Final Report to the Embassy of the Netherlands

**Breaking Gender Stereotypes in Sudan**

2016-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of the project</th>
<th>Breaking Gender Stereotypes in Sudan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant contract number</td>
<td>RSG0123297 (KHA-29642)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>The project’s overall objective to challenge gender norms and stereotypes affecting women in the work world in order to increase economic opportunities for women, particularly IDP and migrant women, in Greater Khartoum, Sudan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Beneficiaries</td>
<td>20 women, 5 teachers of vocational training, 5 employers, 50 students of vocational training institute, 150 members of women cooperatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Omdurman, Bahry, and Khartoum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period covered</td>
<td>Initially 12 months: from 1 December 2016 to 1 December 2017. No cost extension: until 28 February 2018.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact person:</td>
<td>Hala Al-Karib, SIHA Regional Director</td>
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<td>+256 759 286 263</td>
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<td>Adla Abubkr, Sudan Program Coordinator</td>
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<td></td>
<td>+249 921210000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sihanet.org">www.sihanet.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video of project</td>
<td>“Breaking the Norms - a Documentary”: <a href="https://youtu.be/gDEJForkf_Y">https://youtu.be/gDEJForkf_Y</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachments to report</td>
<td>1. Financial report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Baseline assessment report</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Visual Report</td>
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“There is no such thing as a type of job that determines who can work; if you get the job done, khalas, it’s your job. The women that do the job break the gender stereotype”

A female electricity technician in the short documentary “Breaking the Norms”

I. Introduction

With support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Dutch Embassy in Sudan, the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) has successfully undertaken the project “Breaking Gender Stereotypes in Sudan”. The project challenges gender norms and stereotypes that affect women in the world of work, and works to increase economic opportunities for women, particularly IDP and migrant women in Greater Khartoum, Sudan. The project took place over the period from December 2016 until February 2018, including a no cost extension of three months. The finalization of the project was completed with a special complementary event at the residence of Her Excellency Karin Boven, Ambassador of the Netherlands, to celebrate International Women’s Day 2018 on the 8th of March. The 20 trained and skilled women of this project attended the event, where the Dutch Embassy, the Sudanese Journalist Union, and UNESCO together with SIHA exchanged knowledge and experience in the field of gender equality and women (and men) empowerment, an ongoing pressing issue in Sudan. At this event, the conclusion of the project was presented, and the short documentary “Breaking the Norms” that was produced for this project, was screened.

This final evaluation report gives a more detailed account of the process and project implementation according to the undertaken activities. The lessons learned will result in conclusions and recommendations. In addition, this final narrative report is accompanied by an external evaluation report on the experience of the beneficiaries, the project communication, and the project’s impact and sustainability. These reports serve as essential documents in the continuation of “breaking gender stereotypes” and eventual follow up activities in our collective struggle for gender equality in economic opportunities. Also attached is the final financial report, and a visual report to get an impression of the project activities. The structure of this report is as follows. First, the project context will be explained in terms of relevant background information to embed the project in the contemporary political developments in Sudan, followed by an outline of the project design. Second, the results of the baseline assessment will be discussed as foundation for the implementation of the activities, which subsequently will be described.
II. Project context
SIHA started this project to support urban poor and migrant/IDP young women in the informal sector living at the peripheries of Greater Khartoum who struggle to access productive employment opportunities for entrepreneurship. This project worked specifically on providing skills in non-gender typical vocations and with apprenticeships at supportive places of employment, guiding and supporting the women as they break gender stereotypes and seek economic opportunities. The project also worked on promoting discussions of women’s work and equal economic opportunities in Sudan amongst employers, labor union leaders, women’s cooperatives, and skills training institutes, with the aim of changing gender stereotypical perceptions of women’s economic opportunities.

In Sudan, SIHA has been working for years on advancing women’s human rights, ending violence against women, and increasing women’s economic opportunities. This project is part of SIHA’s wider endeavors on these issues, and SIHA benefits from its extensive network of civil society organizations, not only within Sudan, but also from across the Horn of Africa, incorporating over 80 members from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, Somaliland, South Sudan and Uganda.

Background
Sudan’s patriarchal culture has been aggravated in the past 25 years by the ascendance to power of a deeply misogynistic regime which imposes strict gender segregating and discriminatory norms on the Sudanese society. Since this government, gender segregation and stereotypes in Sudan are widespread in various sectors of society, dictating which professions and economic sectors are suited for men versus women. Such norms have been internalized by members of each gender in Sudan, and often reflect in individuals’ decisions about their careers. Following this framework, women are assigned themselves to jobs that are considered an extension to their domestic activities and most girls won’t even consider working as a mechanic, an electrician or a driver when growing up. However, these type of jobs often offer an unexpected potential condition for women (can fix things in household, more flexible hours to combine with etc). When they do, they must overcome strong stigmatization and de-legitimization process from their relatives and their community, not to mention their co-workers and manager or potential clients. Moreover, for women who have attempted to enter vocational careers by completing training in a non-gender typical profession, discrimination from potential employers often prevents them from finding a job at all, which de-legitimizes further their vocation. Inquiry to young women who had graduated from non-gender typical courses from Khartoum II Training Institute revealed the challenges they face in finding employment once completed their course, with employers denying their capacity to achieve similar results as those of men in the same position.

