

World Bank – CAWTAR

Arab Network for Gender and Development (ANGED)

Program Evaluation

Prepared by Samira Atallah, PhD
Senior Research Scientist
Center for Applied Social Science Research
New York University
November 2008

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AGFUND	Arab Gulf Program for United Nations Development Organizations
ANGED	Arab Network for Gender and Development
AWDR	Arab Women Development Reports
BoT	Board of Trustees
CAWTAR	Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DGF	Development Grant Facility
ERF	Economic Research Forum
ED	Executive Director
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-based violence
GERPA	Gender Economic Research and Policy Analysis Initiative
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
IT	Information Technology
LAS	League of Arab States
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
PGN	Persian Gender Network
SAGE	Sustainable Advancement of Gender Program
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of a third-party independent evaluation of the Arab Network for Gender and Development (ANGED) program a program funded by the World Bank's Development Grant Facility (DGF) and implemented by the regional Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) based in Tunisia. ANGED was established in 2002 with the general goal of strengthening sustainable capacities in the Arab region that would influence policies supportive of women's rights and economic participation. Until 2006, the yearly budget of ANGED was set at about \$260,000 to cover the expenses of 4 stated outputs, as follows: building and deepening a gender regional network; organizing a yearly meeting for networking and research dissemination; developing an annual gender-specific regional report; and serving as an institutional spokesperson on gender issues in the region. Training and capacity building services for the members of the ANGED network were also envisioned as part of the research and networking agendas of the program. The yearly budget of ANGED was reduced to \$175,000 starting 2007 as a consequence of its integration into a larger World Bank – CAWTAR initiative, namely the Sustainable Advancement of Gender (SAGE) Program.

The evaluation methodology situated ANGED within 3 interactive settings – the overall situation of Arab women today; the state of Arab civil society; and the institutional structure of CAWTAR – each of which was perceived to have impacted, for better or for worse, the performance of the program. In the first place, an examination of the Arab women's question in the current socio-economic context indicated the ongoing relevance of the ANGED program to regional needs. In the second place, persistent gender inequality throughout the Arab countries, increasing economic disparities, and the rise of social conservatism hostile to women's rights, render the dedication of both CAWTAR and ANGED to women's empowerment more valuable than ever. And in the third place, an examination of the institutional structure of CAWTAR and of its achievements over the years provided evidence of its unique ability to continue to provide essential advocacy, research, and capacity building resources, despite prohibitive restrictions dominating an increasingly crowded and competitive Arab civil society sector. Ten years since its re-launching under a new governance structure, CAWTAR has proven its ability to attract funds, establish fruitful partnerships, assemble a pool of qualified researchers, organize effective training workshops, and carry out successful research projects. Its work has attracted the attention of serious researchers, advocates, and policy makers alike.

Moreover, the findings of the evaluation confirmed that CAWTAR has implemented the ANGED program with remarkable success, in spite of having to confront considerable contextual challenges, financial pressures, and limited human resources. It has laid the strategic foundation for an effective networking tool that is now poised to bolster the work of women's rights advocates across all public and private sectors in the Arab region. In fact, drawing extensively on its institutional base at CAWTAR, the performance of ANGED has exceeded any reasonable predictions and has given an exaggerated impression of its available resources. As a result, ANGED (and CAWTAR) has become

a victim of its own success, raising the expectations of its own network members to unrealistic levels. But while the findings of the evaluation indicated that the ANGED program can still play the effective role it envisioned for itself 6 years ago, they highlighted the need to address certain persistent shortcomings that could ultimately undermine its potential and growth. The lack of focused explicit objectives, of an effective communication strategy, and of clear measurable performance indicators in the design of the program were identified as primary factors limiting the prospects of ANGED. Furthermore, the multiplicity of ambitious objectives has created a degree of confusion about the roles and responsibilities of both the Secretariat of CAWTAR and of its membership base. Finally, and most importantly, it was found that the limited (recently reduced) budget of ANGED has not allowed CAWTAR to retain dedicated staff with the essential technical expertise for execution of the program's activities. Instead, CAWTAR (and its demanding network) has relied on ad-hoc support from every staff member – at once diffusing responsibility and putting additional pressure on an already overstretched understaffed human resource base.

In order to counter the effects of these shortcomings, the report provides a set of operational and strategic recommendations that might be useful in enabling a full realization of ANGED's potential. In a nutshell, the evaluation recommends that the World Bank increases its financial support to ANGED to a level that is consistent with its basic operational and human resource needs. Along with this financial support, the program would benefit from a re-consideration of the outputs of the program, with an eye (a) to giving it a more realistic focus, and (b) to revising its communication strategy to provide a more meaningful networking structure and broader outreach. In addition, a fresh definition of the respective responsibilities of its members and of its secretariat, together with a multi-level knowledge sharing strategy, would also improve ANGED's stability and impact.

But the greatest benefits that ANGED stands to gain would derive from changes in CAWTAR's operational and programmatic structures. Given the intrinsic relations between ANGED and CAWTAR, structural improvements in the latter would surely be beneficial to the former. While CAWTAR has succeeded in proving itself with a remarkable track record, it is now at a point when it needs to pause, to re-consider its operational strategies, and to revamp them with more focused approaches to research, advocacy, oversight, and resource mobilization. Enriching its human resource base with additional skills and clearer lines of responsibility would improve both the performance and productivity of its staff. CAWTAR also needs to infuse its Board of Trustees (BoT) with new energy and perspectives by drawing upon a variety of sectors within the wider Arab society. An expansion of the membership base of the BoT would open new avenues of substantive and financial support for CAWTAR and for its mission. But a pre-requisite of all these steps and of the success of this revamping process is solid support from the BoT – enabling CAWTAR to reach a state of financial security that would allow the organization to build on its impressive body of achievements. The evaluation findings pointed to the fact that the establishment of an endowment and the implementation of a well-designed resource mobilization strategy would (a) provide for the core expenses of the organization, (b) permit it to avoid fragmented projects, and (c)

allow it to consolidate its advocacy and research work into comprehensive effective programs. Supporting CAWTAR in these endeavors is not merely justified, but necessary. Ultimately, the evaluation makes the argument that, through their continuous and re-structured support for CAWTAR, the BoT (consisting of the majority of its donors) would be perpetuating their own enduring visions for gender equality and effective development in the Arab region.

PART I BACKGROUND

1. Introduction and purpose of the evaluation

The Arab Network for Gender and Development (ANGED) was established in April 2002 by the Tunis-based regional Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), with financial support from the World Bank's Development Grant Facility (DGF). The Network was conceived as the main wing of a Program, to be implemented by CAWTAR, the goal of which would be to strengthen sustainable capacities in the Arab region that would influence policies supportive of women's rights and economic participation. Besides the establishment of the Network, the activities of the ANGED Program were to include research on gender related policies, publication of relevant studies, and organization of training workshops and knowledge-sharing conferences.

Initially, the World Bank approved start-up funds for the ANGED Program for 3 consecutive years together with a one year extension for 2005. In 2006, a new funding phase was approved for the program to continue the same agenda but as part of a larger initiative, the Sustainable Advancement of Gender (SAGE) Program¹, and under a longer term DGF financing structure (Window 1). The DGF support for ANGED is expected to run its course in 2010. The World Bank has been represented on the Technical Committee of CAWTAR since 2003 and on its Board of Trustees since 2005. In these capacities, the World Bank designated staff have provided technical and guidance support for CAWTAR while maintaining an arms' length oversight approach to the management of ANGED.

As stipulated in the agreement between the World Bank and CAWTAR, the present independent third party evaluation of the ANGED program was undertaken as part of the regular evaluation schedule. The Evaluation Consultant was selected and contracted by CAWTAR in coordination with the World Bank Middle East and North Africa VP Unit. Apart from the formal requirement that there be an evaluation, there is a need for the World Bank and for CAWTAR to take stock of the ANGED Program, to understand what has and what has not worked in the course of its development, and to assess how effective and efficient the various implementation approaches have been. From a strategic perspective, the World Bank is also interested in revisiting the main mission of ANGED in the context of the emerging gender issues in the Arab region and the internal institutional structure of CAWTAR. An appraisal of the achievements of ANGED and the identification of performance gaps and challenges would present possibilities for improvement and future expansion. An overall assessment of CAWTAR would provide further insights into its capacities to maintain the SAGE Program and other World Bank initiatives in the long run.

The evaluation specifically covers the period of 2004-2008 and, and amongst other things, examines steps that CAWTAR has undertaken to address the recommendations of

¹ The SAGE initiative also includes another component, namely Gender Economic Research and Policy Analysis (GERPA), which aims to engender the work of traditionally "neutral" economic development research institutions and researchers in the region.

the last independent evaluation completed in January 2004. The primary audiences for this report are the CAWTAR Board of Trustees, the World Bank Gender Sector Board, the World Bank MENA VP Unit, the Task Team Leader, and the World Bank DGF Council.

2. Evaluation methodology and frame of reference

This evaluation addresses both process and results, each in terms of their potential effects on stated program objectives and ultimate goals. A focus on process necessitates an examination of the ANGED Program's design, its effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, and sustainability – all within its internal and external environmental contexts. To this end, the methodology adopted here situated ANGED within 3 interactive settings, each of which was thoroughly examined: the overall situation of Arab women today; the state of Arab civil society; and the institutional structure of CAWTAR. The premise of this three-pronged examination is that these settings (a) are intricately connected and (b) have together shaped, for better or for worse, the directions and work of ANGED. Note that the purpose here is not to provide an exhaustive analysis of any of the settings. It is rather an attempt to identify within each of them the elements that may have (positively or negatively) affected the ANGED program.

A focus on results, on the other hand, requires an assessment of outputs generated by the ANGED program since its inception, and of their ensuing effects on potential outcomes. Initial observations and a review of previous evaluations suggested that ANGED is subject to a variety of different interpretations of what it is aiming to achieve, and how planned outputs will lead to intended outcomes. Given the unspecific nature of the overall goal of the ANGED program (to advance women's participation and rights) and the marked absence in the initial design of clear outcome indicators, it was apparent from early on in the evaluation exercise that ANGED and its performance have been conceptualized primarily in terms of process (namely execution of activities) rather than measurable results and defined implementation strategies. Such preliminary realization was useful in refining evaluation questions and anticipated areas of analysis. Also it necessitated an expanded frame of reference to ensure the inclusion of all perceptions, principles, and practices that may have infiltrated the formulation and execution of outputs.

The frame of reference for measuring results and achievements of the ANGED Program was guided by criteria set forth in the Terms of Reference for this assignment (Appendix 2) and by a conceptual framework informed by the following:

a. The World Conference on Women: All CAWTAR projects, including ANGED, operationalize key objectives of the six UN World Conferences on Women, especially the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, known as the Beijing Conference, and its follow-up. The overriding message of the Beijing Conference was that women's issues are global and universal, and that deeply rooted beliefs and practices perpetuate gender inequality and discrimination against women in both public and private spheres across the world. Accordingly, a change in women's situations requires changes at all levels in

values, attitudes, practices, and priorities at all levels. The work of CAWTAR has been indeed informed, more specifically, by the overall principles of the two main documents emanating out of the Beijing Conference, namely the Beijing Declaration (reaffirmed at Beijing+5 in 2000 and at Beijing@10 in 2005) and its Platform for Action. Together, the Declaration and the Platform of Action embody the commitment of the international community to the advancement of women through the implementation of an agenda that deals with removing the obstacles to women's participation in all public and private realms through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making. The implementation strategy of the Platform focuses on ensuring that a gender perspective is reflected in all policies and programmes at all national and international levels in line with acknowledged universal standards of equality between men and women. It also sets time-specific targets, committing nations to carry out concrete actions in such areas as health, education, and legal reforms, with the ultimate goal of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. The Beijing Declaration emphasized that the implementation of its Platform for Action is mainly a responsibility of governments, but also the responsibility of institutions in the public, private and non-governmental sectors at the community, national, sub-regional, regional and international levels. As such, the Declaration rests on the acknowledgement that the empowerment of women will depend on building strategic partnerships and involving all stakeholders in the efforts towards gender equality.

b. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): The eight MDGs are rooted in the various international development targets set in different international UN conferences held over the years, including the Beijing Conference. They were officially established at the Millennium Summit in 2000 and, along with their corresponding 21 targets, were drawn from the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted by all present world leaders. They aim to spur development mainly by improving social and economic conditions in the world's poorest countries. The eight MDG are:

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Clearly the CAWTAR – World Bank Initiative corresponds primarily to Goal 3 in its focus on the empowerment of women and elimination of gender disparity. The ANGED initiative, however, also reflects targets other goals embedded in the Millennium Declaration, given that none of these goals – whether related to health, education, poverty, diseases, youth, child mortality, the environment, or good governance – may be achieved without addressing issues specific to gender relations and to women of all ages. In fact, as in the Beijing Platform of Action, the MDGs recognize the vital link between development and gender, that action is needed on all levels (national, regional,

international), and that all stakeholders (governments, private sector, international agencies, civil society) must be enlisted in order to achieve overall development goals.

