The map of the association's activities showed incoherence of the projects and activities, i.e. each group work with autonomy from each others. Activities are in fragmented way they are not feeding into each others, for instance the research findings are not necessary used within the training, or even feed in advocacy activities or as an advocacy tools.

The core official documents, political statements concerning women's rights and some laws ad regulations are not studied or analyzed by the centre example of the documents is the "National policy for women empowerment" issued by the ministry of social affairs and child and women affaires in March, 2007.

Some target groups (government officials, media persons, political parties affiliated...etc) they are recognizing the role of the centre as positive and its activities have great impact on women's and girl's empowerment. The establishment of the girls' education within the ministry of education is a result of policy influencing. GCRT has to continue its roles by encouraging the department to work on related issues such as FGM awareness, curriculum reforms...etc.

GF is providing an avenue and interactive approach for the identification of the specific gaps through direct consultation with target groups. Some of the gaps within the GCRT advocacy program are that the advocacy is targeting the government staff and not policy makers (politicians) who most of them are men and in badly need of brainstorming and enlighten. The activities are concentrated at policy and strategy level and disregard the community and family level, addressing the gender discrimination dictated by the cultures and norms. They suggested that the awareness program for all women from different backgrounds is crucial, because women are working under very vulnerable and unfair conditions due to the lack of awareness, training and other facilities. Tackling the gender mainstreaming issue should follow smart approach so as to avoid resistance and deviation. gender mainstreaming is a policy issue, (education, health, socio-economic, employments....etc) so targeting only policy makers at technical levels is not enough so politicians should be also targeted to fill the gaps of the decisions making, awareness cycle should be work at both levels bottom-up approach and top-down approach.

Lessons Leaned:

- One of the interesting aspects is the experience of GCRT to influence the school curriculum recruitment policies. Within the curriculum department, a part of the ministry of education, there were no women staff appointed. The centre targeted the staff by brainstorming on gender balances within the staff as well as a gender-sensitive curriculum. The brainstorming sessions resulted in five women being appointed last year, currently living in Eldouim (White Nile state) where the department is located.
- Another interesting aspect is that the partnership process is improving a remarkable ongoing initiative, "Motive". Motive is a partnership between the Center, Salmah Women Resource Centre and Panos-Sudan. The

- foundation was set up with the objective of putting the resources, capacities and experiences of the three founding organizations into research, actions and documentation on women issues together so as to work more effectively to have a wider outreach and increase their impact on combating violence against women.
- The approach to deal with community and family levels and to address the gender disseminations dictated by the culture and norms is very weak. Misconceptions about 'gender' amongst some religious and ideological forces are diminishing ideas by perceiving "gender" as an idea imported from the western world and is not suitable for Sudanese culture and norms. Tackling the gender equality issue should result in a smart approach to avoid resistance and deviation.
 - Establish direct contact/link with the policy makers and influential key posts hindered by ideological differences of the advocates and the policy-makers. In most cases advocates perceive the policy makers as "enemies" to their ideas. On the other hands some influential actors from the official side not fully recognizing the role of the centre.
 - Powerful indicators, gender sensitive qualitative indicators and impact indicators to measure the social changes not yet fully and clearly drafted by the GCRT.
 - Meeting donors and some target groups' expectations are resulting in lack of focus, working in different and many topics and themes without concentrations. This situation is typically reflected by the strategic plan of 2007-2010. Three main themes have been stated: consolidations of democratic transformation, creation and dissemination of knowledge related to issue of development and enhancing rights oriented movement to influence policies related to human rights. Huge numbers of activities identified by the yearly plan⁷ including seven researches on different topics, training, and profile, we topics has been endorsed which is human resource media centre.
 - There is mixing up between research papers and forum/workshop paper.
 - There is turn over due to the unfair budget allocated to the personnel (salaries, wages, and experts fees....etc), the bulk of the funds are usually allocated to the activities and very meager allocated to the salaries and allowances. In 2006 the centre has lost four highly qualified staff. Depending on young volunteers with

⁷ Strategic plan report 2007-2010

little or no experience negatively impact the implementation and inhibited engagement and interactions.

- Although of the exposure of key persons (founder) to information had opened doors for funding opportunities, (Diversifying of fund sources) but there is no fundraising policy in place.

Competencies, Knowledge and Resources Needed:

- Knowledge of lobbying and building alliances
- Knowledge of how to use documented legal cases as an effective advocacy tool.
- Resource persons (to help on drafting law proposals)
- Expertise of advocacy and how to deliver at different levels
- Knowledge of documentation and publications
- Resource persons on gender to deliver appropriate training packages
- Resource persons (experts to deliver appropriate raising awareness packages)
- Knowledge of advocacy and participatory tools and how to deliver
- Knowledge of how to document good experiences for effective advocacy messages.

Common Observations & Recommendations:

- Advocacy should consist of organized efforts and activities based on the existing environment and reality to influence public policies and implements laws.
- The strength of the advocacy drawn from people / affected groups (creating space for public arguments) from where the advocates gain strength and access to the decision making institutions, so as to change the power among these institutions and place the policy issue on political and policy-making agenda
- To make sure that your organization maintains significant relationships with its members, constituents, or those in affected groups and continuously ask yourself three key questions:
 - Are we giving voice to people whose voices are not fully heard?
 - Are we enabling and motivating people to become actively involved in the advocacy process?
 - Are we taking time to learn from the experiences of our members, constituents, or and affected groups.

- Advocacy should consist of organized efforts and activities based on the existing environment and reality to influence public policies and implements laws.
- The areas of resource mobilization, capacity strengthening and scope of work are areas that need to be looked into urgently.
- Strong and clear impact indicator to measure the extent to which the planned activities address the problem and fulfill the desired results.
- Develop approaches that would enhance impact and sustainability by more exposure to other relevant experiences.