The Sudanese Public Order laws, enacted into the Sudan Criminal Code of 1991, largely contribute to the perpetuation and normalization of discrimination and violence against women. Based on militant interpretations of Islamic Shari’a, the laws are infused with a conception of women as problematic actors, whose presence in public and private life must be subject to the highest scrutiny, implying strict restrictions of movement and control of dress code.
All Sudanese women are not equally vulnerable to gender stereotypes in the labour market. Prolonged inner conflicts, poverty and natural disaster have forced a great part of the rural Sudanese population to leave for urban centres, with flows of IDPs fuelling the rapidly growing class of urban poor engaging in the informal sector. However, while displaced males dominate construction work, public transport jobs and most segments of manual work, women, who constitute one third of Greater Khartoum IDPs, survive through undertaking more precarious forms of informal self-employment that expose them to greater risks, including harassment from authorities, health hazards or sexual assault. These women work as tea or food sellers, street vendors, petty traders, alcohol brewers and sellers or domestic labourers, so many fields that are considered an extension of the domestic work and that offer them few to no opportunity of evolution other than shifting to another informal and precarious form of self employment. SIHA has also observed a generational effect – young women from poor families whose mothers work as food and tea sellers tend to view this as their only viable option for work. Men, on the other hand, while still 1) Internally Displaced Persons 2) Urban Refugees 3) facing difficulties linked to working in the informal sector or in under-skilled jobs, also have greater possibilities for promotion – from working as a trainee in a workshop to being a carpenter or a technical mechanic, from being the assistant in a public transport vehicle to becoming the driver.

During the early 1990s, the Embassy of the Netherlands in Khartoum brought crucial support to women informal labourers in Alsough Al Shabi. Women street vendors, shop labourers, domestic workers, weavers, most of them IDPs, were able to establish their own shops and to structure their economic activities, bringing vital contributions to their families and communities. Displaced women are overwhelmingly represented in the informal economy in Greater Khartoum, and the Sudanese government’s growing resentment towards displaced persons in Khartoum in the late 2000s undermined the continuous efforts of these women to maintain their business and income. The 2009 crackdown on international NGOs providing services to IDPs weakened them even further, leaving them and their families with no external support for education or healthcare while forced evictions and land grabbing by developers constantly threatened their very access to housing. Against this backdrop, SIHA has supported the official formation of the first Sudanese Women’s Cooperatives Union on 8th March 2014.

**Sudanese Women’s Cooperatives Union**

Founded by a woman tea seller displaced from Kordofan, the Sudanese Women’s Cooperatives Union represents women street vendors in Greater Khartoum. The Union is composed of 13 women’s cooperatives from different areas in Khartoum (Khartoum North (Bahri), Omdurman (al Mulazmine), Khartoum (Jakson, Nile street, Suq Sha’abi in Khartoum, al Sagana, Al Kalakla, Jebel Awliya, Wad al ‘Agali (Al-Kalakla)). Each cooperative has a membership of 100 – 400 women whose income is generated through selling tea and food on roadsides or engaging in other informal labor. The Union supports and improves women’s livelihoods, challenges their mistreatment and provides them with legal support. In 2016, the founder of the Union received the International Women of Courage award from the US Department of State. The Women’s Union is a partner for this project.

In Interviews with the Women’s Union, while accounting for an overall improvement of their situation since the creation of the Union, the members of the cooperatives state that most of their daily challenges are inherent to the economic sectors they are assigned as women. They also express
great admiration for women who do manage to penetrate non-gender typical sectors – a female carpenter in Azahari area in Khartoum, a livestock trader in Jebel Awliya, a rickshaw driver in Mayo, and many others. In line with those inspirational efforts to break gender stereotypes, SIHA developed the present pilot with view to opening new discourse in Sudan on women’s work. With a focus on most vulnerable populations in the outskirts of Greater Khartoum, including IDPs from conflict areas such as Darfur, South Sudan, and Blue Nile, the project will explore partnerships and avenues to begin a new conversation on breaking gender stereotypes in the work world, aiming at identifying the best ways to provoke mind and behavior change towards women in the workforce in Sudan, in particular in non-gender typical jobs.

**Project design**

The project is initiated and developed based upon SIHA’s extensive experience with women in the marginalized positions in Sudan. To reach the potentially interested young women, SIHA works in partnership with the Skills Training Institute, the Skilled Laborers Union, and the Sudanese Women’s Cooperative Union.

