



United Nations  
**Human Rights**  
Office of the High Commissioner



هيئة حقوق الإنسان  
Human Rights Commission



# Report on the Implemented Activities of the Memorandum of Understanding for Technical Cooperation

Between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, represented by the Human Rights Commission

And the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

(February 2014 – February 2019)





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of the Memorandum of Understanding  
for Technical Cooperation**

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# Executive Summary

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This report focuses on the main pillars of The Technical Cooperation Program, its implemented activities, and achieved results.

The Technical Cooperation Program for Human Rights Capacity Building in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the result of a fruitful partnership between the Saudi Human Rights Commission (SHRC) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). This partnership was translated into a Memorandum of Understanding which was signed between the parties in Geneva on 07/08/1433 H (corresponding to 27/06/2012), and ratified by Royal Decree No. M/31, dated 27/05/1434 H (corresponding to 08/04/2013).

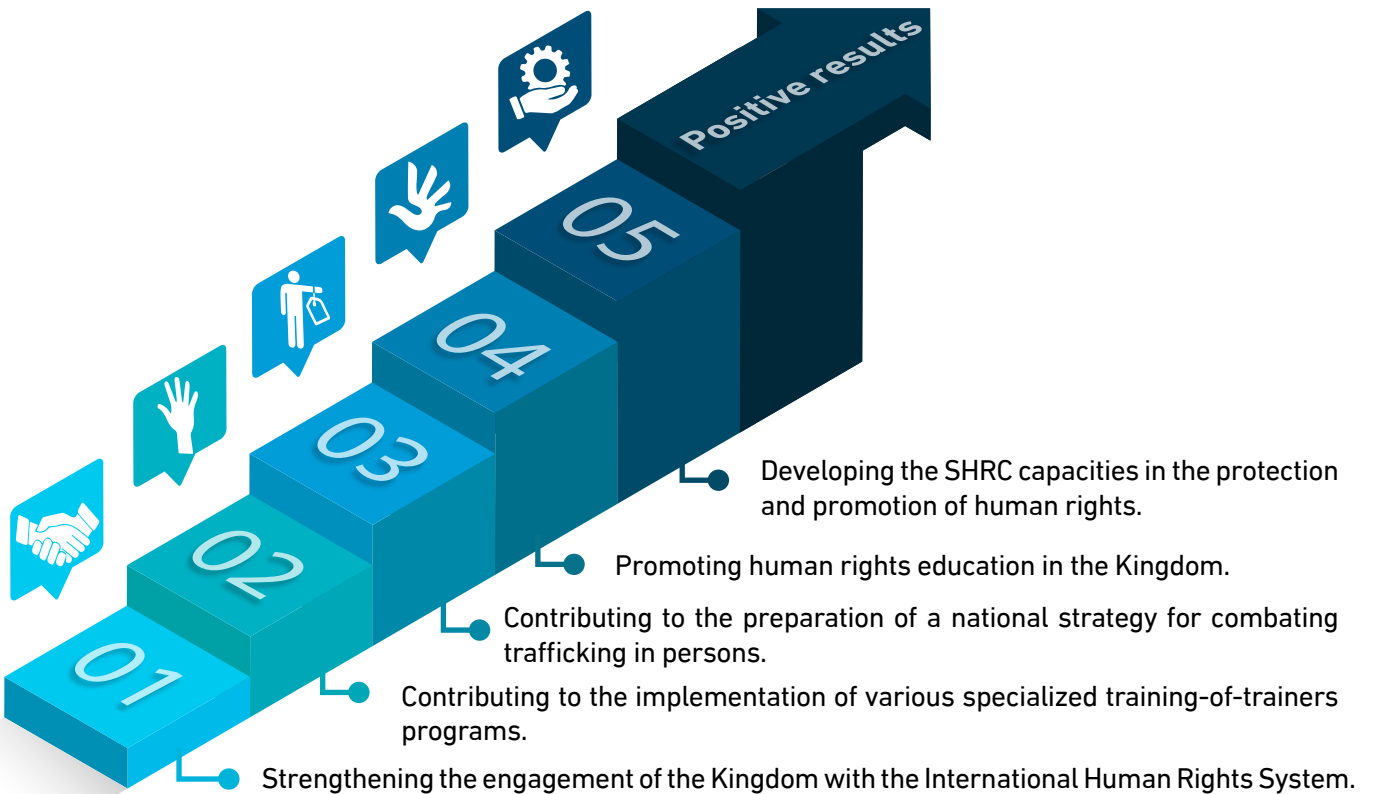
In February 2014, The activities of the Program were effectively commenced as a collaborative effort between the SHRC and the OHCHR through its Regional Office in the Middle East and North Africa in Beirut, Lebanon.

