The gendered impact of corruption in public services sectors in MENA

Possible solutions

Dr. Monica Kirya
Senior Adviser, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, Bergen, Norway
Limited data on gendered experiences of corruption in public services in MENA

- One in five people (22 per cent) paid a bribe for basic services, such as healthcare or education.
- Highest rates of bribery in Police, Identity registration, Utilities and Courts
- Two in five people who accessed public services in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine-used wasa, paid bribes or both.
- One in five citizens across Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine experienced sextortion, or know someone who has.

*Global Corruption Barometer 2019.* Findings not disaggregated by gender, even though the detailed data shows that respondent’s gender was recorded.
Gendered effects of corruption
What can we assume?

- Corruption diverts funds intended for public services
- Corruption in procurement affects the quality of public services
- Corruption perpetuates inequity in access to public services
- Corruption limits women’s employment opportunities and access to decision-making roles in government
Which women suffer more?
Corruption as a vehicle for discrimination

- Rural women
- Unmarried women
- Widows
- Divorced women
- Ethnic and religious minorities
- Migrants
- Women with disabilities
- Gender non-conforming persons
Measures that improve gender equality and reduce corruption too

- Mainstreaming both gender and corruption in sectoral planning processes (SWAp)
- Gender-responsive transparency / open government / access to information
- Gender Responsive (Participatory) Budgeting
- Gender-sensitive or gender-smart procurement
- Affirmative action and merit-based recruitment in the public sector
- Gender-responsive citizen feedback, complaint and whistleblowing mechanisms
Quick wins/ feasible entry points

- **Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in health and education**
  - Job segregation - women’s labour force participation highest in health and education sectors
  - Cultural acceptance of women’s role in these sectors - starting point to pilot new policies such as GRB

- **Merit-based recruitment and affirmative action**
  - Wasta is highly gendered, benefitting men more than women in access to employment and public office
  - World Values Survey shows that most MENA cultures value women’s access to education, but maybe not its utilization
  - Use examinations rather than advertising and interviewing for recruitment
THANK YOU!

✓ Join the United Nations Against Corruption (UNCAC) Coalition Working Group on gender and corruption chaired by U4
monica.kirya@cmi.no
betina.pasteknik@uncaccoalition.org

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