**Overall Objective**

The project’s overall objective is to challenge gender norms and stereotypes affecting women in the work world in order to increase economic opportunities for women, particularly IDP and migrant women.

**Specific objectives**

1. To provide 20 young women, particularly IDP/migrant women, with skills in non-gender typical vocations, with apprenticeships at supportive places of employment, guiding and supporting them as they break gender stereotypes and seek economic opportunities.

2. To promote discussion on concepts of women’s work and equal economic opportunity in Sudan amongst employers, labor union leaders, women’s cooperatives, and skills training institutes, with a view to changing gender stereotypical perceptions of women’s economic opportunities in Greater Khartoum, Sudan.

**Beneficiaries**

This project targeted 20 young women between ages 18 – 30, living in the peripheries of Khartoum as IDP or migrant. 5 Teachers from the Skills training institute, 5 vocational employers, 5 leaders of the Skilled Laborers Union, 50 students at Khartoum II Training Institute and 150 members of women’s cooperatives, in apprenticeships have the opportunity for higher level certification in their vocation.

**Timeline**

Initially, the duration of the project was 12 months over the period 1 December 2016 until 1 December 2017. Given the fact that BGS is a new project idea for SIHA, the project has been delayed at the initial stage of preparation and setting up the activities. The process has taken more time than anticipated. Therefore, to be able to accomplish all planned activities, 3 months up to 28 February 2018 have been added to the project via a no-cost extension agreement. The beginning of the project was challenging because of the difficulties to actually match the women with employers, mostly in the electricity apprenticeship. After extensive consultation efforts in forms of surveys, meetings, and
awareness creation with potential employers of the private sector (from small workshops to large sized companies such as DAL Group, Haggar Group, and JTC). SIHA experienced that many employers say to support the idea of training and employing women in these specific jobs, but that they themselves don’t have the opportunity to employ them due to the lack of “suitable” (physical) space for the women. This challenge will be elaborated upon in the final part of this report [see timeline attached].

III. Results Baseline Assessment

At the outset of the project, SIHA conducted a baseline assessment in order to explore the context related to job opportunities for IDP women and girls in Greater Khartoum, and to inform decisions throughout project implementation. The objectives of the baseline assessment were to:

1. Explore the possibility of opening new access to jobs largely unknown to Sudanese women in the labour market;
2. Investigate why women working in the informal sector do not join public transportation, carpentry, and electronic and electric fields of work;
3. Survey possibilities for IDP women to be trained and work in fields such as general electricity, carpentry, building/construction, metalworking, welding, electronics, mechanics, or driving.

This baseline assessment was designed and conducted by Dr. Amani M. El Obied, a SIHA partner, with support from Leem Alnjeeb, SIHA Outreach Officer. Baseline assessment activities took place between December 2016 and January 2017 in Khartoum. Interviews were concentrated in Mayo, Libya Dar al Salam, Suq Sha’abi Khartoum and Suq Sha’abi Omdurman. Data collection relied primarily on qualitative methods and procedures consisted of the following:

a. **Individual interviews**. Semi-structured interviews with IDP women street vendors, administration at vocational training institutes in Khartoum, Bahri, and Omdurman, police officers, and relevant labor unions (see table: ‘Baseline participants’).

b. **Focus group discussion (FGD)**. One FGD with 15 IDP women street vendors (8 Jan 2017) at the Sudanese Women’s Cooperatives Union headquarters in Suq Sha’abi.

c. **Desk review**. Review of relevant laws, prior research and academic papers, United Nations reports, and newspapers.

**Baseline Participants**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Individual Interviews</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>Women street vendors</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>Vocational Training Institute administration</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Order Police officer</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Police officers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Industries and Crafts Union</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union of Sudanese Transport Chambers</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Interviews</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
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The baseline has shown a strong interest of Sudanese IDP and female street vendors to expand job opportunities beyond traditionally defined gender roles and job types. The baseline has highlighted a number of significant barriers which may need to be addressed in order to support the IDP women and girls to break gender stereotypes, including political, social and legal limitations. The assessment confirmed that there are small numbers of women in Greater Khartoum already working in vocations typically dominated by men, and these women are fairly well-known; they were identified by the founder of the Women’s Cooperatives Union. Individual interviews with four women working in non-gender typical vocations revealed that they are either single or divorced, that they face harassment ranging from mild to severe, and that they choose to stay in the work because it is financially rewarding. All four women are enthusiastic about seeing other females join these fields.

On a social level, abuse and harassment has been an unfortunately common experience for the women workers interviewed although this did not deter them from their vocations. The abuse ranged from the domestic level, to public harassment and stigmatization, to pressure from public order officials. However, as these women demonstrated, there were also support systems to draw upon including female colleagues and institutional support, and this harassment was not a deciding factor for them against the financial and social advantages of their work. The issue of abuse or harassment of women working in non-gender typical vocations is not an absolute barrier but it is an important consideration for already marginalized and vulnerable IDP women. The women already working in non-gender typical vocations are known to the IDP women and have been demonstrating financial rewards, independence, upward mobility, and the value of support networks.