The main objective of the Technical Cooperation Program is to build national capacities necessary for the protection and promotion of human rights in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The implemented activities were therefore in accordance to the Program's objective, and took into consideration the needs of the SHRC and government entities, as well as the recommendations emanating from international human rights mechanisms. The Technical Cooperation Program is fully funded by the SHRC, as illustrated in the table below:

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No.	Fiscal Year	Amount (SAR)	Amount (USD)
1	1436/1437 H (2015)	2,435,100	649,360
2	1437/1438 H (2016)	2,352,999	627,466
3	1437/1438 H (2016)	4,543,962	1,211,723
4	1438/1439 H (2017)	5,550,000	1,480,000
Total		14,882,061	3,968,549

**The Program yielded positive results, including :**





# Background

Human rights acquire growing importance in the Kingdom's policies and strategies for the fact that it has ratified five of the key human rights conventions, and three protocols to the human rights conventions, namely:



» The Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Royal Decree No. M/7, dated 16/04/1416 H (corresponding to 12/09/1995).

The Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, ratified by Royal Decree No. M/38, dated 18/07/1431 H (corresponding to 30/06/2010).

The Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, ratified by Royal Decree No. M/39, dated 18/07/1431 H (corresponding to 30/06/2010).



» The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, ratified by Royal Decree No. M/11, dated 04/04/1418 H (corresponding to 08/08/1997).



» The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, ratified by Royal Decree No. M/12, dated 16/04/1418 H (corresponding to 20/08/1997).



» The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ratified by Royal Decree No. M/25, dated 28/05/1421 H (corresponding to 28/08/2000).



» The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, ratified by Royal Decree No. M/28, dated 22/05/1429 H (corresponding to 27/05/2008).



Several of the periodic reports submitted by the Kingdom to different international human rights mechanisms indicate a steady development of the legal and institutional frameworks governing the protection of human rights, as a result of the development of legislations, laws and regulations for the realization and promotion of human rights on a national scale. Many new laws were promulgated, including the Law for Civil Associations and Organizations in December 2015, the Child Protection Law on 26 April 2014, the Law of Unemployment Insurance on 14 January 2014, the Law of Protection from Abuse on 20 September 2013, the Domestic Workers Regulations on 15 July 2013, the Enforcement Law on 3 July 2012, and the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law on 14 July 2009. Furthermore, a committee was formed to prepare a draft code of judicial decisions. Two laws were also issued: The Law of Criminal Procedure, which provided for the protection of human rights, namely that of the accused, and the identification of the investigation authority; and the Labor Law, which included more provisions for the protection of the rights of workers.



Amongst these positive developments is the adoption of the Vision 2030. The vision 2030 is built around three primary pillars: a vibrant society, a thriving economy and an ambitious nation, seeking to diversify its economy and avoid reliance on oil, while also focusing on enabling its citizens, men and women, to contribute their best to the growth of the country, which has resulted in many reform steps related to women's rights. On the 18th of April 2017, a royal order was issued requesting the SHRC to initiate a national campaign introducing the international conventions ratified by the Kingdom, to increase awareness among the public of its obligations as party to the ratified treaties. The SHRC is currently finalizing a comprehensive national strategy for the protection of human rights, similarly a national plan is being finalized under the Technical Cooperation Project to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations emanated from different international human rights mechanisms for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

## Objectives of the Technical Cooperation Program

The Program aims to build national human rights capacities, and focuses its activities and tasks on capacity building, particularly among the ranks of enforcers of the provisions of the International Human Rights Law. It also focuses on providing and preparing guides for workers in different sectors and supporting activities aimed at developing the role of the judiciary in the protection of human rights, as well as the activities of civil society organizations. The Program also works towards developing mechanisms for drafting the periodic reports required by international human rights mechanisms, and circulating the human rights publications issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

To the end of achieving such objectives, the SHRC and the OHCHR have collaborated towards implementing a series of various activities, programs and events to achieve the objectives mentioned above.

# Technical Cooperation Program Management

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A technical team of two OHCHR international staff and three national positions, respectively, was established to coordinate and cooperate with the SHRC for the implementation of the activities of the Technical Cooperation Program.

To that end, the team coordinates with the SHRC Center for Information and Publishing as a point of contact for facilitating and implementing the proposed activities under the annual plans, with the participation of concerned departments within SHRC. In turn, SHRC holds regular meetings to resolve any obstacles faced during implementation.



























In order to monitor implementation progress, the Program Management runs an operation based on unique methodologies to acquire feedback from participants, and formulate pre- and post-questionnaires to capture participant insight and assessment of the training activities and measure their satisfaction. The Program also conducts a mid-term evaluation through an external expert appointed to assess the project activities and the extent to which they were implemented as per the annual plan. A final evaluation of the first phase of the Program between 2014 to 2016, was conducted by an international expert appointed by the United National Development Program (UNDP).
























## **Activities and Programs**



1. Strengthening the cooperation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the UN human rights mechanisms, which includes the preparation of periodic reports and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations made by such mechanisms.













