WoMena Tourism Network

Connecting women working in the tourism sector in the MENA region

The Challenge

The tourism industry has always been one of the key sectors in supporting economic development and inclusiveness within the MENA region and has great potential in terms of providing opportunities for women and youth. However, as it stands women working in tourism in the MENA region are facing challenges on different levels. Additionally, COVID-19 has seriously damaged the sector worldwide. The relaunch of touristic activities takes time, and the recovery of tourism will require additional capacities and strong business networks.

The Objective

The **WoMena tourism network** aims to establish a format of peer-to-peer learning for women working in the tourism sector in the MENA region. The program aims to support women to better adapt their businesses to the demands of the tourism sector, new trends and new markets. The network is an opportunity for women within the sector from different countries to explore unique and new tourism experiences that can be added to their already existing offers. The members of the network exchange, cooperate, and design transnational tourism packages.

The Approach

The network has been set up in the framework of the **GIZ Sector Network for Sustainable Economic Development in the MENA Region (SN MENA)**. It is a membership-based network of several GIZ projects and programs in countries across the Middle East and North Africa, addressing sustainable economic development. It is aiming at improving framework conditions as well as achieving short-term employment effects, contributing to long-term growth and employment effects, and measuring the employment results in the region. All team members of the SN MENA are contributing by participating in various working groups.

The **working group Private Sector Development (PSD)** is a platform for exchange among projects dealing with topics of private sector development. It fosters peer learning between the member projects as well as interested colleagues from Germany. Annual activities of joint interest are implemented, such as investigating the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the MENA region. The **tourism sub-working group,** consisting of participants from projects in Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia, identified the topic **"Inclusion of women in the workforce of the tourism sector"** as a common key activity.

Projects involved in the activity:

- Employment-oriented MSME Promotion Project, Jordan (PN.: 2017.4102.4).
- Private Sector Development Programme, Palestinian Territories (PN.: 2017.2198.4)
- Promotion of Green Jobs for young people in rural areas, Morocco (PN.: 2020.2252.3).
- Promotion of Sustainable Tourism, Tunisia (PN.: 1721414)

Since 2023 the WoMena Tourism Network activities have been integrated in the regional project "Economic and political participation of Women" (PN 2021.2190.3).

Impact

At the end of **2020, the first digital conference** was held to empower leadership and exchange among management, middle management, and entrepreneurial positions of women working in the MENA region. A total of **44 women from Jordan, Palestine and Tunisia** participated in the online conference. The following year participants from Morroco were added to the group. Based on this starting point, various virtual exchange meetings on different topics such as visibility of women in tourism in the MENA region, culinary tourism and digital tourism took place. The first in-person exchange meeting was held from 24- 26 November 2022 in Berlin, Germany for 16 participants of the WoMena Tourism network. The participants were able to take part in a organisational development workshop in order to further structure the network and discuss its future. The group also attended the Berlin Travel Festival on November 25, 2022 in order to connect with potential business partners and gain experience for a potential participation with a stand for the next year.

After the meeting in Berlin the corporate identity of the network has been established, a logo and a facebook group have been created. The aim is to continue the regular network meetings and organize one physical meeting in one of their respective countries every year.







WoMena Network meeting in Berlin, November 2022WoMena Network meeting in Berlin, November 2022
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