c. Terms of the CAWTAR – World Bank Agreement and the Launching Seminar Report:

These two documents provide information on stated goals, purposes, outputs, and achievement indicators of the ANGED Program. The official agreement specifies the terms of the grant to CAWTAR, including its purpose, main outputs, use of funds, and reporting mechanisms. The report on the Launching Seminar presents an overview of the rationale behind the inception of ANGED and summarizes presentations by various stakeholders and discussions that culminated in its establishment.

d. Previous evaluations: The reports of two evaluations that were completed respectively in 2003 and 2006 were made available to the Consultant as core reference documents to consider in the course of the present evaluation. The 2003 evaluation (finalized in January 2004) was undertaken on behalf of the World Bank but as part of a larger evaluation exercise conducted jointly with UNDP of all of CAWTAR's projects. It consisted of an assessment of CAWTAR in terms of its products, partnerships, people (including Board of Trustees), and organizational and management structure. Using a numerical rating system ranging from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Outstanding), the findings highlighted the impressive achievements of CAWTAR while noting constraints that have resulted in undermining its performance and the quality of some of its activities. Given that the ANGED Program had been in operation for only one year at the time the 2003 evaluation was initiated, the report covered it only briefly. The findings underscored the commendable efforts that CAWTAR had invested in advocacy and partnerships, rating them at an average of 4. The quality of its training and research activities was rated at a high average of 4-5, while the organizational and financial structures received a lower average rating of 3. Dissemination and documentation received a low average rating of 2-3, with the CAWTAR website being given the lowest rating of 1. The analysis in this 2003 report expected that the newly-established ANGED Network would enhance the then week dissemination and outreach aspects of CAWTAR's work. The 2003 evaluation also questioned the long term sustainability of CAWTAR in the absence of an adequate number of core staff, of a resource mobilization strategy, and of a large donor base. The bulk of the recommendations focused on the necessity to enrich the staffing composition, to review salary structure, to expand donor base, and to develop a business plan to redress CAWTAR's organizational weaknesses together with a corresponding resource mobilization plan

The 2006 evaluation consisted of a review of the ANGED program as one of 22 reviews undertaken by the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) of the World Bank. The objective of these reviews was to assess the effectiveness of the World Bank support for multi-country regional programs over the past 10 years. The ANGED part was an in-depth field exercise and focused on the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the Bank's role as reflected in the performance of the ANGED Program in the context of the overall organizational structure of CAWTAR. As in the 2003 evaluation, the 2006 review highlighted the essential place CAWTAR occupies in the region in the area of gender related research and advocacy. It also stressed the growth of ANGED into a

regional asset for promoting the goal of gender equity. But, also similar to the previous evaluation, it cautioned about the fact that the workforce of CAWTAR is significantly understaffed and overstretched. As for ANGED, the review identified weaknesses in its design and networking processes that have thus far limited its effectiveness, especially that ANGED had “spread itself too thin relative to its human and financial resources”. The main recommendations centered on the fact that there is much room for improvement in the quality, reach, and prioritization of its activities.

3. The evaluation evidence base

Following recognized good evaluation practices and World Bank evaluation guidelines, the evaluation took a mixed methods approach, triangulating between different information sources, including the following:

(1) A **review of relevant CAWTAR documentation** in Tunis, including reports to the Board; past organizational and project reviews; CAWTAR’s strategic planning documents; and minutes of BoT and Technical Committee Meetings.

(2) A **literature review** on the questions of Arab women, of gender and development, and of civil society in the Arab region, including relevant studies produced by CAWTAR, UN agencies, and academic researchers.

(3) A detailed **review of ANGED core records** at CAWTAR headquarter, including project document, program expenditures, CAWTAR-World Bank agreements, progress reports, and communication materials.

(4) A detailed **review of CAWTAR’s secondary documents** such as its publications, newsletter, websites, conference proceedings, workshop studies, training kits, and membership lists.

(5) **Individual open-ended interviews** with ANGED members and partners during 2 field visits to Tunis and Lebanon and by phone to Syria. The interviewees (listed in Appendix 1) were selected in a manner to reflect the diversity of the membership base of the ANGED Network. To that end, they included journalists, researchers, academics, NGO representatives, governmental officials, social workers, and senior media professionals. In terms of their professional focus, these varied between human rights, political reforms, socio-economic development, judiciary studies, women’s rights, family affairs, and communication and documentation.

The interviews took place in person, except for those few with the Syrian members, which were carried out on the phone. They included a set of common questions that covered issues concerning their respective educational backgrounds, professional affiliations, and history of membership in the ANGED Network. Given the lack of a common profile amongst ANGED members, the diversity of their organizational line of work, and their different types of involvement in the activities of ANGED, a common questionnaire was deemed inadequate for the purpose of this evaluation. Instead,

interview questions were adjusted to the profiles of the interviewees and their respective organizational objectives. From each interviewee, the questions aimed to identify the following: (a) the impact of the ANGED membership on their respective work; (b) their expectations of ANGED and of CAWTAR; (c) their perceptions of their own role as ANGED members; (d) their views on the strengths and weaknesses of ANGED and of CAWTAR; and (e) their recommendations. In cases where the interviewees had attended training workshops organized by ANGED, their assessment of the quality of the training and its consequential impact on their work was also sought. In addition, all interviewees were asked to provide their own assessment of Arab women's situation today. It is important to note that all interviewees were cooperative and willing to share their time and knowledge without any hesitation. Many were extremely eager to learn (if possible) about the findings of the evaluation and about the ultimate fate of ANGED.

(6) A **management review** consisting of in-depth individual interviews with CAWTAR's senior management and staff (listed in Appendix 1), examination of minutes of meetings, group discussions with program staff, and consultations with members of the World Bank Task Team. Both individual and group discussions with CAWTAR staff were extensive and covered a vast variety of issues, including their employment history with CAWTAR, details of their responsibilities, division of labor within the organization, perceptions of management structure of CAWTAR, input on CAWTAR's work and future, and, of course, observations regarding ANGED and its place within the organization. Again, it should be noted that all views were expressed frankly, readily, and with complete cooperation.

(7) The Consultant also drew on her **direct observation** of a workshop that brought together grantees of the GERPA Program along with a regionally representative group of ANGED members. The workshop took place in April 2008 at the World Bank Headquarter in Washington D.C. and also included World Bank representatives and members of the Persian Gender Network (PGN) (another component of the SAGE Program). The joint workshop, entitled "Gender and economics in MENA: from theory to policy making", consisted of presentations by the GERPA grantees on their preliminary research findings followed by open discussions on the ongoing gap between gender economic research in the MENA region, on the one hand, and policy intervention and civil society action, on the other. The main aim of the workshop was to establish a link between the ANGED Network and GERPA researchers with the objective of disseminating research results and advocating for their integration in public policies. During the workshop (which coincided with the preparation for this evaluation), The Consultant had the chance to have preliminary discussions with the participants about their perceptions of the work of CAWTAR, in general, and ANGED, in particular.

(8) Finally, the Consultant drew on her knowledge of CAWTAR's work over the years, especially as a former staff member of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). In that capacity the Consultant was directly responsible, for about 3 years, for the management of UNFPA regional grants for CAWTAR and for overseeing their implementation. While the analysis presented in this evaluation reflects solely her own views, it did benefit from the experience she previously had with CAWTAR and with its

operations, including interaction with other CAWTAR donors and partners such as the League of Arab States, AGFUND, UNDP, and IPPF – all represented on the BoT of CAWTAR.

4. Methodological limitations

Notwithstanding the openness and accessibility of all relevant stakeholders, a constraint on the evaluation process was the absence at CAWTAR of (a) a central figure who could play the role of focal point on all matters related to ANGED, and (b) a central depository of all its operational and programmatic documentation. Another limitation related to the absence of clear measurable indicators of results (as stated above) combined with the fact that the bulk of program reporting has focused solely on the activities of ANGED rather than their results. Given these inadequacies in the evidence base for analyzing results, the evaluation focused on broad issues of overall design and management, while at the same time attempting some aggregation of program level effects.

5. Outline of the report

The report is organized in five parts. Part I has set the stage for the evaluation and provided a description of its objectives and methodology. Part II examines the contextual setting within which ANGED has been conceived and developed: to that end it gives an analysis of the Arab women's question, of contemporary Arab civil society, and of CAWTAR's institutional structure. Part III outlines findings of the evaluation as they relate to the achievements and limitations of the ANGED Program, especially in terms of program design, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. In the process, this part presents the key activities of ANGED and their possible impact as perceived by its members. A set of recommendations that address the operational and strategic directions both of CAWTAR and ANGED are included in Part II and Part III. Part IV concludes the evaluation. Part V includes a listing of all tables, boxes, persons consulted, and the terms of reference of the evaluation.

PART II THEMATIC, REGIONAL, AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

This part provides an overview of the contextual dynamics within and outside CAWTAR that have shaped the work of ANGED and will continue to do so. A premise of this part of the evaluation is that ANGED and CAWTAR are interlinked financially, programmatically, and institutionally. As such, an assessment of ANGED necessitates a thorough look at CAWTAR. But just as ANGED is a product of CAWTAR, the Center is in turn an outcome of the interaction between the conditions of Arab women, on the one hand, and the dynamics of civil society in the region.

1. Arab women today

The Arab region today is home to a population of about 320 million. Its societies, stretched across two continents, display at once cultural similarities, social differences, and ethnic multiplicities. It is a region rich with extremes and contradictions in many aspects: from one part to another, the Arab region is marked by enormous wealth and extreme poverty, by the survival of ancient tribal traditions and the spread of modern social practices, by the emergence of democratic political structures and the endurance of rigid traditional autocracies. With its unprecedented number of young people (50% of Arab population is under the age of 25), increasing poverty levels (23% of Arabs live below \$2 per day), fluctuating economic growth, and persistent violent conflicts, the development path in the Arab region has been quite problematic. But the thorniest element in this process has been the status of Arab women.

While Arab governments have endorsed the MDGs and the region on the whole has made some strides towards meeting them, the future continues to look bleak for the bulk of Arab women. And despite inter-regional differences in socio-economic characteristics, ethnic compositions, standards of living, and political systems, women across the region suffer from common problems that transcend time, geographical borders, and national specificities. To date, and despite improvements in female education, illiteracy among Arab women continues to be a high 49% compared to 27% for Arab men. Significant budgetary allocations over several years for girls' education in many Arab countries are yet to translate into a meaningful increase in female economic participation. Across the region, women continue to suffer from especially high levels of unemployment and underemployment. World Bank figures indicate that the participation of Arab women in the labor force is only 32% of total labor force, compared to an average of 50% for developing countries. While a lack of reliable and disaggregated data across the region masks the full economic conditions of women, many indicators point to the fact that women are suffering from increasing levels of extreme poverty and vulnerability.

The erosion of traditional social safety nets under the effects of unbridled globalization has added to the vulnerability of women in the Arab region, especially given the noticeable increase in the number of female headed households. In most Arab countries, public policies have failed to provide viable alternatives to those safety nets, having been for long oblivious to gender equality and women's empowerment. In recent years, and with the support of international development agencies, governments in the region have

expressed serious commitments to advancing women's rights; but such commitments are yet to be translated into measurable results and structural improvements. In several countries in the region legislative reforms have stopped short of giving women basic personal rights in areas such as divorce and child custody. Even in countries, such as Lebanon, typically identified with social liberties and modern attitudes to gender relations, women continue to be deprived of granting their citizenship status to their own children if married to a foreigner. With the rise of cultural conservatism and the emergence of fundamentalist movements across the region, even countries, such as Tunisia, where women have made significant solid progress in the areas of personal status code, conservative forces are on the offensive threatening to reverse hard-fought and long-established gains.