Activity	Date	Participants
 Training Course on “Elimination of Discrimination against Women”	 23-24 April 2014	 10 men 20 women
 Workshop on “Best practices in combatting Trafficking of Persons”	 27-29 April 2014	 35 men 15 women
 A training workshop for the Standing Committee for Reporting to strengthen efforts involved in drafting the periodic report required by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	 08-10 September 2015	 9 men 5 women
 One day training workshop on human rights terms and UN mechanisms	 09 December 2015	 18 men 7 women
 Introductory seminar on the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	 06-07 January 2016	 60 men 22 women
 Workshop on drafting the National Plan for the Implementation of the Recommendations of International Human Rights Mechanisms	 17-21 July 2016	 27 men 8 women
 Training workshop for the Standing Committee for Reporting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child	 28 August 2016	 7 men 7 women
 Preparation of the national strategy to combat human trafficking	 2017-2016	
 Seminar on the rights of persons with disabilities, and a meeting with civil society organizations	 10 January 2017	 400 men 250 women

 <p>Two training workshops on the standards and principles of documenting and tracking torture practices</p>	 <p>1st: 14-16 August 2017 2nd: 20-22 November 2017</p>	 <p>22 men – 5 women 20 men – 6 women</p>
 <p>Three field visits for government officials to Geneva to review the operation of international human rights mechanisms</p>	 <p>1st: 25-29 January 2016 2nd: 23-27 January 2017 3rd: 23-27 April 2018</p>	 <p>19 men – 6 women 15 men – 7 women 16 men – 4 women</p>
 <p>A 2-day workshop for members of the SHRC on the two covenants; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in order to facilitate the accession of the Kingdom to both covenants</p>	 <p>24 – 25 May 2017</p>	 <p>10 men 6 women</p>
 <p>A training course for 3 members of the Standing Committee for Reporting, to develop their ability to use the database of the National Plan for the Implementation of the Recommendations of International Human Rights Mechanisms</p>	 <p>17-18 May 2017</p>	 <p>2 men 1 woman</p>
 <p>Engagement with the international human rights mechanisms, the functions of the CEDAW, its modalities and reporting</p>	 <p>29-30 January 2018</p>	 <p>13 men 17 women</p>
 <p>Production of publications on rights of persons with disabilities</p>	 <p>March 2018</p>	
 <p>Production of publications on the universal periodic review and Saudi recommendations at its previous two cycles</p>	 <p>March 2018</p>	
 <p>Drafting a guide for the implementation of the human rights conventions ratified by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia</p>	 <p>March 2018</p>	






 Produced a guiding manual on the role of law enforcement officials in the promotion and protection of human rights	 March 2018	
 Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Day	 17 December 2018	 36 men 24 women
 Training workshop on “The Rights of Victims of trafficking”	 30-31 January 2019	 22 men 6 women
 A one day symposium on the rights of persons with disabilities	 20 February 2019	 145 men 155 women



















## 2. Adapting national legislations to international standards in accordance with the Kingdom’s international obligations

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Participants</b>
 Workshop on the International Standards for Fair Trial Guarantees for the judiciary and the Bureau of Investigation and Public Prosecution in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in Geneva	 03-07 October 2016	 23 men
 Training program for law enforcement officials on applying human rights international standards in police work	 03-07 December 2017	 30 men
 2-day workshop on developing the national human rights indicators	 03-04 February 2019	 21 men 9 women
 Preparatory workshop on the rights of persons with disabilities	 07 February 2019	 29 men 40 women

## 3. Training of trainers in human rights and wide-scale dissemination of the culture of human rights in the Kingdom.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Participants</b>
 A training program for trainers representing various private and public sectors	 Phase 1 14-18 December 2014	 26 men 19 women



 Phase 1 of the training-of-trainers program for private and public sectors	 Phase 2 10-19 February 2015	 22 men 10 women
 Introductory seminar for the Convention on the Rights of the Child	 25-26 October 2015	 30 men 47 women
 Workshop titled "Towards a National Vision on Human Rights Education"	 20-22 December 2015	 40 men 31 women
 Training-of-trainers program on the human rights approach to combating trafficking in persons	 24-28 April 2016	 32 men
 A consultative meeting on the development of human rights education in public schools	 26 April 2017	 8 men 4 women
 Training-of-trainers program for law enforcement officials titled, "How to apply Human Rights Standards in Law Enforcement Operations"	 23-27 December 2018	 28 men 2 women

#### 4 . Protection and promotion of human rights through the development of the SHRC capacities and roles in coordination with other external and internal stakeholders.