Despite strong interest expressed by IDP women in driving work, legal restrictions in the transport sector, particularly with regard to public transport, present certain limits to driving work which would require a systemic change to address. However other forms of driving work are possible for Sudanese women and there was a suggestion that there is even a potential niche market for women drivers. Political barriers within the Small Industries and Crafts Union and institution-level gender stereotyping present barriers for IDP women in particular as they are explicitly excluded, as well as limiting access to apprenticeship opportunities for Sudanese women generally. These are systemic biases at a leadership level. However, the interviews with vocational training institutions demonstrated positive supportive signals to promote women’s enrolment onto non-gender typical training programs, with solutions and opportunities being suggesting by institution leaders. In particular, the stated willingness to accommodate women’s current income-generating activities was very significant in increasing the accessibility of training for IDP women who might otherwise fear the opportunity cost.

The baseline assessment presents a complex picture of the opportunities and barriers for IDP women seeking to break gender stereotypes in the work world however there is strong evidence of opportunities emerging for training and employment, as well as success stories of IDP women who have already begun to work in male dominant trades. There is however a need to build a supportive environment and to address systemic issues which exclude IDP women from unions and women in general from certain types of employment.
IV. Evaluation of expected results

The overall objective of this evaluation is to assess, analyze and report on the activities impact the programme has had on the lives of the targeted communities after four years of implementation. An external evaluation.

Orientation phase: connecting the odds

The partnership between SIHA, the Women’s Cooperatives Union, and Skills Training Institutes in Khartoum 2 led to the organization of an one-day "project planning workshop" in December 2016 and was attended by 14 women. During this workshop, the project objectives and activities where extensively discussed, and the project action plan revised, pointing out shared responsibilities among the partners and a division of tasks. A project supervision committee was formed, scheduling regular meetings during the implementation period.

Motivational orientation speeches

During were two moments of motivational speeches: in the orientation phase, and in the middle of the project. After the baseline assessment, in partnership with the Women’s Cooperatives Union, SIHA started the project by hosting three sessions of motivational speeches at community levels to reach out in various ways to potential candidates, and encourage women to actually register for the project. Two sessions were held between December 2016 and January 2017 in the Omdurman localities: Umbada where 30 women attended, and Wad AlBashir where 45 women attended, and one session in Khartoum locality Mayo, where 25 women attended the session. These sessions were focused on communicating the project to the local community, among others: members of the Women’s Union, women and girls who expressed interest during the baseline assessment, and community leaders from the localities, and women who enrolled in previous SIHA programs. The women cooperative played vital role in the mobilization and organization process for these sessions in the community level. The orientation sessions were facilitated by SIHA, the administrator of the Khartoum II vocational training institution.

The sessions were presented by four women who are already working in unconventional jobs that assumed predominantly done by men. These women were identified during the baseline assessment by the founder of the Sudanese Women’s Cooperatives Union: “Hawa the carpenter, Hikmat the mechanic for motorbikes, and Asia the mechanic who opened a workshop for maintenance of cars”. They talked about how they entered these fields and the challenges they faced in the first years. Also they discussed dealing with harassment, sexual harassment and the workplace and how they overcome their problems. In addition, the SIHA staff presented the project and a motivational speech was given by a representative of the Women’s Union who shared their experience with various successfully income generating women, such as tea ladies. Lastly, several community leaders talked about the current variety of challenges that women in their community face, and encourage the women and girls to work in the invisible jobs, to have careers and gain skills, and ultimately to become qualified laborers and benefit from having secure jobs. The motivational speeches have been used as an advocacy entry point in the local community. SIHA has targeted cooperative members, community leaders, CBOs and women and girls. The panel was used to encourage
women and girls working in the invisible sectors to shift and change their careers by joining men dominant vocational job opportunities.

**Specific Objective 1: Skills, Training, and Support**

To provide 20 young women, particularly IDP/migrant women, with skills in non-gender typical vocations, with apprenticeships at supportive places of employment, guiding and supporting them as they break gender stereotypes and seek economic opportunities.

**Activity 1.1. 20 young women will be placed in apprenticeships for 6 months with 5 employers who are open to having female employees**

In December 2016, SIHA started the project by conducting meetings with the Women’s Cooperatives Union’s executive committee, to explain the project’s objectives and planned activities. This meeting was attended by 14 women. The intention was to establish a formal partnership with the Women’s Union and support by a 24,000SDG grant to for supporting the project implementation. During the orientation sessions, SIHA has discussed the different aspects of the project, objectives, shared responsibilities, and the selection criteria of young women who are suitable for the vocational skills building.

