

KCGS Activities Report Volume 1, Issue 3

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September 2016

Board Meeting

After a short halt of KCGS activities due to the summer holiday, the board got together in a meeting held on 7th of September at High Council in Erbil. The aim was to discuss issues surrounding the KCGS future as the UN-Women and KRG are withdrawing their financial support. The KCGS board decided that all remaining budget has to be spent according to the budget-line agreement such as activities. Assem and Ibrahim stayed behind to devise a plan and sort all financial matters.

In sum, all agreed that KCGS must implement the board decisions and do all that is necessary to carry out the plan devised at the meeting.

Seminar

On 21 September the KCGS director held a seminar for college students, police and public members. The subject was gender understanding, raising awareness about prejudices against women at workplace, public space and why this is a cultural hindrance. Another local activist Mirza Ibrahim also gave a speech in which he shed light on deep cultural patriarchy that has stood against women full and meaningful participation in the societal processes. KCGS is working closely with local NGOs, anti-violence against women police force and organizing such activities on a regular basis will become a part of our work. More than 50 people attended the event and it was well received. It is crucial that we engage local civic actors all for the sake of achieving KCGS objectives. Many people who participated in seminar welcomed this activity and asked for more such events to be held in future to raise public awareness.

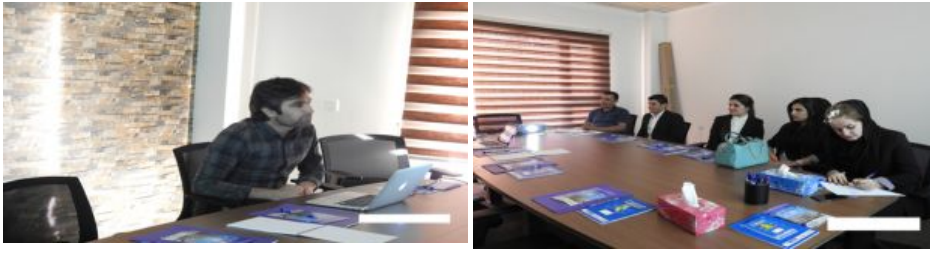
From this event what we learned the most is that KCGS project must continue despite fund shortages. For some people in the event, the concept of gender equality was new and therefore, fascinating one. We urged all participants to read texts, books to become familiar with gender concept. Through this, the level of public and civil servant understanding will increase which could in long-term be beneficial in fighting gender disparities.



Seminar

As a part of KCGS activity to hold events and training for both public and private sectors, for the first time since the center establishment we held a seminar on 22 September for Jihan's Bank staff. Again as other events, the subject was to get them acquainted with KCGS and the reasons for having such an academic institution. After the introduction, we told them our aim is also to inform private sector as an important pillar of society to be aware of gender inequality in the workplace. They welcomed and thanked KCGS for paying them attention as private sector employees. Moreover, the concept of gender studies such as trying to limit the inequality based on being man and women, focusing on women empowerment amused them as they found it interesting and a different approach to women related issues.

In short, this was an important event given that it was the first time that such work had been done with private sector firm. This kind of activity should be carried out more.



Training

As part of our continuous work to train public and private sectors, KCGS held two-day training for anti-violence against women police force in Soran district. KCGS trainer Evan conducted the training sessions on 26 and 27 September. We work closely with this branch of police which is designated to combat violence against women. Therefore, it was crucial the KCGS carried out this event. It was very engaging as 25 police officers eagerly participated and took part in discussions during the sessions. For some participants, this was the first training program that they had taken part as well as never hearing or knowing about gender concept. Moreover, the participants asked for this kind of training to continue in future as they found beneficial and relevant to their work; as it will help and equip them with better knowledge to be gender aware in their dealing with public members.

Highlights; the training was well received and participants were excited with what they gained from two-day training. The feedback was very positive as many asked for more such work to be carried out more given, that they learned a lot in such short course of training.



DVAW Meeting

Upon the invitation of Directorate of Violence Against Women (DVAW) the KCGS director attended a meeting held in Erbil Walat Hotel on 27th of September. The aim was to gather all international and local NGOs for the latest news on women related violence in Kurdistan region. There was some good news in DVAW report as honor killings and other self-harming incidents amongst women was reduced comparing to previous years. Nonetheless, there is still plenty that needs to be done to limit the violence against women in Kurdistan. There were many NGOs all of which provided their account on women related issues and efforts that they have made in such process as well as putting forward their ideas on how to better deal with it. Following the discussions, the need for working together was reiterated as the collective action is the only way forward to end violence. KCGS director also made the point that education and raising awareness will be very helpful and we would gladly work with NGOs to do that if need be.

Attending this event shows that KCGS relation-building is growing and therefore our message for gender equality is expanding. Furthermore, it was also an opportunity to gather some crucial data for our future academic research.



Training

Following our intense activities in September 2016, we held another training program this time for Traffic police in Soran on 28 and 29 of this month. The reason we choose to train traffic police was that they too deal with the public members on a daily basis. Thus, understanding gender-related issues is vital for them to get around it. As expected this training was their first major event, and all were delighted that KCGS has given them this chance to get acquainted with gender disparities. Many police officers had very basic or no idea about the gender equality and thus, founded it as an interesting subject. Unfortunately, all those who participated were men as this police force had only two or three female officers in their ranks. Having said that they were very satisfied and thanked KCGS for providing them with this opportunity as it was the first time they had taken part in such activity. They asked for more training for their colleagues since they said that their thinking has changed towards the concept of gender and its importance to society.

In summary, all participants gave a positive feedback and said that these sort of training should take place more often. Many said that our community needs to understand more about gender disparities; only then, we will be able to reduce violence against women and be able to fight for men and women rights equally.



Training feedback samples

- *Many thanks for this opportunity, I have learned a lot in these two-days. My wish is that you will continue providing this chance to all; only then, we will be able to make a difference.*
- *This was the first time that I have learned so much in such short period. I am very thankful for all your efforts and commitment to enlightening our community for a better future not only for us but our kids too.*
- *Thank you very much, for me this was a very especial training, as I have learned many things that will stay with me and how I view both men and women in future. Please keep doing the good work.*
- *What has really impressed me in this training was that, you made us all to actively participate. I felt valued and that my opinion matters. As for the gender understanding, I am very happy to have attended and learned many things that will help me to do my work with better judgment.*
- *Please continue doing what you taught us, our police force and all those who serve public daily need to know about gender. It will make us all to be less judgmental about males and females. Again many thanks for this opportunity.*