<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Participants</b>
 Training course on "International Human Rights Mechanisms"	 23-27 February 2014	 100 men 40 women
 Training workshop for SHRC researchers on the mechanisms and methods for documenting and monitoring the status of human rights	 07-09 June 2015	 14 men 11 women
 Preparation of a national guide for human rights complaints, for persons working in complaints, follow-up and investigation departments in various SHRC branches	 01 June 2016	 26 men 5 women



Training programs for SHRC Board members, implemented across three phases:

 Phase 1: The Concept of the International Human Rights Law and its Historical Development, and the Regional Human Rights Law	 22-23 November 2016	 11 men 5 women
 Phase 2: Mechanisms of the International Human Rights Law	 29-30 November 2016	 11 men 5 women
 Phase 3: Role of National Human Rights Institutions in the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Kingdom	 20-21 December 2016	 11 men 5 women
 Workshop on the various UN complaints mechanisms	 21-22 March 2017	 24 men 8 women

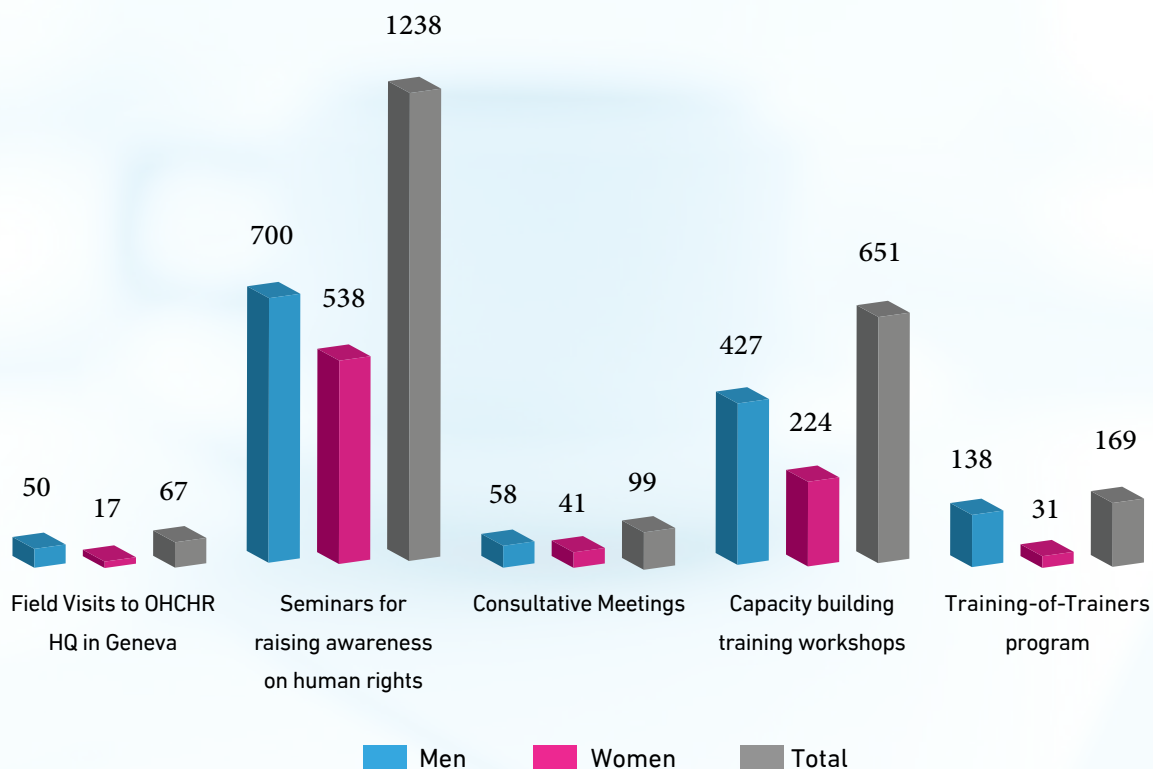
5 . Assisting civil society organizations through developing their capabilities in human rights protection and cultural dissemination

Activity	Date	Participants
 The role of the civil society in monitoring and documenting human rights cases in the Kingdom	 16-19 August 2015	 12 men 29 women
 Training program on the role of national associations and institutions in interacting with the International Human Rights system, and ways of contributing to tasks associated with the Universal Periodic Review	 12-14 March 2018	 15 men 15 women