**Selection process for apprenticeships**

SIHA made a significant effort in the strategic selection of women to be placed in vocational skills training as we learned from SIHA experiences that carefully selecting participants is critical to the success of the project.

Selection criteria were agreed upon with the Women’s Union:

- Age 18 – 30
- Priority given to IDP/migrant women
- Interest in pursuing work, and if possible, record of previous skill-training in one of these fields: general electricity, carpentry, building/construction, metalworking, welding, electronics, mechanics, or driving
- Demonstrated leadership skills
- Priority given to young women facing financial difficulty pursuing further studies

The apprenticeship placements contained the following steps:

1. Registration: 60 women from the orientation sessions, were interested and registered via a written form.
2. Interviews: SIHA interviewed all the applicants and after the personal interviews, a few withdrew, and several had to be rejected because they failed the selection criteria: some were illiterate and some beyond the age criteria.
3. 25 of the applicants were accepted, among them they express interest for carpentry and electricity. Because of the difficulties faced with finding potential employers for the apprenticeships electricity specialty, we find the solution to get them all in the Taddod workshop, a carpentry workshop in Wad al Bashir, Omdurman, while continuously looking for a placement in an electricity apprenticeship. After a few months, a 8 more girls heard about
the project and fitted the criteria, but they were keen to receive training in electricity. A measurement that was taken to make up with the challenge of finding an electricity employer, was to provide the 8 women with the three months vocational training, before an internship apprenticeship. SIHA is still supporting them in finding a placement.

4. After 6 months, 12 girls of the initial 25 entered with the carpentry apprenticeship, they started the level upgrade 3 months vocational training. Together with the 8 girls who entered the electricity workshop, a total of 18 girls graduated and received certificates and a personal toolkit in February 2018.

Building private sector partnerships
A survey was held by SIHA to find potential employers in Khartoum, Bahri, and Omdurman. Dozens of smaller and larger workshops were approached to inquire the owners’ perspectives on female employees. The survey created moments for discussion, raising awareness among the owners and employees. The majority of the workshop owners and male employees expressed their support of women in these type of jobs, and confirm that it is a good idea that women seek economic opportunities to provide for themselves. However, simultaneously most workshop owners responded negatively when they were asked to receive the women trainees in their own workshops. Their reasons for not accepting women mostly referred to the lack of a suitable space for women - in terms of privacy, protection from potential harassment, and the harsh working conditions.

Also meetings with CSR and HR departments of larger companies were arranged, among others DAL Group, Haggar, LG factory, and JTC. After initial conversations, they were repeatedly invited to various sessions and workshops by SIHA to build partnerships. Many companies said to support the idea of the project, but despite initial promises, there were minimal responses and follow up communication. The most promising contact has been with Haggar, they stated that they are willing

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Vocation</th>
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<tr>
<td>01</td>
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to train girls from the vocational training, and they want to employ them for 3 months but they have a waiting list to enroll people in their training. Their requirement for hiring women is that the women should be trained already.

After establishing good agreements with both Al Tadod Carpentry workshop, and Hikma’s car mechanic workshop as potential future employer (no women registered for car mechanics this time), the in kind incentives were distributed among the two partners. Al Tadod benefited from tools and the coverage of the trainer costs, and Hikma’s workshop received a contribution to rent payment and workshop tools.

**Activity 1.2. Three months upgrade level vocational training**

12 women enjoyed the upgrade level vocational training for carpentry in the Khartoum 2 Vocational Training institute, which is related to the Ministry of Labour, which is accepting women - unlike the Vocational Training Institutes under the Ministry of Education. Additionally, 8 women received a 3 months vocational training in electricity.

**Activity 1.3. Graduation ceremony**

On the 2nd of March 2018, SIHA organized an official graduation ceremony (see photos). Various partners were invited and attended the festive session. Upon completion of the project, the women were promised to receive support in kind supplies. We distributed equipment: every graduate received a personal toolset.

**Activity 1.4. One day supportive training on harassment and workplace rights**

This training was organized on the 25th of December 2017 for the 20 women in the 3 months vocational training, at the Khartoum 2 Vocational Training Institute.

- Youssra Akasha, women’s rights activist, talking about the definition of gender and gender roles, and workplace rights.
- Muntasir Ibrahim, a lawyer talking about the anti-harassment labour laws and criminal laws.

**Specific Objective 2: Promoting the discussion on gender equality**

To promote discussion on concepts of women’s work and equal economic opportunity in Sudan amongst employers, labor union leaders, women’s cooperatives, and skills training institutes, with a view to changing gender stereotypical perceptions of women’s economic opportunities.

**Activity 2.1. A Two day sensitization workshop on gender equality**

On the 11th and 12th of October workshop sessions were organized at the Mamon Bihairy Hall for 33 female students, instructors, employers, and leaders of the Labour Union attended. The workshop was called: “Gender equality, women’s human rights, and workplace rights for women in male dominated sectors”. The objectives to discuss these topic:

1. With a view to changing gender and promoting further discussion on concepts of women’s work and equal economic opportunity in Sudan amongst employers, women’s cooperatives, and skills training institutes, with a view to changing gender stereotypical perceptions of
women’s economic opportunities and advocate for the women who have been in the field of a male-dominated trade.