The participation of women in political activity and in other decision making processes continues to be significantly weak across the Arab region and lags behind other developing countries. While elections in recent years in several Arab countries saw the arrival of women for the first time on municipal councils and national parliaments, the increase in women's political participation does not constitute a major qualitative change in their role in their countries' public affairs. In many cases, the elections of women were the result of executive orders or of an imposed quota system. Even though national constitutions and legislations in most Arab countries guarantee women equal access to public office, traditional social attitudes together with predominantly patriarchal systems of power have made the political arena resistant to women's infiltration. Furthermore, persistent armed conflicts in several Arab countries have made the possibility of political reforms that would be supportive of women's empowerment even more difficult. In fact, it has been well argued that even in progressive political movements, traditional gender relations have

Box 1: Views of ANGED members about Arab women today

“Despite all the negative signs, I am not pessimistic. Like many other Arab men, I realize that my personal situation will not improve without a similar improvement in my wife's situation and vice versa.” (Syria)

“Without the political will of decision-makers fundamental changes in women's conditions will not occur.” (Tunisia)

“Religion and politics are the biggest constraints for Arab women today. Women's liberation is a threat to status quo in both fields. Many Arabs today carry the banner of change in one place while they reinforce regressive traditions in another.” (Lebanon)

“We might have established mechanisms for change, but we failed to change traditional attitudes about women. Many claim support for women, but in fact work against them. We need to implicate both men and women in the struggle for women's rights.” (Tunisia)

“Women have become more aware of their rights, more active, and more determined. But the combined threats of fundamentalism and poverty can reverse accomplished progress” (Syria)

“Arab media's negligence of women's issues is shameful. News of entertainers dominates media outlets but little space is given for women's issues or gender awareness activities.” (Lebanon)

“After all these years of hard work for women's rights we still have not reached effective results. Women have given up and accepted their fate while men blame women's oppression on fundamentalism. Even before this new wave of fundamentalism, women never really made it. We need to increase the awareness of both men and women. Women's situation is utterly sad. (Lebanon).

been reproduced in a manner that precludes the inclusion of women's issues and gender equality on their agendas.

Rising cultural conservatism in the Arab region has, in addition, made it difficult to address issues related to women's reproductive rights, sexual reproductive health, and gender-based violence (GBV). While in some countries, civil society organizations have made some progress in bringing these issues to the forefront, there is an urgent need for effective programming and meaningful policy debates to change regressive legislations and to increase awareness among both men and women. In fact, several ANGED members interviewed for this evaluation argued that Arab women themselves have been the main agents of social conservatism – internalizing, reproducing, and passing on to the younger generations regressive beliefs that undermine their own rights. The practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is widespread within the Arab region; and this is supported by means of misconstrued religious beliefs that justify harmful practices against women; so there is an urgent need for continuous and extensive advocacy interventions and research studies to promote the development of GBV-related legislation. In countries where such legislation already exists, enforcing it through awareness and knowledge sharing campaigns is needed to ensure their accessibility to all women. This is especially pressing given that various studies indicate that basic legal literacy about women's rights is virtually nonexistent even among college educated women in the region. To make matters worse, Arab women typically shy away from seeking their rights, fearing community wrath and other negative repercussions, especially when married with children. One interviewed ANGED member confessed to the fact that she herself cannot seek divorce fearing the loss of her marital home and children's custody to her abusive husband (Box 1 provides further testimonials from ANGED members about status of Arab women).

In sum, the situation of Arab women today mirrors the situation of the Arab region. For both the region and its women, a degree of progress has been noted in the fields of education, employment, politics, and legislations. But at the same time, legal restrictions, regressive social attitudes, misguided public policies, violence and insecurity, and the sluggish state of political systems, have undermined the path to progress and development. In this context, Arab women continue to struggle for their rights while contributing to their families' wellbeing and their countries' economic growth. But effective development continues to be an elusive goal. Given the centrality of women's issues to effective socio-economic development (as underscored in the foundations of the Beijing Declaration and the MDGs), it is evident that the Arab region will simply not witness a state of comprehensive long-lasting development unless the situation of its women drastically improves.

2. Arab civil society

Civil society organizations (CSO) in the Arab region have witnessed in recent times a significant increase in terms of both numbers and scope of activities. Their growth is at once a sign of positive change in the political structures of countries in the region and a reflection of the escalation of socio-economic challenges facing Arab societies.

Civil society as a sign of positive change: In some countries, deeply rooted old-world restrictions on civil liberties have undermined the growth of a vibrant civil society that would occupy a buffer zone between the state and the citizen. Specialists argue that the same authoritarian regulations that have inhibited the promotion of democracy in most of these countries have in the process restricted the establishment of independent non-profit organizations, unions, research centers, civic associations, and other institutions that constitute the basis of an active civil society. As a result, most parts of the region were for long deprived of voluntary institutions committed to actions geared towards communal support and social change outside the boundaries of the government or the family. Although the recent emergence of such institutions is still uneven and limited, it does point to the fact that in some parts of the region governments are finally easing their grip on independent social activism and freedom of expression. Critics have argued though that many of these so-called civil society organizations are in fact covert state organizations, intended to provide an appearance of openness and freedom but without the real substance of independent social movements. Some of these CSOs are in fact openly affiliated with the establishment and have some semi-official status, with an agenda that reflects the objectives of the sponsoring government rather than the communities they claim to serve. NGOs that are truly independent complain that the negative impact of such “governmental NGOs” is twofold: they project a deceitful image of the situation of civil society; and at the same time they enjoy huge financial and moral support at the expense of the “real” NGOs. But regardless of such skepticism, there is a widespread agreement that the growth of an active civil society is essential to the transformation of the Arab society at large.

Civil society as an indication of socio-economic challenges: it is evident that worsening economic conditions have paved the way to an increase in the number of civil society organizations focused on responding to challenges outside the concerns or capacities of governments. In many cases, these organizations have sprung into existence with significant support from international development agencies that see them as more viable partners than the often bureaucratic and inefficient governmental agencies. Some of these organizations operate as alternatives to ineffective or absentee governments in efforts to respond to the needs of underprivileged communities, while others are rooted in opposition movements that aim to respond to governmental abuses of power and national resources. A few, however, function as intermediaries between societies and their governments, and focus on channeling social concerns into the agendas of decision makers, cooperatively and through advocacy, research, and public debate. As a result, throughout the region a new generation of civil society organizations has been active on broad socio-economic issues ranging over women’s empowerment, youth activism, gender-based violence, human rights, political participation, freedom of expression, and environmental sustainability.

The rise in the number of such organizations in the Arab region does not necessarily imply that Arab civil society today is strong. Nor does it mean that these organizations are playing an effective role in the development paths of their societies. For one, in many

countries the work of independent organizations is still burdened by heavy governmental restrictions that limit their outreach and operations. Moreover, many NGOs are guided by charitable rather than development goals and are primarily involved in welfare and philanthropically oriented services rather than long-term empowerment programs that may have a lasting effect on the lives of their beneficiaries. In many countries, a lack of transparency together with restrictions on civil freedom has limited the advocacy roles of civil society organizations and in the process has rendered many of them either simply ineffective or has turned them into co-opted mouthpieces of the authorities.

A recent study of Arab civil society² highlighted the fact that many civil society organizations have weak visions and missions, along with inadequate strategies for accomplishing them. One of the significant causes of this situation is that countries of the Arab region often lack comprehensive development plans. The troubles CSOs have in developing visions that reflect the priorities of their constituencies stem therefore in part from the absence of a shared national vision – one that is capable of addressing national challenges and pointing toward strategies for advancing development. Furthermore, the capacities of many civil society organizations are often weakened by poor access to information, communication, and financial resources. As the 2002 UNDP Arab Human Development Report confirmed, the Arab region today suffers from scant availability of information technology, and that in turn is scantily used. Together with restrictions on freedom of expression and on inter-regional mobility, this widespread technological semi-illiteracy undermine opportunities for cooperation and networking among civil society organizations, both at national and regional levels. The media, typically an ally of a vibrant civil society, is obviously also burdened by the same limitations, and therefore has not been able to play a role in providing the Arab civil society sector the substantive support it badly needs.

Shortage of funds has been identified as yet another significant obstacle to the growth of a viable Arab civil society sector with effective capacities to respond to prevailing socio-economic challenges³. Except for a few notable exceptions⁴, Arab civil society organizations are mostly dependent on funds from outside the region – funds originating from international development agencies, including Western private foundations. While philanthropy is an entrenched feature of Arab culture (rooted in an Islamic tradition of alms giving), donations to socio-economic causes is not a common practice in the Arab region. Despite the great wealth of many Arab individuals, the region is yet to adopt the long-established Western tradition of ‘societal giving’ where civil society organizations enjoy access to abundant resources made available by individuals, by foundations, and by various grant programs administered by private businesses, and even by governmental institutions. Scarcity of funds is especially notable in the case of *research*. Neither universities nor governments in most Arab countries have historically allocated

² “Civil Society in the Arab Region: its necessary role and the obstacles to fulfillment,” by Ziad Abdel Samad, in *The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law*, Volume 9, Issue 2, April 2007

³ “Civil Society in the Arab World: The Missing Concept,” By Sa'ed Karajah, in *The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law*, Volume 9, Issue 2, April 2007

⁴ The Arab Gulf Program for United Nation Development (AGFUND), established and presided by HRH Prince Talal Ibn Abdul-Aziz Al-Saoud, is a unique home-grown organization in the Arab region that supports regional and national entities dedicated to socio-economic development.

significant portions of their budgets to supporting research or to fostering a tradition of cooperative sharing of knowledge. Similarly, Arab charitable societies and private foundations (a typical sponsor of research in the West) have rarely subsidized grant programs for good scientific research in the region, and instead have tended to focus on supporting capacity building programs centered on training and service delivery to their chosen beneficiaries. As a result, there is a striking absence in the region of independent institutions, such as think tanks and research centers, which are dedicated to home-grown research and knowledge building, and capable of sparking informed debates on pressing issues related to public policy and socio-economic development. The few such institutions that are to be found in the region owe their existence to support mostly from Western and international organizations (e.g. the Economic Research Forum). Others are affiliates or offshoots of political parties (such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization or Hezbollah) and are hence not independent, by definition. Significantly rare are civil society institutions such as CAWTAR that combine independence, a mandate committed to social change, and an agenda of work dedicated to advocacy and quality research.

In the absence of local private resources for development, international development agencies have flooded the Arab region with funds designated specifically for Arab civil society organizations. While this external flow of money has been essential to the survival of many local organizations, it has created a state of dependency and competition among them. With the majority of grants coming into the region with an already set agenda and limited life span, recipient organizations have been struggling to maintain programmatic independence and long-term sustainability. Furthermore, lack of coordination among donors as well as among recipients has often resulted in a fragmentation of resources and a wasteful redundancy of activities. Moreover, in many Arab countries, recipients of foreign funds have become suspected of questionable “external connections” and some have been subjected to governmental interference and questioning.

3. CAWTAR

Evidently, it is no easy matter to build and sustain a nonprofit independent organization dedicated to social change in the Arab region. When this organization is focused on gender issues, when its scope of work transcends national boundaries, and when its agenda is dedicated to quality research and advocacy, the task becomes almost insurmountable. For, as indicated by the situational analysis provided above, CAWTAR has to operate in a regional context marked by many problematic features: shortage of funds; restrictive regulations; official mistrust of civil society organizations; lack of open and transparent policy debate mechanisms; predominance of a culture of reticence among researchers; persistence of a “taboo off-limit” nature of many gender-related issues; and lack of coordination within an increasingly over-crowded non-governmental sector. Addressing women’s rights in today’s regional climate of resurgent conservatism and rising fundamentalism makes the advocacy efforts of CAWTAR even more difficult. And the situation is exacerbated by worsening economic conditions in most countries of the region, which contribute to the relegation of women’s rights to an even lower priority

status on public policy agendas that are notoriously known for their negligence of gender equity and social development.

But the nature of these contextual challenges – facts of life that are deeply rooted in a region where meaningful change is painfully slow – makes CAWTAR’s work even more relevant and pressing, especially given its commitment to cooperation, outreach, and quality policy research (elements that are largely absent from the region today). While it is true that CAWTAR (or any other organization for that matter) is simply not in a position to solve these chronic problems, its work – if persistent – will in the long run ultimately contribute to their amelioration. What follows is an overview of, on the one hand, the achievements of CAWTAR and, on the other hand, the factors that have imposed limitations on its staff and have thus far undermined its potential. Some remedial recommendations to address these challenges are also presented for consideration by the Board of Trustees (BoT), management, and staff of CAWTAR.

3.1. Achievements:

CAWTAR has positioned itself in recent years as the leading entity in the Arab region dedicated to women’s issues. But its journey has not been smooth. After its establishment in January 1994, it went through a rocky four-year period of mixed results followed by about a two-year lull when the Center was officially closed after reviews of poor management and lack of clear direction. In July 1999, CAWTAR resumed its operations and re-emerged with new management, a more focused agenda, and a revised, effective governance structure. Since then, it has slowly yet surely grown into a solid beacon of progress in a region struggling with substantial gender inequalities and re-emergent conservative attitudes against women’s rights. With an overarching agenda of training, research, and advocacy, covering a wide range of often-neglected gender related issues, CAWTAR’s work has gained it a regional reputation for independence and seriousness. Researchers and ANGED members interviewed for this evaluation emphasized that this reputation is not to be taken lightly, given the prevalence of partiality and ineffectiveness among the bulk of research and advocacy institutions across the region.