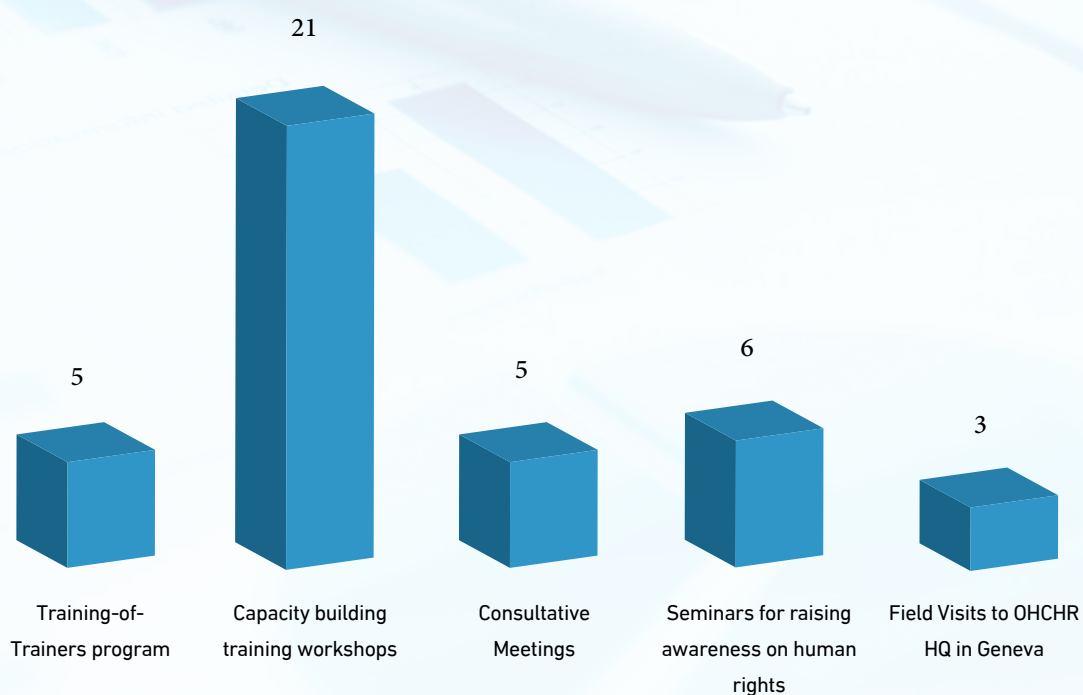


## Statistical Graphs

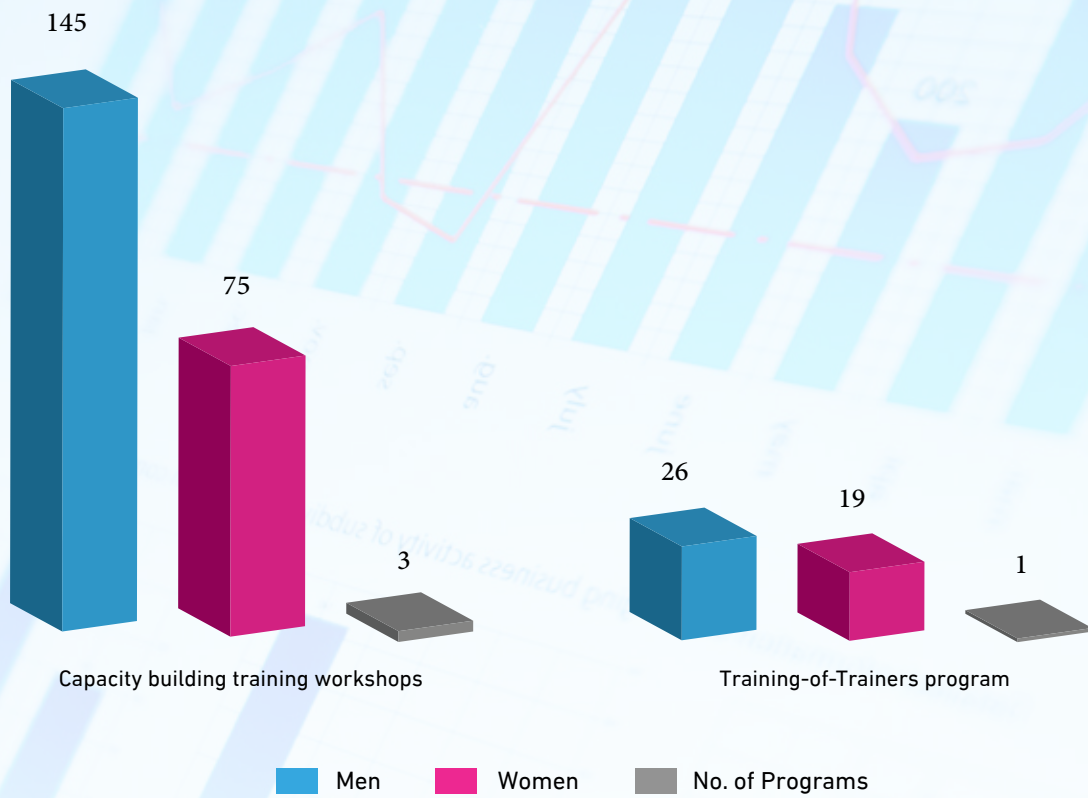
No. of participants in activities of The Technical Cooperation Program for Human Rights Capacity Building in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia between February 2014 and February 2019