2) Elimination of sexual harassment and sensitizing technical tutors and potential employers to gender equality, equal-opportunity employment and equal treatment of employees, which will facilitate the integration of the women on the job market, as well as contribute to the creation of safe and comfortable working conditions for women.

The facilitator:
★ Manal Abd-Alhleem: she highlighted on the concept of Gender and Gender equality. From one of the instructor question on women’s ability to endure the difficulties of the vocational trades, the participants openly and curiously have led a very fruitful debate on many issues and concerns related to the girls’ ability of enduring the hardships of certain jobs.

The program:
★ Day 1:
  9:30 - 10:00  Registration SIHA introduction (SIHA Team)
  10:00 - 11:00  Gender Concept
  11:00 - 11:30  Tea Break
  12:30 - 13:30  Lunch and Prayers
  13:30 - 14:30  Working Groups – Open discussion - Closing

★ Day 2:
  10:00 - 11:00  Protection from all types of harassment in workplace
  11:00 - 11:30  Tea Break
  11:30 – 12:30  Anti harassment policies in firms
  12:30 - 13:30  Lunch and Prayers
  13:30 - 14:30  Working Groups – Open discussion – Closing ceremony

Activity 2.2. Two half-day motivational speech for 50 students at Khartoum II Training Institute
On the 14th and 15th of February 2018, two half day motivational sessions were organized for 50 students and teachers of the training institute. The facilitators:
★ Zahir, a human rights defender with legal aid background
★ Enass Muzamil, expert women empowerment.

The sessions covered the following topics:
★ An interactive discussion based training focusing on raising awareness and creating a proper understanding to gender equality, equal-opportunity employment and equal treatment
★ Illustrating the gender concept.
★ Awareness on gender equality, human rights and sexual harassment.
★ Supportive exercises to learn how to deal with harassment, sexual harassment and workplace rights.
Exploring perceptions about the kind of work women can do identify roots of gender inequality in vocational jobs and help to counter perceptions and change beliefs.

Addressing the policies the limit women working in vocational jobs and try to identify a new policies

**Activity 2.3. Six half-day motivational speech for 50 members of women’s cooperatives**

After the 3 motivational sessions during the orientation phase, 3 more motivational sessions were organized between June and September in Khartoum, Omdurman, and Shiraga. These half-day sessions focused on equal work and economic opportunities for women. The discussion addressed the issue why these vocational skills would only be for men, while we identified interested and potential women participants. Please find the short reports of the motivational sessions below.

**2nd Motivational Session:**

On Monday 19th June 2017, SIHA held the second motivational session in AlGuneid Cultural Center in Khartoum. The event was a Ramadan Iftar and 100 women from Women’s Union, 2 from the Union of Craftsman ‘Itihad Al-Hirafeen’ and SIHA Staff attended.

The motivational speakers were:

- Awadia Mahmud, President of the Women’s Union
- Awadia Abas, the Financial Secretary
- Wafa President of Al- Ilfa cooperative.

We started the session by presenting SIHA activities, our partnership with the Women’s Union, and the project objective, and overview of the baseline, and the experience so far. Awadia Mahmud, the president of the Women’s Union, mentioned the importance of this project and how it provides a life changing opportunities for the participants as it will help them to work in a relatively better environment than the women in their communities, also it will help them to improve their lives instead of selling tea on the streets (to improve their livelihood and to protect the girls from the hazards such as the lengthily hours where they have to endure both customers harassment and brutal authorities acts). Also, she said the Union will support the activities by visiting the workshop and requested the Craftsman Union to help and support the initiative by providing work opportunities and facilitate the process.

Wafaa, the coordinator from the Ilfa Cooperative (Al Taddod) talked about their experience with the carpentry workshop in the beginning as a self sustained group, and about the lack of financial support by which they had to collect the instructor’s fees from the participants, until one of SIHA’s regular contacts heard about the initiative. SIHA is sponsoring the initiative now and has taken the responsibility and provides technical support too as the participants will attend a 3 months course in Khartoum II vocational training center (the only one in Greater Khartoum to have carpentry courses).

Mr. Mohammed from the Craftsmen Union was impressed with this initiative and expressed his full support, also he talked about women rights to work and how they suffer from different types of harassments; special those women who work in the informal sector. He thinks that this project will
change families life and said he is willing to help by open opportunities to young women and specially for electrician, air conditioning and carpentry.