The profile of participants in the activities of CAWTAR, the array of beneficiaries of its training programs, and the cooperation agreements it has signed with institutions across the region, all indicate that CAWTAR has succeeded in developing active **collaborations** with a diverse array of establishments in most of the Arab countries – including the media, research centers, intergovernmental bodies, private corporations, development agencies, governmental entities, and activist non-governmental organizations. This variety of **partnerships** feeds into CAWTAR’s coordinated multi-sectoral approach to gender issues – a valuable model that is unique in the region. Indeed, through a thematically diverse research agenda, CAWTAR has increasingly (and quite appropriately) approached gender as a multidimensional public matter – rather than primarily a “woman’s” issue to be relegated to the private domain. At the same time, CAWTAR has aggregated its established relations and extensive knowledge of the region into a large **database** of gender related Arab institutions and experts, along with an

electronic tri-lingual bibliography on Arab women. Together these resources form the basis of a unique and valuable reference hub for gender and development specialists.

CAWTAR's eclectic program of work has to date consisted of numerous **research** initiatives on issues including economic development, human rights, gender-based violence, legislative reforms, adolescent's rights, role of the media, management of environmental resources, and the use of information technology for social change. Its series of Arab Women Development Reports (AWDRs) – the first of its kind in the region – has become a standard reference document for researchers, development practitioners, and women's rights activists alike. The six AWDRs produced since 2001 have consistently addressed timely gender related issues, combining quantitative methodologies with in-depth analytical frameworks. Their preparations have drawn on national case-studies that cover most Arab countries and were usually conducted by experts from inside and outside the Arab region. The Center's quarterly periodical, CAWTARIYAT, has grown into an important outreach tool for CAWTAR, ANGED members, and partner organizations. It goes well beyond the typical format of an organizational newsletter, providing a platform for thorough discussions on

Box 2: Views of ANGED members about CAWTAR

“CAWTAR has built an important cadre of young researchers. It has contributed to strengthening the skills of numerous gender specialists and to expanding the outreach of their work throughout the Arab region” (Professor).

“There are numerous organizations working on gender issues but with little coordination. Although disorderly competition limits the potentials of CAWTAR, this organization nevertheless stands out for the superior quality of its training programs, research reports, and skilled researchers. Most Arab official establishments lack the capacity and vision on women's issues; but CAWTAR plays an essential role in filling this gap” (Governmental Representative).

“CAWTAR should not focus on micro-level gender issues related to one country or another – its biggest contribution is to address macro-level issues common to the whole Arab region and to empower activists, researchers, and journalists to advance them in their own communities through quality research, advocacy, and skill building” (Journalist and NGO Representative).

“Despite limitations on advocacy and persistence of gender inequality, some taboos have begun to break and women have started to pose questions that weren't allowed before – CAWTAR plays an important role in advancing these questions and in increasing awareness about their significance” (NGO Activist).

“The work of CAWTAR in Tunis was an essential factor in the decision of upper management to “genderize” our newspaper and hire me as the first female Editor-in-Chief – CAWTAR was the first to popularize the concept of women in decision making. It helped me to understand complicated gender-related concepts and empowered me to pursue a gender-focused agenda in my work” (Journalist).

“It is surprising how much CAWTAR does with little resources. But CAWTAR will not fly far for as long as it is dependent on project-based funding from international organizations” (Ministry Official).

“Despite its good work, CAWTAR's activities are largely in Tunis. CAWTAR should expand its work further into the region. It should stop relying on the same researchers and the same participants (Head of NGO and Researcher).

“CAWTAR is a pioneer in addressing new topics; but it is important not to fall into the trap of repetition and not to limit its work to the production of knowledge. The AWDR should be an entry point for extensive advocacy and awareness activities” (Researcher).

“In the standards of the Arab region, the performance of CAWTAR is superior. But it is high time that CAWTAR brings the current standards to advanced levels and better qualities in line with international standards. Does CAWTAR have the will and the vision to do so? YES. But does it have all the needed resources? Not Really” (Academic).

emerging issues and a showcase for important developments in the field of gender studies and activism in the Arab region. Moreover, CAWTAR has successfully brought together a large diverse group of professionals drawn from various private and public sectors into **specialized networks** that constitute an innovative space for advocacy and knowledge sharing on gender related issues. Through these networks (such as ANGED), CAWTAR has channeled both its message for gender equality and the findings of its research to the official establishment and to the society at large. It has also made available to the members of these networks its training services in order to strengthen their expertise in, and commitment to, women’s empowerment.

CAWTAR’s **training workshops and training kits** have benefitted dozens of advocates, researchers, educators, journalists, trainers, public servants, members of NGOs, and development practitioners throughout most Arab countries. Over the years, the training program of CAWTAR has grown significantly, starting with only a few workshops in 2004 and increasing to 13 in 2008. Further, in a matter of only one year, CAWTAR succeeded in more than doubling the number of its trainees, going from 174 in 2007 to about 353 in 2008. Although the majority of its training workshops have been held over the years in Tunisia, CAWTAR has made concerted efforts to expand regionally, holding in 2008 four workshops in Syria, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia (please see Table 1 for more details). Regardless of their locations, however, the various training workshops of CAWTAR have over the last 5 years included participants from 19 different Arab countries. Finally, the **research competitions** of CAWTAR have provided unique opportunities for many young Arab researchers. Its **art-production contests** have expanded the reach of the organization outside its traditional base of stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Table 1: Training Workshops - CAWTAR

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Number of Workshops	5	4	3	9	13
Number of Participants	*	*	*	174	353
Location	Tunis (1) Egypt (2) Yemen (1) Jordan (1)	Tunis (3) Morocco (1)	Tunis (2) Saudi Arabia (1)	Tunis (8) Egypt (1)	Tunis (9) Saudi Arabia (2) Bahrain (1) Syria (1)

Source: Compiled from the Website of CAWTAR and its annual reports. * Data not available

Although the long term impact of CAWTAR’s activities is yet to be determined, its areas of work have been pioneering and have proven so successful that in some cases they were replicated by other organizations. One interviewed ANGED members stated that “the activities of CAWTAR are extremely organized compared to other organizations. In many ways, they set the standards that others often try to follow.” In fact, it is evident that the work of CAWTAR on youth and adolescents well preceded the recent “youth surge” that has come to dominate, in recent years, the programmatic and research agendas of organizations in the Arab region (including United Nations agencies).

3.2. Limitations:

The achievements of CAWTAR do not of course imply that it has reached its full potential, or accomplished total programmatic independence, or secured its future financial sustainability. Nor do they necessarily mean that the work of CAWTAR has not had certain limitations - some of which are rooted in its general contextual settings discussed above, while others are specific to its internal governance and organizational structures. What follows is a summary of these limitations and their consequences, followed by suggestions for measures that might mitigate them.

(a) Financial sustainability and operational framework:

Since its establishment, CAWTAR has operated entirely on fee income generated from sponsored projects, on earmarked grants, and on implementation of service agreements with international organizations. In recent years, The Executive Director (ED) of CAWTAR has succeeded, with the support of a dedicated small staff, in significantly expanding the funding base of the organization and in mobilizing several new grant awards from a new set of donors. As Table 2 indicates, the total mobilized resources of CAWTAR rose from about \$1,375,000 in 2002 to about \$2,092,500 in 2008, while the number of its donors increased from 10 to 16 during this period. Such an impressive flow of funds signifies that CAWTAR has reached a level of good standing that provides it with a reliable ability to secure support from the donor community. It does not, however, signify that CAWTAR has reached a state of sustainable financial security beyond the dates of its active agreements. In fact, it is not CAWTAR itself, but rather the funded projects and their approved set of activities that enjoy such security. The general operations of CAWTAR and salaries of its core staff, on the other hand, are in a state of vulnerable dependency on (1) a relatively small overhead fee from its time-bound projects, and (2) a limited amount of earmarked funds from two main donors, namely AGFUND and the Government of Tunisia.

Table 2: Total available resources of CAWTAR during 2002-2008 (US \$)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total Funds	1,375,000	1,098,000	1,586,000*	1,743,000*	1,736,000*	2,078,474*	2,092,5000*

Source: Data compiled from documents made available to the Consultant and from figures provided by the Financial Administrator of CAWTAR.

*Funds for these years include an amount of \$100,000 channeled via CAWTAR from the World Bank to PGN.

The dependency of CAWTAR on funds earmarked for specific time-bound projects has shaped its operational structure and limited its ability to meet all its stated objectives as an independent research and training regional center. It has become an executing firm, primarily focused on just one element of its stated areas of activities (i.e. implementing projects on behalf of international organizations), rather than a self-sufficient institution engaged in a full fledged research and training agenda (as specified in its original declared mandate). Furthermore, the fact that mobilized funds are typically allocated for individual projects drafted separately with different partner organizations does not necessarily translate into the establishment of well-connected comprehensive programs.

As such, with its human resources tightly committed to the execution of various (and often unconnected) service agreements and approved projects (which typically reflect the research priorities of its funding agencies), CAWTAR has not enjoyed the liberty to undertake independent research or training initiatives.

Moreover, the financial restrictions on CAWTAR (stemming from its dependency on pre-allocated project-based budgets) have generally left its senior management little room to expand its operational, programmatic, organizational, or research structures. In other words, despite increases in the mobilized funds of CAWTAR, its operations and human resources remain static without serious possibilities for growth and development. Such a situation has had negative repercussions on the staffing situation (discussed below in more detail), keeping CAWTAR stuck in an inescapable vicious circle – without unrestricted funds CAWTAR has not been able to expand its human resources; and without a richer human resource base, CAWTAR has not been able to achieve financial self-sufficiency or secure long-term sustainability. The effect of this situation is most apparent in the fact that CAWTAR has not to date succeeded – despite repeated recommendations from previous evaluations – in hiring a capable dedicated resource mobilization officer, and this in turn has undermined the possibility of developing and implementing an effective resource mobilization strategy. In sum, while superficially CAWTAR seems to enjoy the financial support of an expanding donor base, a closer look indicates that the sustainability of CAWTAR as a self-sufficient organization – i.e. independent from the terms of time-bound externally-determined projects – is questionable.

(b) Staffing and programmatic structures:

The most disconcerting effect of the financial structure of CAWTAR has been on its human resources. Since its re-launching in July 1999, CAWTAR has depended on a handful number of extremely committed, over-worked, and underpaid staff. Over the last decade, the total number of staff has varied between 15 and 30, with a core of 9 people⁵ who have renewable annual contracts administered through the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)⁶. In contrast with the project staff (whose affiliation with CAWTAR is managed through short-term special service consultancy agreements), the core staff members enjoy limited benefits such as medical insurance and end-of-term indemnity. None of the staff, however, has permanent or long-term tenure with the organization, and regardless of contract-type, salaries are largely dependent on project funds. According to CAWTAR's Financial Administrator, the “guaranteed” funds

⁵ Core staff members are presently confined to: executive director, information and communication officer, database and documentation officer, financial administrator, 2 financial assistants, secretary, guard, and maintenance assistant.

⁶ UNOPS provides project management, procurement, and other support services to UNDP and other UN agencies. The arrangement that CAWTAR has with UNOPS is rooted in the original inception period of CAWTAR when it was still a “project” of UNDP and its personnel were short-term project staff of UNDP with contracts administered by UNOPS. Although the relation of CAWTAR with UNDP has changed long ago the arrangement with UNOPS was maintained in order to provide core staff with the benefits of association with a large UN agency, namely medical insurance and indemnity. Every six months, CAWTAR transfers funds to UNOPS, which in turn use them to pay the salaries of the 9 core staff, in return for a specific service fee.

(committed on a yearly basis by AGFUND and the Tunisian Government) available to CAWTAR outside its mobilized project awards amounted in 2008 to about \$365,000. This amount supported all the operational expenses of the organization and part of the core salaries. The remaining balance of core salaries along with the compensation of project staff had to be covered from the overhead percentage charged to the budget of each contract. It is significant to note that despite the increase over the last 10 years in both the number of total staff and the mobilized resources of CAWTAR, staff salaries as a percentage of total yearly budget have remained more or less the same (please see Table 3 for details) – apparently, staff have not seen significant increases in their salaries during this period. It should also be noted that regardless of the increase in the volume of work, the number of core staff has mainly remained the same (9 in total) with new additions consisting usually of staff on special service agreements recruited only for part or full duration of their corresponding projects.