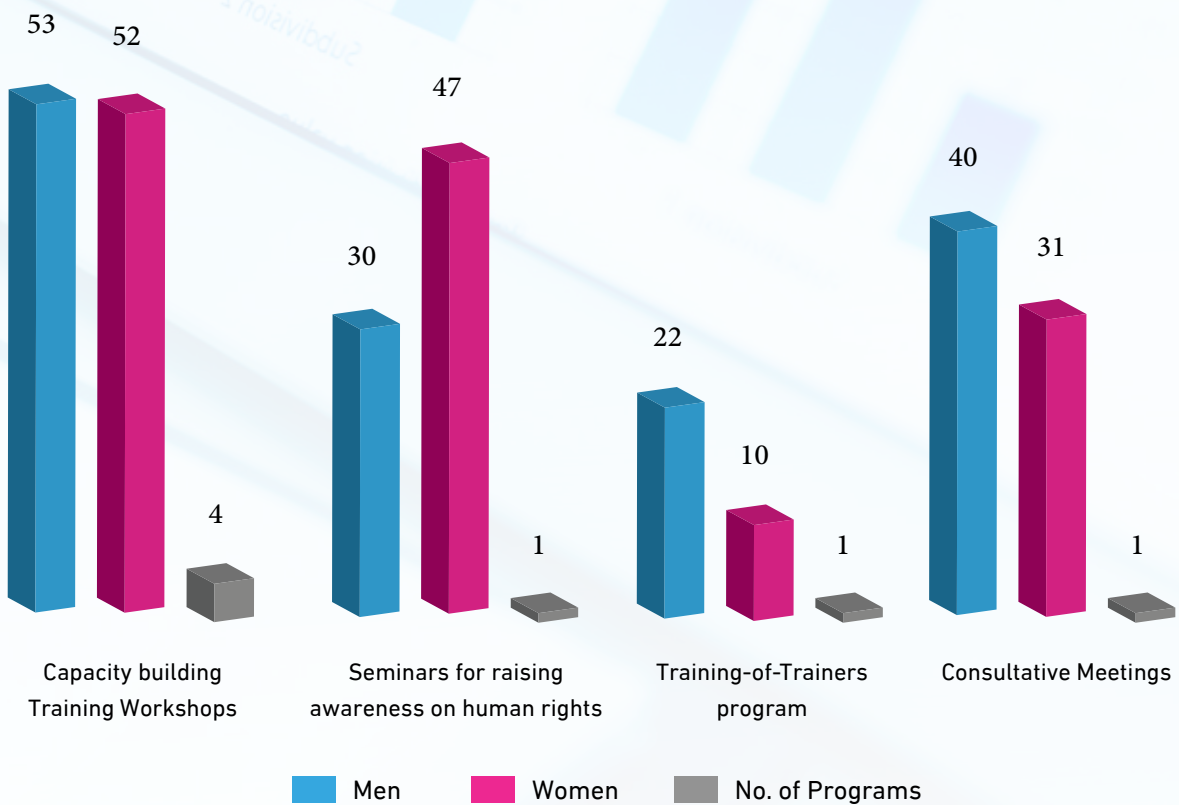
No. of activities between February 2015 and February 2019



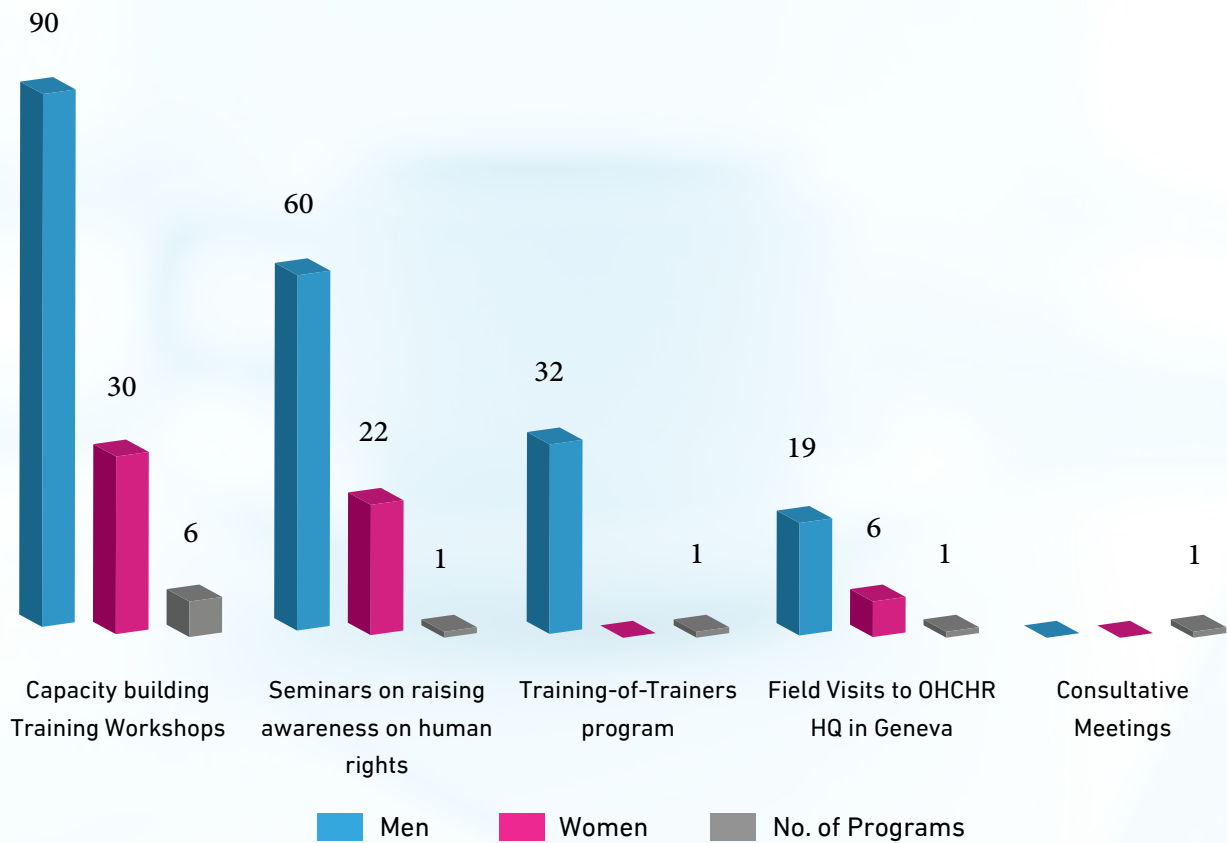
### No. of Programs and Participants in 2014