3rd Motivational Speech
SIHA and the Women’s Union held the motivational session in Khartoum (Villa Toubia) 19th Sep 2017. 37 from the Women’s Cooperatives who work in tea and food selling attended the session, in addition to the motivational speakers:
- Awadia Mahmud
- Jalila Khamis

Awadia Mahmud, the Union leader, presented the challenges they face as tea and food seller and how women can advocate to the importance of this project, and how it provides a life changing opportunities for the participants as it will help them to work in a relatively better environment than the women in their communities.

Jalila Khamis is working with IDPs from the Nuba Mountains. She talked about the project with girls from the literacy classes and how they were motivated to know more about the project.

4th Motivational Speech: Who Said You Can’t
The 4th community advocacy motivational speech held in Omdurman (Umbada) on 27 September 2017. The event was under theme “Who Said You Can’t” and 60 women from Al-mosada Al-Zatia Women’s Cooperative were invited. The speakers:
- Two Community leaders
- Hikma: The mechanic and workshop owner
- SIHA Staff.

The Session discussed the women work and how they can break the stereotyping with different jobs. The participants expressed their views on the work of women in the vocations acquired by men and the community stigma and gender stereotyping.

Hikma a mechanic, and one of the potential employers, told her story as inspiring story for the women who want to enter this field. She talked about the challenges that she faced in the first years of her work, and how she deal with harassment, sexual harassment and workplace and how she was overcome to the problems. The participants asked Hikma many questions about her experience in the market and the Industrial Area that is full of men, and how she can deal with her customers. Hikma answered all the questions and encouraged women and girls to challenge all the boundaries and they can do it.

Motivation Speech in Al Shigara – Khartoum
In August, SIHA organised an extra motivational speech in Al Shigara by MS. Galia Khamis, who is working in literacy classes with displaced persons from Nuba Mountains. Galia Khamis talked about the project with girls from the literacy classes and they were motivated to know more about the
project. About 20 girls attended. After that we had another meeting in Al Shigara with 6 girls attending the session aged between 18-21 years old.

**Activity 2.4. Two awareness sessions for 45 ppl at Khartoum II Training Institute**

SIHA conducted 2 awareness sessions during the event “16 Days of Activism” on the 4th of December 2017. The day was divided in 3 sessions: the first session was for 3 classes of the grades 11 and 12 of the Training Institute to introduce them to the idea behind the 16 Days of Activism event.

The second workshop was on gender equality and breaking gender stereotypes, attended by 150 students of the Khartoum II Training Institute, and additional invitees attended the event including The Netherlands embassy staff, US embassy representative, USAID, Swiss Embassy, DAL Group, civil society organizations, SIHA’s friends, vocational Center staff, students and youth groups. The program included a photo exhibition about women in breaking the stereotype with their jobs.

**Activity 2.5. Five consultation sessions for 5 employers and 5 Union leaders**

As described above, during the orientation phase of the project, SIHA held consultation meetings with various actors in the private sector. In a later phase once the employers were identified, the Skilled Labour Union leaders and SIHA held individual consultation meetings with the two employers (Al Taddod and Hikma) to explore and discuss perceptions of women’s work, gender equality, and attitudes that support women’s rights. All these employers showed their willingness to accommodate the girls after completion of their trainings. Unfortunately, as mentioned in the part about the private sector relationships, we have not (yet) managed to bring all big companies and small workshops together because of their apparent hesitations to actually get on board.

**Activity 2.6. Five network meetings for 20 women, 5 employers, 10 Union leaders, and 5 training institute staff**

There were several network meetings to establish a strong network among the trainees, SIHA, the Union, the possible employers and the Training Institute. In these meetings we addressed how to promote women’s work and equal economic opportunity in Sudan with a clear view of changing gender stereotypical perceptions of women’s economic opportunities.

The first meeting for example was with the women to encourage them to find jobs, SIHA and the Women’s Union visited them in the Training Institute. The second meeting was after the women graduated with SIHA and the Women Union, to discuss how we as network can help to get the women a job placement. Time is the biggest challenge in establishing an official network, we will need more time for establishing a strong relationship mostly with the private sector. The teachers, women and unions are all willing the attend the meeting - but the employer is often too busy for in depth discussions about gender equality and seems to request an approach where they know what they need to deliver exactly.
Activity 2.7. Realization and screening of a short clip featuring girls in non-gender typical places of work

The short documentary: “Breaking the Norms” has been successfully produced by a professional filmmaker, telling stories of non-stereotypical occupation for women, by Sudanese women. It was screened receiving much enthusiasm from the audience. One screening took place on the 8th of March 2018, during the International Women’s Day Event at the Dutch Residence.

Another screening took place in the community, the Wad Al Bashir group: the families organized a graduation ceremony at carpentry workshop, around 80 women and girls from the community attended and expressed serious enthusiasm after seeing the inspirational documentary.

The short documentary has been published on the SIHA website and on social media, reaching a wide audience and enthusiastic comments.