Table 3: Staff salaries as percentage of budget (2002 and 2008)

	2002	2008
Yearly budget	\$1,375,000	\$2,092,500
Number of staff	15	30
Total staff salaries	\$282,300	\$366,882
Salaries as % of budget	20.5%	17.5%

Source: Data compiled from figures provided by CAWTAR Financial Administrator

Given the limited availability of unrestricted funds, many important positions at CAWTAR have remained vacant over the years. The functions of these positions have been assumed by existing staff (both core and project-based) resulting in an overlap of responsibilities, overloaded schedules, and uncompleted tasks. For instance, the inability to appoint a Deputy Director, a Research Director, a Resource Mobilization Officer, and a Networking and Public Relation Officer (all considered as core functions in an institution such as CAWTAR) has resulted in the need for the Executive Director to take on, at different points, the responsibilities related to each of these positions, in addition to her standard responsibilities. Rather than focusing all efforts on her already demanding set of tasks – overseeing the general work of the Center, developing its strategic directions, maintaining linkages with the Board of Trustees and Technical Committee, and promoting CAWTAR at a senior level within the donor community and official establishment – the ED has spread herself too thin, needing to also deal with micro management, research issues, and day-to-day operational questions. The few senior staff of the Center, such as the Information and Communication Officer, have also had to step in at many points to fulfill the demands of one or the other of the vacant positions. In fact, every professional staff member (core or project-based) must on top of their project-related assigned work perform essential core tasks that cut across all the operations of the Center. Given that most of the staff do not enjoy long-term job security, and in light of the relatively low salary structure, CAWTAR is always at the risk of losing its staff to more alluring opportunities; therefore, many of its essential functions are at the risk of being abruptly neglected. Obviously, with such staffing structure, every employee is

twice (or even three times) as valuable as an employee should be; and his/her departure would potentially put the Center under significant pressure. Although CAWTAR employees are fully committed to their work and to the objectives of the Center, there is a sense of muted ambivalence (to say the least) about their employment situation, especially given their relatively low salaries and limitations on upward mobility. An interviewed staff member commented that one is prepared to compromise on the lack of promotion possibilities (it is a small organization after all) and on the lack of job security (given the appealing nature of the work), but at least one expects meaningful salary increases to justify rejecting other more attractive opportunities.

In the absence of full-time in-house researchers, CAWTAR has relied heavily on consultants from across the Arab region to fulfill the research requirements of its projects. While such a practice has enhanced the regional diversity of its work, it has undermined the ability of its management to closely monitor performance, to maintain quality assurance, and to create a sense of continuity and intellectual cohesion within the Center. Moreover, being continuously conscious of the limitations of its budget has sometimes led to privileging affordability over quality in the selection of research consultants. Also, the need to reconcile the deadlines of its projects with the conflicting schedules of outside researchers (who are typically full-time employees at an academic or research entity elsewhere in the region) has often resulted in additional complications, especially in terms of the ability of CAWTAR to meet its contract commitments on time. As a result, CAWTAR has tended to rely on the same pool of outside specialists (for a combination of affordability and reliability) – a practice that has attracted repeated criticism from affiliates and from interviewed ANGED members, with some citing personal bias in the selection process. As for its own full-time staff, some of whom are qualified researchers in their own right, they are mainly tasked with the coordination of research projects, and given their busy schedules rarely have the chance to apply their substantive skills and engage in the actual research process. Most of them, however, do engage in the training activities organized by the Center (both as trainees and as trainers). In fact, in the absence of full-time trainers at CAWTAR (another vacant core post), most professional staff often end up by doubling as trainers as needed. One interviewed staff member commented that although the shortage of staff imposes significant pressure on the time of personnel, it also creates significant learning opportunities for them: “CAWTAR provides its staff with many opportunities for capacity development through “learning by doing”, close coaching by the Director, and participation in training activities aimed at external constituencies.” Another staff member emphasized that despite overloaded schedules and relatively low salaries, in the end it is the employees who benefit more than the organization, given the intensive on-the-job learning possibilities and the steep learning curve required. In fact, based on available records, CAWTAR has over the years launched the career of many successful researchers, programming officers, and training specialists in the field of gender and development.

Several interviewed staff members lamented the fact that the limitation of core funds precludes the possibility of attending conferences of interest, or participating in professional development activities outside the organization. Moreover, operating on a shoestring budget makes it virtually impossible to organize public relation and

networking events (an essential element in the promotion of an organization such as CAWTAR). Most detrimental has been the inability of CAWTAR to maintain the services of a full-time in-house webmaster and the need to rely instead on the part-time maintenance support of a contracted IT company. Given the nature of CAWTAR's work (especially in terms of on-line documentation and electronic networking) and at this time and age of technological advancement, the continued lack of such expertise within CAWTAR limits the efficiency of some of its most important activities, especially networking within ANGED (discussed in more detail in Part 3).

(c) Management, oversight, and quality assurance:

It is evident that CAWTAR has benefitted tremendously from the expertise and commitment of its exceptionally qualified Executive Director, who has succeeded, with the support of an equally dedicated and skilled small team, in gaining the trust of its Board of Trustees, donor community, and wider constituencies. In a relatively short time, the ED has managed to put the organization back on the map after its earlier lull in operation, and to re-establish its credibility and reputation as a serious institution across the Arab region. At the same time, the efforts of the ED and her team have been, over the years, hugely reinforced by the support and guidance of the 10-member Board of Trustees of CAWTAR, composed of the representatives of its principle donor organizations⁷. Headed by HRH Prince Talal Ibn Abdul-Aziz Al-Saoud (President of AGFUND), the BoT has been a driving force behind the financial and strategic strength of CAWTAR, with the organizations to which its members belong maintaining a yearly flow of funds to the Center each through the support of at least one project. In addition, AGFUND and the Government of Tunisia provide respectively a yearly contribution of about \$300,000 and \$65,000 towards core expenses, while the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) of the Arab Region supports the salaries of 2 support staff and contribute \$16,000 per year towards the production of CAWTARIYYAT and \$4,500 in support of the young journalists' competition. Such financial help, along with the membership of most of these organizations on the Technical Committee of CAWTAR, have been critical to the survival of CAWTAR and to its growth over the years.

Notwithstanding its significant support for the work of CAWTAR, the BoT has stopped short of taking some steps that would have an ever-lasting impact on the productivity and well-being of the organization. For one, the BoT is yet to approve the formation of a "Scientific Committee" (listed as a required step in the Bylaws of CAWTAR) that would play a much-needed role in guiding the substantive work of the Center, maintaining quality-assurance, and providing advice on the quality of its research methodologies and directions. In fact, in the absence of a Research Director at CAWTAR, and given the problematic state of quality research in the region, the continued failure to form a Scientific Committee is rather a disservice to the organization. Furthermore, the restriction of the BoT to donor organizations (i.e. international public or governmental entities) has deprived the Center of a wealth of diverse perspectives, experiences, and resources that would be provided by other sectors such as academia and business. Moreover, ongoing stalling in finding solutions to the appointment of vacant core posts

⁷ The Board is composed of representatives of the following organizations: AGFUND, Government of Tunisia, IPPF, League of Arab States, UNDP, UNFPA, UNIFEM, and the World Bank.

(such as Deputy Director or Research Director) has (1) overburdened an already over-stretched Executive Director, and (2) resulted in the concentration of reporting lines in virtually one person (namely the ED). And of course, the absence of such senior staff has also limited the possibilities of active networking, public relations, and monitoring and evaluation, which has in turn limited the potential of the organizations as a whole.

3.3. Recommendations:

The senior management of CAWTAR is acutely aware of the perpetual financial dependency and vulnerability of the organization as discussed above. The ED is also aware of the effects of the ongoing absence of essential core staff on the potential of the organization and on its ability to live up to the high standards that the whole CAWTAR team, its BoT, and its constituencies have justifiably grown to expect. But also the concerns of the ED are cloaked in a sense of pride (and rightly so) in what CAWTAR has managed to do in a relatively short time and with fairly little financial and human resources. As echoed by many affiliates and previous evaluations of CAWTAR, she credits much of the organization's achievements to its exceptionally committed and qualified team of professionals and to the trust its BoT (which also represents its main donors) has in its abilities. But some unavoidable questions continuously lurk in this positive context (and on the mind of the staff of CAWTAR): For how long can an organization with such a growing volume of work survive under such tremendous financial and operational pressures? What will happen to CAWTAR when (and it is only a matter of time) its dedicated staff move away, either for retirement or for better opportunities? And ultimately, can an organization sustain its success by depending on hard-working people rather than solid institutional structures? It is crucial that the members of the Board of CAWTAR address these questions and act accordingly.

Many people in the Arab region, who are involved in the NGO field of development, stress that the fate of CAWTAR, as implied in the questions above, is not dissimilar from the fate of all other non-profit civil society organizations. As one interviewed ANGED member underscored, "permanent dependency on project-based aid from international (Western) organizations is a fact of life for any 'successful' NGO in the Arab region." While this might be indeed true, it is up to the BoT to choose between two different scenarios: (a) to have CAWTAR continue surviving like "any other successful" Arab NGO – drawing on a tight budget and the efforts of an understaffed over-worked human resource base to execute individual projects on behalf of multiple international organizations – or (b) to capitalize on the impressive track-record of CAWTAR and enable it to finally settle into the secure state of a solid institution that contributes to the realization of its objectives through well-designed cohesive programs and in effective partnership with development and donor organizations. In weighing this decision, the BoT and senior management might wish to consider the following recommendations:

(1) Establishing an endowment for CAWTAR is the most secure approach to giving it long-term financial stability – guaranteeing its ability to engage in effective and quality research, training, and advocacy activities despite any changes in the economy and in its funding situation. A well invested endowment would produce income for CAWTAR while the real principal value is preserved and even increased. In fact, the members of

the Board of Trustees have already planted the seeds of an endowment⁸ through the kind of support that they have advanced to CAWTAR over the years. For instance, the Government of Tunisia, through its donation of prime land for a permanent base, and the President of AGFUND, through his generous support for the building cost of the new center, have already endowed CAWTAR with a permanent “gift”. Organizations such as UNDP, UNFPA, and The World Bank have already together invested several million dollars in supporting the goals of CAWTAR since its inception. Contributing to a permanent endowment for CAWTAR would in fact be sustaining a considerable investment that they have already made. Whether the members of the Board choose to seek a single donation from one entity committed to the goals of CAWTAR or pool together several contributions from within the Board, the establishment of an endowment would provide the organization a dependable stream of income for its core expenses, would free it from the pressure of engaging in fragmented project activities for the sake of additional funds, and as result, would allow it continued progress and the solid chance to achieve its full potential. Ultimately, through their support for an endowment, the donors and Board members of CAWTAR would be perpetuating their own enduring visions for gender equality and effective development in the Arab region.

(2) CAWTAR is in a dire need of an experienced trilingual full-time Resource Mobilization Officer. While the salary of such a professional (estimated at about \$30,000 a year) would put an additional pressure on an already limited budget, the gains that CAWTAR stands to make from this person significantly outweigh the cost. S/he would not only free the ED from the responsibility of grant writing and indentifying additional grant possibilities; s/he would also be essential in identifying ways (a) to put the impressive (yet underutilized) facilities of CAWTAR’s new location to good use to generate funds, (b) to promote the sale of CAWTAR’s impressive (yet fairly inaccessible) array of publications and training products, and (c) to set up a strategy for mobilizing funds through membership fees and unconditional institutional donations. While such a position should be allocated funds from core resources, CAWTAR might want initially to build the salary cost into the budget of a grant proposal to one or more of its main donors. In the meanwhile, however, and until this post is filled, it is highly advisable for CAWTAR to immediately recruit a resource mobilization specialist on a short-term consultancy basis (for a fairly low cost) to design an effective and realistic resource mobilization strategy for implementation in the short run. Parallel to the development of this strategy, it would be desirable to the BoT to invest efforts in expanding its membership to include representatives from other sectors within the region, including academia and the private sector. Such new members would not only enrich the Board with fresh perspectives, but would also provide avenues to alternative sources of funding. Eventually, a recruited Resource Mobilization Officer should work closely with the ED to design an innovative strategy to implicate the members of the Board in fundraising activities on behalf of the Center (besides their own project contracts with CAWTAR).

⁸ It should be noted that endowed institutions in the Arab region are a rarity. A notable exception is the Economic Research Forum, a regional entity based in Egypt and dedicated to economic research and networking in the Middle East (excluding Israel). The endowment of ERF (in which the World Bank has played an essential role) has allowed it high levels of independence, success, and quality research that are unprecedented in the region.