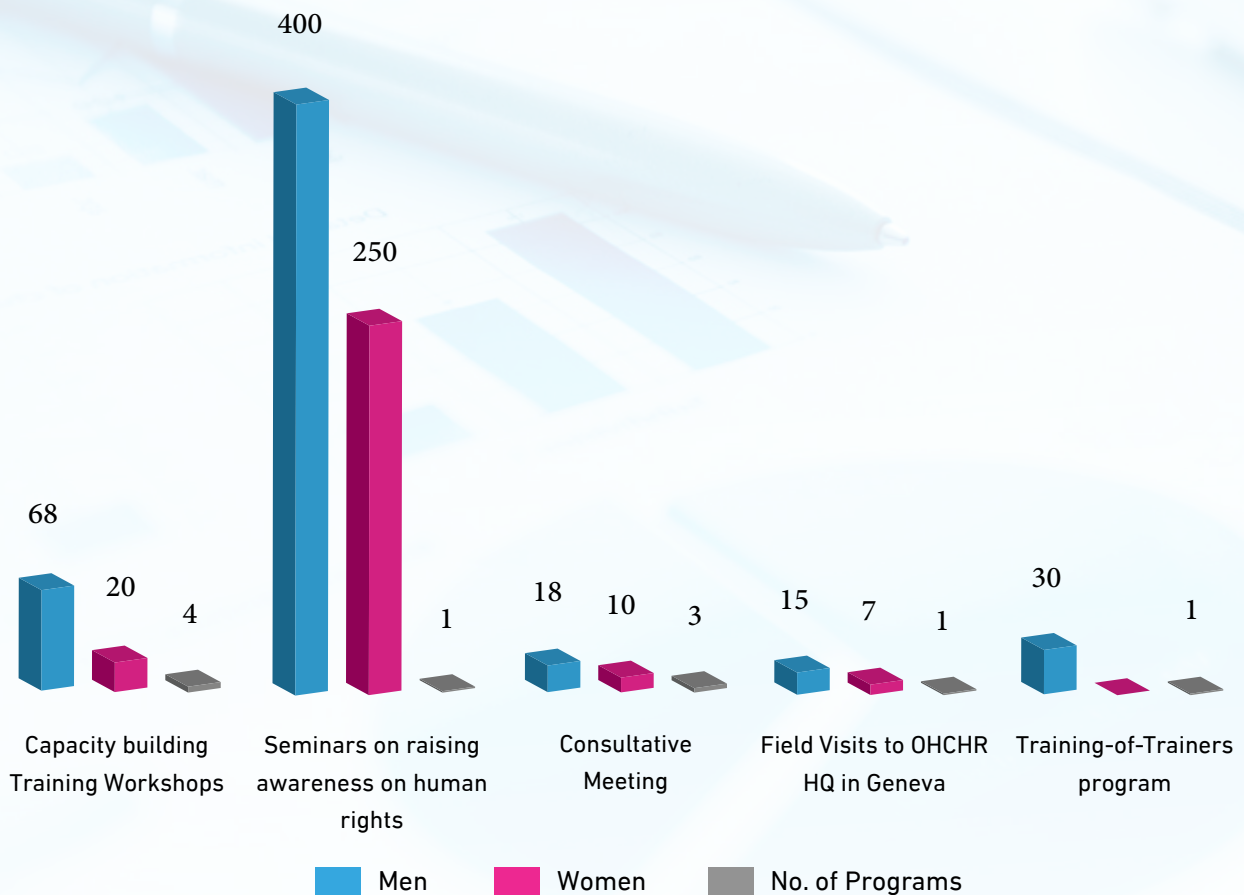
### No. of Programs and Participants in 2015