★ The youtube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDEJForkJ_Y

Activity 2.8. Support to Sudanese Women’s Cooperative Union

After a formal partnership was established, support has been provided to Sudanese Women’s Cooperative Union in various ways. SIHA has been working hand in hand with the cooperative to ensure efficiency and productivity of the teaching center. In addition, SIHA assisted the cooperation to provide a healthy and productive work environment within their center. In Khartoum, Omdurman, (and Bahri), all the registration of the women went through the cooperative. This project benefited from and added to their network. Also, serious efforts have been made to establish a good relationship with the Skilled Labour Union, they had 3 network meetings. They invited the Labour Union during the Ramadan iftar, which is a good momentum to connect because of the extra incentive during this time.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

The project has been a pilot project for SIHA and the stakeholders, unveiling great potentials to break gender stereotypes at workplaces in Sudan, and providing more insights on which steps are still needed to take from here. The baseline assessment (attached) increased SIHA’s in-depth knowledge about the contemporary situation, and the historical, legal, and cultural limitations that need to be taken into account when paving the way towards gender equality in the workplace. Over the course of the 15 months, many women have taken the initiative to become resourceful, providing themselves the chance to learn and increase their vocational skills. Not only that, these women have showed courage as leader and inspiration for men and women of their communities.

The overall project was successful in terms of meeting the expected results. Its innovative character has been received very well by many relevant actors, such as the women themselves, the Unions, and the Khartoum 2 Training Institute. A total of 68 women showed enthusiasm and applied for the project, of which initially 25 were accepted to the 6 month carpentry apprenticeship, and another 8 women entered the 3 month electricity vocational training immediately. Out of the 25 carpentry women completed the 6 months apprenticeship, 12 were selected for the 3 month carpentry
vocational training - of which 18 graduated. A total of 18 from the 20 students thus graduated from the vocational trainings and received certificates and a personal toolkit to start small work as handyWOman. Two women of the electricity training have mentioned to be making an income, using their toolkits and applying their learned skills in their networks. All of the women who participated in the apprenticeships and vocational training have tremendously increased their skills, and continue to access the workshop space for community work. They have said to have not yet found formal jobs, but apply their skills among the needs in their community.

**Challenges:**
Challenges in access to employment still persist; 9 girls who were trained in Carpentry are working in a private carpentry workshop as part of a local community association. 2 girls were given internships with ColdAir, a well-known air conditioning company (owned by the Hajar group). 4 girls were given an opportunity to work in a female mechanic workshop. However, challenges these girls encountered in accessing employment were many; one of the employers told SIHA that they cannot hire women since they don’t have female washrooms in the company workshops. 2 girls were hired by a private mechanic company but eventually left due to the fact that many customers and other workers were sexually harassing them. During the training at the vocational training institute, the instructor of Air Cooling refused to teach the girls for weeks, arguing that women and girls cannot physically lift air conditioners/coolers and install them into walls, until SIHA submitted a formal complaint to the vocational training administration. Despite the instructor’s initial refusal to teach them, the girls were so determined to learn that they took their own initiative and learned from other male students before they were finally allowed to attend classes. Many of the private sector companies seemed at first supportive of the project, only to later refuse to give these girls opportunities, reflecting the cemented gender segregated work culture in Sudan.

Sudan’s lack of strong labor regulations that address harassment in the workplace is also a challenge, as none of these companies actually have a sexual harassment policy in place. Based on SIHA’s encounters with various private and public sector companies, it is evident that workers at all levels are quite vulnerable to harassment in Sudan.

Ultimately, this pilot phase of the Breaking Gender Stereotypes project has revealed several factors and lessons, including the following:
1. The great potential of engaging women in vocational training and the opportunities available for them in a market that struggles with trained and skilled workers;
2. The readiness of the women and their ability to learn and to engage in vocational skills despite the gender disparity and the fact that there is no strong history in Sudan of women working as skilled workers;
3. The specific external challenges facing women and the type of actions needed to support them, and finally,
4. The great potential for involving women in vocational training and skilled employment, despite all the challenges encountered with breaking gender stereotypes. There is a great vacuum of skilled workers in Sudan and a high need for a reliable workforce. Engaging the female population has high potential not just for empowering these women but also for improving the socioeconomic conditions of greater Khartoum.
Recommendations

★ Seek different strategies and connections to work with various type of companies and small workshops, and overcome their apparent hesitations to actually get on board.
★ Focus on investing in establishing female workshops, entrepreneurs, so that the women can be ensured of a workplace to practice their learned skills.
★ Inclusion of more men in Breaking Gender stereotyping initiatives
★ Promote and improve the importance of Vocational training among the community is a decisive core issue.
★ Advocacy with the Vocational Training Institutes of the Ministry of Education to accept women, like the Vocational Training Institute under the Ministry of Labour.
★ Continue with Phase II of the Breaking Gender Stereotypes project now that the basis is set up.
★ Include different type of jobs and match women with employer (e.g: Hikma - car mechanic).