(3) As stated above, several further core positions continue to be vacant at CAWTAR for lack of funds, often compromising the quality or outreach of its activities. Filling these posts, especially that of a Research Director, should obviously be a priority for CAWTAR. Realistically speaking, however, unless CAWTAR manages to secure a permanent stream of income (through a combination of an endowment and a well-designed resource mobilization strategy) such core positions will have to be dependent on project funds. Again, CAWTAR should consider recruiting a qualified Resource Mobilization consultant with considerable skills in grant writing to focus in part on developing proposals for the support of these positions. While the budgets of time-bound projects would not secure permanent funds for such staff, they could, if approved, be a starting point that would provide the Center for at least few years with a qualitative change in its human resource base. In the immediate run, CAWTAR could take certain remedial measures that do not necessarily have significant cost but would counter the effects of these unfilled posts; and this would enhance its regional role as a center for knowledge making and sharing. For one, it is imperative that the Board of CAWTAR approves the formation of a Scientific Committee that would guide its research agenda and enrich it with more substantive perspectives – especially important in the absence of full-time researchers at CAWTAR. Such a committee should naturally include specialists in gender and development studies. It is essential though that advocacy and public policy experts be also recruited to the committee in order to guide the outreach objectives of CAWTAR. This would help with the fact that a significant part of the research work of CAWTAR stops at the scholastic level and does not translate into practical measures that would be useful for advocacy, training, and outreach purposes. In this connection, it is highly advisable that CAWTAR re-examines and revises its approach to the planning of research activities, including the selection of researchers. While it is understandable that affordability and familiarity are important criteria in selecting a research consultant, the products of CAWTAR would be further enriched by expanding its pool of contributing researchers and experts. Finally, if CAWTAR could fill only one of its vacant posts, it has to be the position of the Webmaster. Given the nature of its work, the IT requirements associated with its electronic networks and databases, and the centrality of a good website to the outreach of a regional institution such as CAWTAR, leaving the functions of this post to external part-time support is simply a mistake. As difficult as it might be for CAWTAR to secure an amount of about \$18,000 a year for this position, the positive impact of such a staff member would be tremendous, especially for ANGED.

(4) To counter to its financial inability to recruit regional staff from outside Tunis, CAWTAR could initiate exchange programs with other NGOs and research centers in the Arab region. In addition, it could host visiting researchers and graduate student interns for short term periods. Such visitors would diversity the profile of the Center and enrich its intellectual and research base without necessarily exhausting its resources, since such visitors could be supported by their own establishments or other funding agencies. It is evident from the experiences of many organizations, especially in the West, that a well designed graduate internship program provides centers like CAWTAR with a wealth of energy and skills (at virtually no cost) that can be deployed to support a variety of activities, such as seminar series, editing and data analysis, and training services.

Finally, it should be noted that, issues discussed above in relation to the long-term financial independence of CAWTAR, shortage of staff, and formation of Scientific

committee, have already been identified in previous evaluations. The persistence of these problems today does not indicate any lack of awareness on the side of the management of CAWTAR, or any unwillingness to reform. On the contrary, it was evident throughout the course of this evaluation exercise that the CAWTAR team was acutely aware of, and concerned about, these shortcomings. As discussed above, however, many of them require remedial actions that are well beyond the internal control of CAWTAR or its staff; for they are the prerogatives of the principle donors and/or the Board of Trustees of CAWTAR.

PART III – THE ANGED PROGRAM: ACHIEVEMENTS & LIMITATIONS

1. Profile and outputs of the ANGED Program

The impetus for the establishment of ANGED embodied a common goal of CAWTAR and the World Bank: namely a strengthening of sustainable capacities in the Arab region to influence and monitor policies supportive of women's rights and economic participation. As such, ANGED was designed with the aims of (1) mobilizing regional expertise into a network oriented towards priorities in the field of gender and development; (2) contributing to the formulation of policy recommendations on gender equality; (3) producing and disseminating findings of gender related policy-oriented research among decision makers and media professionals; and (4) providing a unique space for dialogue on gender issues among regional and national stakeholders. Membership in the network was to be diversified, participatory, and open, for a very minimal fee, to all strata within the Arab countries, whether individuals or institutions, academics or activists, governmental agents or civil society affiliates.

ANGED is in fact an exemplar, par excellence, of CAWTAR's pioneering work. It should be stated categorically that the ANGED initiative has been an ambitious, innovative, and unprecedented endeavor in the Arab region. Its mission to address sensitive gender-related issues, and to do so by building an eclectic base of typically unconnected individuals and institutions from the whole Arab region, is both commendable and indispensable to any potential progress towards gender equality. In a part of the world where competition among civil society organizations is strikingly high, where inter-regional differences extend well beyond geographical borders, and where mistrust between NGOs and governments is a common reality, ANGED has made significant progress although much bigger and better-funded entities continue to struggle.

As one of the main programs of CAWTAR, ANGED has benefitted hugely from its institutional base. At its inception, ANGED instantly gained the credibility and worthiness that had already been accorded to CAWTAR. More importantly, from the onset of its operations it drew on the tremendous energy of CAWTAR's small yet committed staff for the planning and execution of its activities. The resourcefulness of CAWTAR's dynamic and highly-regarded Executive Director, along with the prominence of its Board members across the Arab region, afforded ANGED immediate access to an international donor community and to a wide membership base throughout the Arab region. Thus, the success of the ANGED program to fully complete its prescribed activities is owed, in no small part, to its setting within CAWTAR.

The agreement between the World Bank and CAWTAR indicates that the performance of ANGED is to be measured against the successful completion of four interconnected outputs: deepening the gender network; organizing an annual event for networking and research dissemination; developing a gender-specific regional flagship report that would facilitate comparative and substantive knowledge exchange; and serving as an

institutional spokesperson for gender issues in the region. With respect to each of these outputs, CAWTAR has exceeded expectations at both scope and quality levels. With relatively little resources, its staff has managed to produce each ANGED output thoughtfully and systematically. The following is a description of these 4 outputs followed by a discussion of the challenges associated with their implementation:

- **Deepening the network:** The membership base of ANGED, composed of both individuals and institutions, has grown over the years to reach more than 300 members (a 200% increase since 2005). The members of ANGED consist of NGOs, academics, parliamentarians, media professionals, research centers, governmental representatives, and gender specialists from across the Arab region. International experts and organizations have also participated in the activities of ANGED and, in the process have extended the reach of the network well beyond the boundaries of the Arab region. A significant indication of the success of this output is the specialized and smaller spin-off networks that have been forged by ANGED members. For example, the Adolescents Network (@DO) was established in January 2005 under the aegis of ANGED to focus specifically on gender and public policy issues relating to Arab adolescents. Due to funding limitations, @DO has not been able to maintain a consistently active agenda. Still, it has focused on the important topic of ‘adolescence and the media’, and has succeeded in making relevant materials and training workshops available to its members. Media professionals within the network have also launched (with supplementary funds from the European Union) an online newsletter (@DOONLINE) produced on a rotational basis by different members to provide news, discussion forums, and information sources about adolescents in the Arab region.

- **Annual Meeting:** The annual meetings of ANGED – a total of six at the time of this evaluation, with the seventh under preparation – have become a notable venue for knowledge sharing and for policy discussions of gender issues (which are rare occurrences in the Arab region). Over the years, ANGED has succeeded in bringing together at each of its annual events an increasingly large number of its members (reaching 140 in 2007) representing various research, media, governmental, public policy, and non-governmental organizations (please see Table 4 for more details on meeting participation). Journalists have been notably present in these meetings, amounting to as many as 33 participants in the 2007 meeting. Their presence has guaranteed extensive coverage in local and regional TV station and newspapers. For instance, the events of the 2007 annual meeting were covered by 3 different TV stations and were the subject of 13 newspaper articles. Over the years, these meetings have provided a platform of continuity for ANGED members to explore networking and cooperation possibilities, to showcase their research on cross-cutting gender issues, and to engage in debates on pressing gender-related policies. At the same time, the ANGED annual meetings have become a sounding board for CAWTAR to present its various research findings and explore new priority areas. The seventh annual meeting, which took place during the course of this evaluation, brought ANGED’s partnerships to new qualitative and geographical levels. This meeting was held in Dubai (rather than Tunis, the traditional base for the previous meetings). It had a special focus on women in the Arabian Gulf, and, was conducted in partnership with a distinguished policy-oriented academic

institution, namely the Dubai School of Government. Moreover, the Dubai meeting is the first of its kind for CAWTAR, as it drew on the research findings of another World Bank – CAWTAR initiative, the Gender Economic Research and Policy Analysis (GERPA), with the aim of establishing linkages between the advocacy objectives of ANGED and GERPA’s focus on mainstreaming gender approaches in economic studies.

Table 4: Participation in ANGED Annual Meeting (2005-2007)

	2005	2006	2007
Participants	100	107	140
Represented organizations	N/A	89	100
Represented Arab countries	15	16	18

Source: Reports of Annual ANGED Meetings, CAWTAR

- **Flagship report:** At the time of the inception of ANGED in 2002, CAWTAR had already produced 2 issues of its flagship regional report, the Arab Women Development Report (AWDR). Since then, four additional reports have been completed, each with substantial research contributions from ANGED members. The AWDRs have been recognized throughout the region as valuable references on issues of utmost significance to debates on gender-oriented public policies. Both in their preparation and in their dissemination, CAWTAR has drawn heavily on the expertise of its network’s members. But the role of the ANGED program in research and knowledge building has not been restricted to these Annual Reports. ANGED members have been actively involved in every other research activities initiated by CAWTAR, including national studies that were offshoots of AWDRs, calls for papers on timely issues, and research competitions specifically targeting young scholars.

- **ANGED as institutional gender spokesperson in the Arab region:** Most interviewed ANGED members credited the network with inducting them into the field of gender and public policy, equipping them with tools to bring this newly-acquired knowledge into their daily professional life, and ultimately translating that knowledge into products of real practical significance. Some acknowledged that the benefits they gained from their membership in ANGED have impacted their work in drastic and long-lasting ways: for example, raising the awareness of an otherwise indifferent policy maker about the intrinsic linkages between women’s economic rights and poverty alleviation; training a peer-educator into the skill of addressing the reproductive health concerns of a vulnerable adolescent; and securing the commitment to gender issues of a prolific journalist with daily outreach to thousands of otherwise uninformed readers (please see Box 3 for more views from ANGED members about the Network).

Such testimonials manifest the real positive impact of ANGED, and provide a vital indicator of its outstanding performance – one that goes importantly beyond what is shown by the required 4 outputs. Furthermore, a solid web of relations between the especially active Information and Communication Unit at CAWTAR and journalist members of ANGED has resulted in agreements for guaranteed coverage that have sprouted several prime-time articles on gender related issues in some of the most widely circulated newspapers in the region. Finally, CAWTAR has heavily involved ANGED members, especially journalists, in the preparations of its organizational newsletter CAWTARIYAT, and through this involvement, has managed to link them (and the work of ANGED) to the wider constituencies of CAWTAR and its affiliated organizations.

In summary, the ANGED program has played a significant role in the achievements of CAWTAR

as a whole. Given the intricate connection between CAWTAR as an organization and ANGED as a networking entity their effects on one another are unsurprisingly multidimensional and mutually beneficial. Through the ANGED membership base, CAWTAR has expanded its pool of researchers, and with that, its access to more specialized expertise on gender related issues. Furthermore, ANGED annual meetings

Box 3: Views of ANGED members about the Network

“I have been a member since 2003 and have attended 2 trainings, 1 strategy workshop, and 3 annual meetings – these activities expanded the way I work. For the first time I was able to cooperate with women from all over the Middle East. Through ANGED I have access to a wealth of information and a huge pool of knowledgeable professionals. ANGED strengthened my awareness about gender and introduced me to new methodologies of advocacy and cooperation” (Journalist)

“ANGED opened new possibilities for informal YET important collaborations between professionals working on gender and development. But these possibilities need to be sustained with more follow-up activities and constant communication. The value of the yearly meeting is undermined by the lack of continuity and absence of a framework for on-going interaction” (Ministry Representative)

“ANGED is trying to work against many odds, as our region lacks many pre-requisites for successful networks: We have NO solid NGO community; NO effective communication channels; NO commitment to joint work and common goods. I applaud CAWTAT for its efforts on this Network. Despite setbacks ANGED should persist – slowly but surely it is building a connected community of dedicated and more aware gender and development specialists (NGO Representative).

“ANGED is a network rich with multiple perspectives. It has pushed me outside the limits of my own field and national boundaries. Before ANGED I never had the chance to engage with other Arab researchers. Today I am part of a wide community that I draw on to enrich my work and exchange information” (Researcher).

“ANGED gave me what my university could never give me – a chance to know and cooperate with academics from all over the region. Being able to network with members of my own profession in other countries AND without having to go through institutional bureaucracies is a huge benefit. ANGED allowed me the chance to broaden my horizon and exposed me to new perspectives, at a time when inter-disciplinary approaches are a requirement for any successful work” (Academic).

“ANGED should implicate more public officials in its yearly meetings. More efforts should be invested in training members on how to reach decision makers. Otherwise the work of ANGED will not go beyond “converting the converted”. But the responsibility also falls on ANGED members. Many want the benefits of membership but are passive and lack the initiative to contribute. A priority should be to define membership terms and responsibilities (Journalist and Head of NGO).