### No. of Programs and Participants in 2016

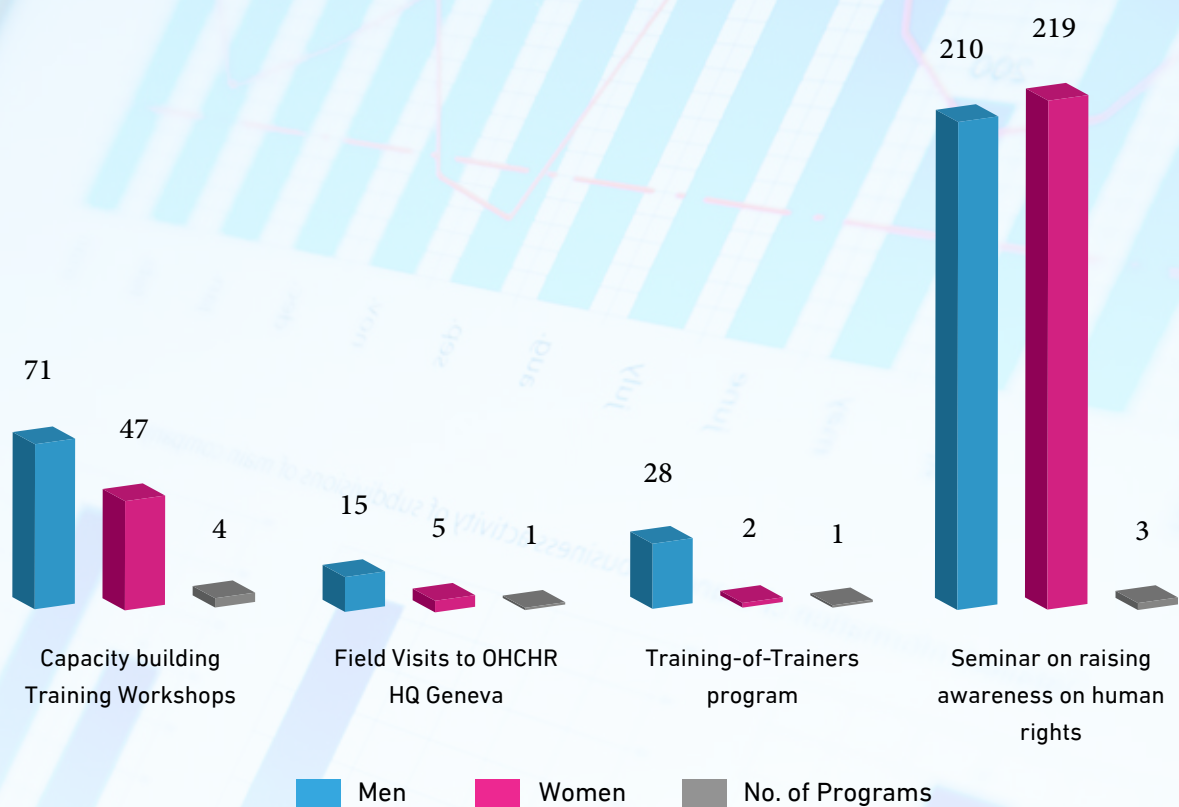


### No. of Programs and Participants in 2017





No. of Programs and Participants from January 2018 to February 2019



# Challenges and Future Prospects

The Technical Cooperation Program was successful in implementing many capacity-building activities and contributing to the qualitative leap in the SHRC operations and performance; yet, several challenges remains to be addressed. At the same time, however, there are many opportunities that would serve to strengthen the human rights foundation in the Kingdom in the future. These challenges and opportunities can be summarized as follows:

## Future Challenges

- Dispelling the common belief in the difficulty of reconciling the concept of human rights with the Islamic Sharia, on which the Kingdom bases its laws and regulations.
- Enhancing the performance and capacities of government authorities tasked with the protection and promotion of human rights in the Kingdom through training and capacity-building programs.
- The novelty of establishing many civil society organizations whose activities are predominantly philanthropic, and the difficulties faced in connecting their activities to the concept of human rights/human rights based approach.
- Keeping the legislative and legal framework in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia in line with the international human rights obligation.



## Future Prospects

- Taking the necessary steps to reform human rights within the society under the Saudi Vision 2030, notably through emphasis on the moderate interpretation of Islam. This has been preceded by reform steps that will reflect positively on the Saudi society, the most important of which was the implementation of physical education programs in all-girls schools in 2017; enabling women to access services without the consent of their guardians; and the amendment of the Traffic Law to allow driving for both men and women. Other steps include allowing women to access football stadiums, developing the Anti-Harassment Law, establishing a supreme committee to combat corruption, and adopting the Citizen's Account Program that enables many segments of society to mitigate the impact of the rise in prices and the introduction of VAT in 2018.
- The Shura Council and several other concerned government authorities have already begun reviewing laws and regulations in light of the Saudi Vision 2030. Currently, work is underway to prepare the Code of Judicial Decisions, which will include a chapter on personal status, and to review the Code of Criminal Procedure. Furthermore, two draft laws with the potential to positively impact the protection of human rights are currently being studied, namely the Juvenile Law and the Law of Misuse of Power.
- The SHRC is currently drafting the National Human Rights Strategy, which is expected to promote and clarify the roles of various government authorities and bodies in the protection and promotion of human rights in the Kingdom.

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For more information on the activities and programs of the Technical Cooperation Program, please contact the Project Coordinator, Mr. Farid Hamdan,  
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