“Networking is not in our Arab culture. ANGED is trying to change this situation – but this needs patience, persistence, knowledge, and most importantly, sufficient financial resources. Without the latter, the fate of ANGED will be the same as many other networks that we have seen disappear as soon as they surfaced” (NGO Activist).

have provided CAWTAR with an additional forum in which to give public exposure to its research and advocacy agenda. And most significant has been the role of media professionals – who form an especially active segment of the ANGED membership base – in disseminating to the general public the research findings of CAWTAR (beyond those of ANGED) and highlighting the pressing gender issues advanced in CAWTAR’s public events and publications. But as stated above, ANGED has in turn also benefitted tremendously from its institutional base. CAWTAR has given ANGED much more than a home: its human resources, research groundwork, and public relations have been the backbone of the establishment, expansion, and continuity of ANGED. Given the limited funds available for ANGED’s ambitious agenda, without such input from CAWTAR the survival of ANGED would be highly unlikely.

2. Limitations

The stated achievements of the ANGED program should, however, not blind us to the challenges that it faces. Its success has been affected both by problems in its own internal structure as a program, and by constraints that derive from its wider three-dimensional context whether related to the woman’s question, Arab civil society, or CAWTAR’s institutional character . These factors have inevitably played a role in the performance of ANGED and provided important lessons for future directions. (Note that each of the challenges that face CAWTAR (as discussed in Part 2) has intrinsically impacted the performance of the ANGED program. At the same time, with its limited budget and overarching agenda of work ANGED has also been at many points an added pressure on the time and efforts of the already overworked staff of CAWTAR).

The ANGED program has an ambitious set of objectives and a demanding agenda of work. Its stated outputs are quite labor intensive, requiring specialized expertise in the areas of networking, research, training, advocacy, and information technology. Its budget, on the other hand, does not match its technical and human resource needs. In the first 2 years of its inception (2002 and 2003), the ANGED program received from the GDF of the World Bank a total of \$475,000 and for the following 3 years an annual grant of \$260,000. According to information from CAWTAR, it was agreed from early on with the World Bank that 70% of the yearly budget will be allocated for the expenses of the annual meeting (although this agreement was not indicated in the signed contract). Given the significance of this meeting to the enhancement of networking between members, the allocation of such a large proportion of the funds was clearly justifiable. However, this left little to cover the cost of the other 3 required outputs. In particular, the approved budget did not allocate sufficient funds for the cost of necessary specialized human resources indicated above. As a result, the growth potential of the Network has been undermined and its outreach somewhat limited, especially in terms of follow-up activities outside the scope of the annual meeting. Training opportunities for ANGED members in the first few years of the network’s establishment were also limited (-- only a few per year). Such shortcomings were noted in the previous evaluation of ANGED, which underscored for instance that in the period of 2002-2005 only a total of 35 members participated in about 15 training workshops organized by CAWTAR. In the following years, CAWTAR invested significant efforts in addressing these shortcomings. And the number of members participating in training events gradually increased, amounting to

about 20-25 per year during the more recent years⁹. The CAWTAR team also took steps to use its recently established website in order to promote ANGED and to enhance electronic communication with ANGED members. However, at the end of 2006 the World Bank integrated the ANGED program within the larger SAGE initiative (along with the GERPA component), and consequently, reduced its approved yearly funding to \$175,000¹⁰.

But the reduction in the budget of ANGED did not carry with it corresponding changes in the expected outputs of the program. Since then, ANGED has been struggling to meet the requirements of its contractual agreements with the World Bank, by drawing heavily on the wider institutional human and financial resources of CAWTAR. As a result, while the financial reports of ANGED indicate disbursements limited to its available budget from the World Bank, the quantity of funds that actually goes into the implementation of ANGED outputs is by far greater. These funds are, however, hard to specify. With each and every staff member of CAWTAR (core and project-based) being involved at one point or the other in various aspects of ANGED's operations, and with CAWTAR making available every single institutional resource it has for ANGED, an accurate account of the real operating budget of the program is virtually impossible to produce. The upside of this situation is the implication that ANGED has been deeply integrated in all programmatic and operational structure of CAWTAR – a scenario that was in fact recommended in the previous evaluation of ANGED. But the downside of this situation is that it has (a) perpetuated an exaggerated perception of the resources of ANGED, (b) allowed the emergence of unrealistic expectations of the network amongst its members, (c) diffused (but without helping to rectify) the design deficiencies of the ANGED program, and (d) dispersed responsibilities among CAWTAR employees to the point of obscuring performance accountability. The absence of any full-time staff member dedicated to ANGED has been especially detrimental to maintaining continued communication and coordination with its stakeholders.

As mentioned above the ANGED program, given its budget limitations, was designed with too many objectives and too many expected outcomes. CAWTAR, in its implementation of the program, has strived to meet all these objectives, ending up by (a) spreading itself too thin and (b) setting unrealistic expectations of its own capacities and of the network among its members. In fact, ANGED has been operating with an agenda that is fit for a coalition, or even an NGO, rather than a mere network. The interviews conducted in the context of this evaluation, as well the documents of ANGED, all point to the fact that, for its members and for its coordinating secretariat, ANGED has different (although not totally unconnected) missions: for some it is a network for advocacy, for some a network for knowledge exchange, for some a network for research development, for some a network for capacity building, and for some a network for every one of these stated purposes. While all these aspects of the network revolve around one issue –

⁹ This is a rough estimate based on various periodic reports, as no exact information is available about the participation of ANGED members in training activities.

¹⁰ Based on the records provided to the Consultant, ANGED has also received over the years some supplementary funds from other CAWTAR donors to cover some of its expenses. However, no specific figures were made available.

gender and development – this multiplicity of perceptions has undermined the coherence of ANGED’s work and has clouded in ambiguity the relations with its members..

Connected to the previous problem is the lack of definition of roles and responsibilities when it comes to both ANGED members and its coordinating secretariat. ANGED has never failed to attract new members. Its activities have been a magnet to researchers, journalists, governmental officials, activists for women’s rights, and NGOs with interests in the general field of gender and development. Based on the email records of CAWTAR, numerous individuals and institutions from all over the region contact ANGED on a daily basis expressing interest in the network and seeking one type of assistance or another in support of their lines of work in that field.. But without clarity about the functions of membership, such success in attracting new members has not always translated into the creation of clear lines of cooperation, especially across sectors. It has also allowed a significant number of members to lapse into passivity, responding only to concrete requests, without being motivated to initiate support or outreach actions. This ambiguity has been further enforced by the absence of a centralized focal point entrusted with the responsibility of continued mobilization of members into networking and cooperation possibilities. Fundamentally, the main problem in this regard resides in the fact that ANGED was not equipped from day one with a clear and effective networking and communication strategy – one that corresponds to the dynamics of Arab civil society, traditionally marked by the lack of any networking and lobbying culture. The absence of such a strategy has been most noticeable in the inability to establish effective mechanisms for cooperation among network members beyond the yearly meetings and within the national context of their respective countries.

Finally, another limitation rooted in the design of the program is the lack of clear outcome indicators or systematic impact assessment mechanisms. As a result, the program has had to rely on listing its completed activities as an indication of meeting its objectives, stopping short of gaining a systematic understanding of the real impact of these activities. Such an understanding would be especially useful in determining performance gaps and successes, and in identifying approaches for improvement when needed.

3. Recommendations

It would be advisable for the World Bank to increase its funding support for the ANGED program, to at least its original pre-SAGE amount of \$260,000. It would also be advisable to extend the funding beyond 2010 (when the DGF support is supposed to run its course). Given the complications inherent in the design and planning of the program, and in light of the resources invested thus far in its development, a longer period of support will be required before it becomes possible for the returns of the investment in ANGED to solidify. Furthermore, it is evident that networks, especially in the Arab region, require significant levels of persistence and patience. Despite its considerable achievements and its efforts to overcome many of the effects of its structural shortcomings, the ANGED program is likely to need donor support for at least another 4 or 5 years before it can reach an advanced level of productivity and programmatic sustainability.

However, it will be important for the World Bank and CAWTAR to re-consider the objectives of the ANGED program, its implementation approach, and its expected outputs. Re-focusing on fewer and more realistic objectives and prioritizing the activities of ANGED based on available resources would enhance its long-term effectiveness and relevance. For instance, CAWTAR (with the approval of the World Bank) might want to consider directing all the resources of ANGED for at least one year towards revamping the network with (i) an extensive communication strategy, and (ii) tools aimed at increasing the responsiveness of the network's members and engaging them throughout the year outside the scope of organized events. By putting support for research activities (designated one of ANGED outputs) on hold for one or two years, CAWTAR would be able to hire a skilled Communication and Networking Officer dedicated to the network and to the aggressive implementation of a well designed comprehensive communication strategy. An important component of this strategy should be setting up mechanisms for country-level cooperation between members. This scenario would also allow CAWTAR to channel some of the freed funds into innovative communication tools (drawing especially on electronic mediums of communication) to enhance the outreach aspects of the network. But such a step would require a temporary repackaging of ANGED as a network for outreach and knowledge sharing, rather than a network also for knowledge making.

Any networking strategy that ANGED might choose to adopt should identify ways of enlarging the membership base of the network, especially to include younger members involved in activism for gender equality. Special efforts should also be invested to involve more men in the network in order to improve the gender balance. But in the end, regardless of any restructuring that CAWTAR might want to consider for ANGED, it is essential that the respective roles and responsibilities of the members and of the ANGED secretariat be well defined and made clear to all. The webpage and the annual meeting should be used to spell out all the details related to membership mechanisms, responsibilities, and criteria for participation in program events. These measures would importantly enhance the transparency and credibility of the ANGED network.

At the programmatic level, it is highly advisable for CAWTAR to revise its evaluation methodology and reporting approaches, not only in relation to the work of ANGED, but also for all its projects. There is a need to institute a systematic evaluation structure into the very fabric of the organization's management and operational systems. For one, evaluation should be ongoing (i.e., not only once every few years) and should focus not just on outputs (i.e. the number of activities or event participants), but also on outcomes (i.e. what has changed as a result of these activities). Ultimately, periodic evaluations should seek to measure impact on the immediate stakeholders the program is trying to serve. This might seem like a difficult and costly task. But evaluation need not be overly complicated. It might be conducted by in-house staff. For instance, one of the simplest ways to conduct an evaluation is to seek input from trainees about the workshop being provided and how it might be modified or improved. Based on provided records, CAWTAR has previously used this tool in its workshops, including training and networking events for ANGED members. It is not evident however, that collected input

was systematically analyzed and then integrated into the planning of future activities. More importantly, follow-up input should also be sought periodically from ANGED members (through the use of systematic monitoring and evaluation tools) to identify concrete impact of program activities on their daily work. In terms of training, given the limitation of its financial resources, ANGED secretariat can benefit from collaborating with national organization to deliver small country-level targeted training and mentoring programs for its local members. Based on feedback from interviewed ANGED members, training workshops on communication strategies, local networking, and public policy analysis would be especially beneficial for the members of the network across all sectors. Without such basic skills, a network aimed at influencing public policies would have serious difficulties transmitting its message. Finally, in revamping the ANGED program, CAWTAR might want to consider recommendations sought directly from interviewed ANGED members, as listed in the following box:

Box 4: Recommendations from ANGED members for the network

“The appointment of an ANGED focal point in each country would be very useful. The focal point (a person or, preferably, an institution) would informally coordinate between local members and propose meetings for follow-up and exchange of information. It could be rotational and on volunteer basis, but with small nominal incentives” (Government)

“Continuity and transparency are essential to the success of a network. A minimum level of ongoing communication is required to sustain continuity. CAWTAR should make more use of technological tools to break geographical barriers. Weekly bulletins and other cost-effective electronic communication would keep members engaged” (NGO).

“Members of ANGED need to learn how to communicate with policy makers, get the message to them. We need to implicate more officials in ANGED events” (Researcher).

“We need to learn the methodology of networking. It shouldn’t be assumed that people are comfortable networking or know how to network simply because they have joined ANGED. CAWTAR needs to educate ANGED members on the concept and mechanisms of networking” (Journalist).

“I suggest that CAWTAR clarifies the rights and duties of ANGED members. Also, members should understand better the operational structure of ANGED” (Media).

“Memberships should be activated with constant communication and updates. E-forums are excellent to exchange knowledge. A roster of all members should be made available” (NGO).

“I recommend that every member leave the annual meeting with a clear plan on networking activities in their own countries. Also, meeting agendas should include fewer presentations, more focused discussions, and concrete focus beyond general objectives. CAWTAR should not only focus on specialized networks. Members should also be encouraged to connect with others outside their own specializations. This is how we can learn more and have wider impact on each other” (Academic).

“CAWTAR should implicate other organizations in implementing some of ANGED activities. A system of co-sponsorship of ANGED events might be cost effective. Members should be asked to submit short updates on women’s issues in their sectors/countries. CAWTAR and other affiliates can take turn consolidating submissions and circulating them.”

PART IV – CONCLUSION

CAWTAR has proven its ability to create a successful network, to equip it with substantive knowledge and capacity building tools, and to maintain it for over six years under considerable pressure and with very limited resources. At this point, there is no doubt that the ANGED initiative has the basis of a solid networking entity able to advocate for women's rights and gender equality, with an everlasting impact. But as CAWTAR nears the 10 year anniversary of its re-launching and as the World Bank's financial commitment to ANGED comes close to running its course in 2010, both CAWTAR and ANGED are at a point that calls for courageous decisions by the BoT, donors, and senior management.

While CAWTAR has succeeded in proving itself with a remarkable track record, it now needs to pause, to re-consider its operational strategies, and to revamp them with more focused approaches to research, advocacy, oversight, and resource mobilization. Enriching its human resource base with additional skills and clearer lines of responsibility would improve both the performance and productivity of its staff. CAWTAR also needs to infuse its Board of Trustees with new energy and perspectives from various sectors of the wider Arab society. An expansion of the membership of the BoT would open new avenues of substantive and financial support for CAWTAR. But a pre-requisite of all these steps and of the success of this revamping process is a solid support from the BoT – enabling CAWTAR to reach a state of financial security that would allow the organization to build on its impressive line of achievements. The establishment of an endowment and the implementation of a well-designed resource mobilization strategy would (a) provide for the core expenses of the organization, (b) permit it to avoid fragmented projects, and (c) allow it to consolidate its advocacy and research work into comprehensive effective programs. More than ever, the mandate of CAWTAR continues to be worthy of such support. Its goals remain of immediate relevance to the regional needs in the areas of gender and development. With the persistence of gender inequality, increasing economic disparities, and rise of religiously inspired social conservatism, CAWTAR is in a unique position to provide essential advocacy, research, and capacity building resources across the Arab region.

Given the intrinsic relations between ANGED and CAWTAR, structural improvements in the latter would surely be beneficial to the former. But in any case, ANGED would benefit from an increase in its budget in order to support its staffing base and to allow the implementation of activities that are critical to its growth. A re-consideration of the outputs of the program with an eye to giving it a more realistic focus and to revising its communication strategy would enhance its effectiveness and broaden its outreach. A fresh definition of the respective responsibilities of its members and its secretariat, along with a multi-level knowledge sharing strategy, would promote continuity and enhance impact. After such steps, the ANGED Network would be poised to grow into an effective medium that not only accomplish its own stated objectives, but more importantly, help to accomplish those of CAWTAR and its wide range of partner organizations.

PART V – APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interviews / Consultations

I would like to thank every one of the people listed below for taking the time to meet with me and for their willingness to openly share their views. The CAWTAR team headed by Dr. Soukeina Bouraoui was most cooperative and hospitable during my visits to Tunis in the course of the evaluation – securing my access to information and people with utmost courtesy and transparency. Ms. Nadereh Chamlou and Ms. Randa Akeel, at the World Bank, were equally cooperative and accessible. Finally, my deep appreciation to all the interviewed ANGED members, and GERPA participants in the April 2008 Workshop, for being so eager to cooperate and support the objectives of this evaluation.

Tunisia

Bouthaina Gribaa, Director of International Cooperation, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, the Family, the Child, and the Elderly

Hafidha Chekir, Professor, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Tunis

Nabiha Gueddana, President General Director, National Board of Family and Population

Nacer Kefi, Professor, Higher Institute of Documentation, and Senior Advisor, Arab Institute of Human Rights

Radhia Al-Saidi, Editor-in-Chief, Al-‘Aked Newspaper

Salma Al-Jalssi, Journalist, Al-Shaab Newspaper

Senim Ben Abdallah, Researcher and Assistant Professor, Sociology Department, University of Tunis

Zouhair Skandar, Director General, Center of Judiciary Studies

Lebanon

Abir Abdel-Samad, Head of Women’s and Family Affairs Department, MOSA

Amani Kabbara Charani, President of Lebanese Women’s Council, and President of NGO Committee for the Follow-Up on Women’s Issues

Dalphine Compain, Moawad Foundation; Education, Social Development, and Human Rights Department

Mariana Al-Khayat Al-Sabbouri, Head of the Office for Public Relations and Conferences, and General Secretary of National Committee for Population, Ministry of Social Affairs

Nahawand Kadri Isa, Professor, College of Communication and Documentation, Lebanese University / Member, Association of Lebanese Women Researchers (Bahithat)

Natalie Abboud, Social Worker, Ministry of Social Affairs

Rola Masri, Program Coordinator, Collective for Research and Training on Development
Roula Mekhayel, Journalist at Al-Nahar Newspaper, and Executive Director of Al-Maharat Foundation

Sami Ofeish, Director of the Lebanese Association for Democratic Election, and Professor of Political Science, Balamand University

Syria

Anas Azrak, Director of Drama TV Station, Syrian General Administration; and former Director of General Organization of Radio and TV

Tomader Fateh, Journalist, Forward Magazine and Syria Times

CAWTAR

Adila Mochref, former CAWTAR Staff Member, currently the African Bank

Atidel Mejbri, Information and Communication Officer

Donia Ben Romdhane, Projects Coordinator

Hedia Sebai, Database and Documentation Officer

Hekmet Zouari, Financial Administrator

Imed Zouari, Project Coordinator

Rajaa Makharita, CAWTAR Consultant / Technical Committee Member

Soukeina Bouraoui, Executive Director

The World Bank

Carmen Niethammer, Operation Officer, IFC

Nadereh Chamlou, Senior Advisor (Economic & Sector Work and Knowledge), Office of the Chief Economist, Middle East and North Africa Region

Randa Akeel, Economist, Middle East and North Africa Region, Social and Economic Development Group

Appendix 2: Terms of reference

Evaluation of the Sustainable Advancement of Gender (SAGE) Program

Objectives and Components of the Program

The SAGE program has three inter-related objectives:

1. To advance the debate on women's economic contribution and economic rights,
2. To stimulate economic research capacity on gender from within the region as well as through established research institutions and think-tanks, and
3. To widen the spectrum of networks to disseminate research and advocacy on women's issues.

The program is composed of two components with the following objectives:

Component 1: Economic Research – Gender and Economic Research for Policy Analyses (GERPA).

- (a) Develop sustainable regional capacity for gender research built within previously “gender-neutral” research institutions and think tanks;
- (b) Conduct ongoing economic research on a regular basis that may not necessarily be addressing gender. This objective will provide incentives to incorporate gender within selected activities;
- (c) Broaden gender research of experienced researchers through calls for proposals.

Component 2: Expanding and Deepening Gender Activities – Gender Network for Arab Speaking Countries (NGED) and the Persian Gender Network (PGN)

The objective of this component is to strengthen the existing Gender Network for Arab Speaking Countries (NGED) and the Gender Network for Farsi speaking countries (PGN). It will produce:

- (a) One periodical regional flagship report on a theme that allows for cross-country comparisons and would generate comparative data and analysis. It would also bring together research and policy makers from different parts of the region and facilitate substantive knowledge exchange.
- (b) Yearly networking conference.
- (c) Publication of network members' activities.
- (d) Participation in international conferences to represent the regional gender issues.

Objective of the Evaluation and Audience

The objective of the evaluation is to take stock of the NGED program, revisit its main mission in the light of the emerging gender issues in the region, and assess CAWTAR's internal institutional capacity for sustainability in maintaining this SAGE program in the long term.

The GERPA component has only recently been launched. The first round of research papers and outputs, have not been produced yet thus it would be too early for this component to undergo an evaluation at this stage. The PGN has experienced difficulties in its launch due to the various political issues facing Iran where promoting gender has become very difficult, thus the PGN will not be considered in this evaluation either.

This evaluation is being undertaken as part of the regular evaluation schedule stipulated in the agreement between the World Bank and CAWTAR. The primary objective is to provide information on an ongoing program and to seek to improve it for future years. In addition, the evaluation will evaluate how CAWTAR has managed this program and assess its institutional structure to ensure its sustainability in the long term. The primary audiences for this evaluation report are the CAWTAR Board, the World Bank Gender sector Board, the World Bank MNA VP unit, the task team leader, and the World Bank DGF Council

Contract and Reporting Responsibilities

This is an independent third party evaluation of CAWTAR. However, CAWTAR will conduct the selection of the consultant and sign the contract on behalf of the Bank. CAWTAR will be responsible for furnishing all relevant information, documents, contacts, as well as access to its premises, staff, partners, and members.

The first draft and final evaluation report are to be submitted to the World Bank MNA VP Unit, by email for comments to the attention of:

Nadereh Chamlou, Senior Advisor, Office of the Chief Economist email: Nchamlou@worldbank.org; and to

Randa Akeel, Economist, task manager of the project, email: Rakeel@worldbank.org; Tel: (202)473-4152.

The World Bank will be responsible for furnishing all documentation and information related to the project.

A copy of the first draft of the evaluation will also be submitted to CAWTAR's Board of Trustees and to the Technical Committee for comments.

The Evaluation Consists of Two Parts:

1. The first part of the evaluation deals with the success/problems of NGED and areas that need improvement and with CAWTAR's performance, management and implementation of the program.
2. The second part of the evaluation deals with CAWTAR's overall institutional capacity (past, present and envisioned) in view of previous evaluations, taking into consideration the extent that CAWTAR has achieved the stated recommendations indicated in these evaluations.

A. Program Evaluation (NGED)

- Assess the current status and work program of NGED (years in operation, number of members, geographical coverage, quality of programs etc.)
- Assess how the program objective has changed or is expected to change in the future (including geographical scope if applicable)
- Assess whether or not the program outcome(s) have been achieved and if not to what extent there has been progress made towards their achievement;
- Assess the monitoring and evaluation system that is in place.
- Identify the intended audience for the outreach, research or networking, and the major beneficiaries.
- Provide a stakeholder map. This should list all direct stakeholder groups, and their perceived roles and responsibilities in relation to the program.

- **Program management.** Indicate the location of the program management unit (secretariat), the host organization, and the key characteristics of the management, such as the number of staff, and to whom they report administratively. Indicate whether the program has a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) unit or officer.
- State any relevant principles which guide the operations or management of the program, and any criteria, as applicable, which apply to the selection of country partners, grantees, or beneficiaries of services. Identify key features of the medium-term and annual (or biennial) planning and decision-making processes.

- Cite additional sources of information about the program such as the program Web site.

- What are the lessons learnt from past and current experiences that can be applied in developing future scenario(s) for the sustainability of the program?
- What was suggested in previous evaluations and to what extent have recommendations in previous evaluations been implemented?

B. Institutional Evaluation

- Assess the adequacy of and availability of financial resources as they relate to CAWTAR's work in general;
- Assess efficiency and use of CAWTAR's financial resources including the planned budget and actual expenditure, inputs and outputs;
- Assess CAWTAR's existing resource mobilization mechanisms and constraints: progress made in funding of its overall projects by donors, cost recovery, etc.
- Assess whether CAWTAR's partnership strategy has been appropriate and effective;
- Assess the staffing situation: skill mix, diversification, qualifications, terms of engagement (full time/consultants etc.), salary level, and career development opportunities;
- Review the management and implementation arrangements, including the timeliness of outputs, degree of stakeholder and beneficiary involvement in project implementation and completion of outputs, and how processes were managed/carried-out (e.g. were the processes transparent and participatory?)

- What are the continuous challenges facing CAWTAR (whether the same or additional ones) and what can be some of the mitigating factors to overcome them.

Process and Methodology of the Evaluation

The approach and process of evaluation will comprise the following:

1. Previous evaluations. Identify any previous evaluations of CAWTAR and the NGED program, the key findings and recommendations (particularly those that pertain directly to the scope and purpose of the current evaluation), and what actions have been taken in response to previous findings and recommendations. Indicate whether these evaluations are publicly available, give their title and source, and where they are posted on the Web, if applicable.
2. Upon review of the steps that CAWTAR has taken to address the issues raised in the evaluation.
 - a. If these steps have resulted in successfully overcoming the challenges identified by the evaluation, then elaborate.
 - b. If not, then please elaborate on why the steps were not taken or, if taken, why they did not result in the desired outcome.
3. Review of relevant documentation at CAWTAR in Tunis
4. Briefing by telephone or in person with CAWTAR staff
5. Field visits to one country (the country selection should be based according to the highest number of NGED member representation), in addition to the host country, where discussions should be held with representatives of both governments and civil society organizations;
6. Discussions with donor organizations (AGFUND, World Bank, UNFPA, Ford Foundations, IFC, etc.) – These could be conducted via telephone and e-mail correspondence.
7. Feedback from individual members of the CAWTAR established Arab Network for Gender and Development (NGED) possibly through a survey questionnaire to be sent to all members.

Expected Output

A report covering: the evaluation process, methodology, criteria, findings (including an analysis of the survey) and recommendations. In addition to providing the report, the evaluator may be asked to make a presentation of his/her findings and recommendations to the Board of Trustees of CAWTAR and possibly to World Bank staff in Washington DC.

Time Period

The evaluation should not take more than 3 months and the report 3 months from the time of signature of the contract.