



His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum
Prime Minister and Vice President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the Ruler of Dubai.

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ARAB WOMEN

LEADERSHIP OUTLOOK 2009-2011

1st Edition



مؤسسة دبي للمرأة
DUBAI WOMEN ESTABLISHMENT

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Highlights

1. Arab women & leadership

Nothing propels these Arab women to leadership roles more than their passion, focus and sheer determination. Their passion is not just about their career path but is brought to bear in other parts of their life, including the desire to encourage the next generation of women to strive for success. The report identifies leaders who have succeeded as the result of a combination of characteristics they were born with, which have given them a competitive edge, and the skills they have acquired. These women have achieved leadership roles despite the cultural, social and political hurdles they sometimes had to surmount in their respective countries, making them exceptional role models.

2. The importance of family

Behind every great woman is a great mother. Some 67% of the Arab women leaders interviewed cited their mother as the most positive influence in the advancement of their career. Such strong role models cannot be underestimated. A similarly high percentage, 66%, said the support of their father was critical followed by 61% stating that their husband had a very positive effect on their career progression. Family at large plays an important role for these women. They consider family values to be the most important drivers in everyday life. And when the leadership styles of Arab women were compared with those of their counterparts elsewhere in the world, the former were found to possess a strong appreciation of family values and the sense that work and family must go hand in hand.

3. Leadership style

The report identifies the emergence of a new style of leader whose management style is well suited to the 21st century. Women typically adopt a 'transformational' leadership style. Arab women are no different, displaying a tendency to communicate openly and share fully in their responsibilities. But they also combine this with an emphasis on emotional intelligence. It is clear that there are some marked differences in the leadership style of Arab women compared with their male counterparts. They tend to be highly committed and, because their goals are often concealed by obstacles, give more attention to detail and tend to be less power-hungry. Their style is less autocratic and more inclusive than that of men.

4. The changing environment

The survey indicates a significant improvement in the position of Arab women leaders in society. The level of participation by women in the political and socio-economic agendas of their countries is moderately to substantially better than it was five years ago, according to 82% of those polled. Similarly, a high percentage of women (86%) expect this participation to increase in the next five years. Despite the advances they have made in society, those surveyed pointed to three main challenges faced by women reaching the top: the religious environment, 44%, the legal framework, 42%, and the cultural environment, 41%. However it was clear from the qualitative segments of the interviews that it wasn't religion itself that was a barrier, it was in fact its interpretation driven by cultural norms that created the challenge. This was reflected by the highest percentage of women (29%) stating that religion had no effect on their career progression.

5. The importance of religion

Religion, for the women surveyed, is something they are all proud of, but it poses something of a conundrum for them when it comes to the world of work. Most of the Arab women leaders agreed that Islam on the whole is pro-women. However only 25% said the religious environment in their countries was favourable, when it came to accessing leadership positions, compared with 44% who found it to be 'unfavourable or very-unfavourable'. The main reason for this is due to interpretation since Islam is a faith that can be adapted to every circumstance and portrayed as regressive or progressive, depending on the context.

6. Geography matters

The experience and progress of women leaders, in different fields, varies by country. Over 51% of the female population in Kuwait is now economically active, compared to just over 18% in Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, over the last few years, a new generation of political leaders has promoted women in leadership positions across sectors. Likewise in Bahrain, the UAE, Jordan, Oman and Qatar, among other countries, political leaders have recently shown strong commitment to women's rights and empowerment. While countries like Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt made advances for women decades ago and had significant progress, younger countries, such as the UAE has made many achievements for women in only one generation.

Introduction

A tradition of successful women leaders in the Arab world can be traced back as far as the first wife of the Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him), Khadija bint Khuwaylid. After the death of her father, a rich merchant, Khadijah inherited a vast amount of wealth. She successfully managed her father's business interests and preserved the family's fortune. She was wise in decision making and over time became a very successful businesswoman. Today's successful women leaders are working in government, finance, manufacturing, and some are true entrepreneurs who have started their own companies. It is a testament to their achievements that some of these women are now becoming part of the exclusive – and previously elusive – lists in prestigious publications, including Forbes International, Forbes Arabia and Arabian Business. It is clear that women leaders in the Arab world are becoming more visible and their influence is felt across many sectors of business, despite the fact that they continue to represent a small minority in Arab society. Yet this minority increasingly punches above its weight, and these women leaders act as role models and agents for change in Arab society.

The Arab Women Leadership Outlook (AWLO) surveyed a group of women who have not only changed the face of their organisations, but have had significant impact on the region as a whole. These women lead with a profound vision and are an inspiration to women all over the world. Four groups of women took part in the study:

- Arab women business leaders
- Arab women political leaders
- Arab women civil society leaders
- Arab women thought-leaders in the media, academic or cultural spheres

The AWLO takes a top-down approach in understanding leadership from the perspective of Arab women who are leaders in their fields. Through a survey of 94 female leaders as well as experts in the area, the AWLO seeks, in the first section of the report, to define what constitutes an Arab woman leader. It then explores the environment that enables and promotes aspiring Arab women, or hinders them from reaching leadership positions. Within this framework, the seven key enablers have been identified as: legal structure, political environment, socio-

economic environment, culture, religion, education and media. The AWLO investigates the key challenges faced by aspiring Arab women within each of these seven enablers. While the report findings are presented in a regional context, it should be emphasised that the Arab world is not homogenous, and Arab women leaders therefore differ from country to country in distinct social, cultural, political and economic histories and realities.

The final section of the AWLO presents experts' insights and perspectives on how to provide Arab women with equal opportunities to reach leadership positions, and equip them with the necessary skill sets to successfully lead in their respective fields and organisations. The AWLO has provided these women with a platform to voice their views, challenges and recommendations that will help pave the way for a new generation of women leaders to emerge in the region. This report offers a snapshot of the thoughts and views of a dynamic, intellectual and enthusiastic group of women. Although they come from different countries and educational backgrounds, they share many similar characteristics. Above all, their style of leadership and very existence as leaders is testament to their drive and passion – and desire to effect change and educate the next generations.



Defining Arab Women Leadership

Defining Arab Women Leadership

In the last few years, a significant number of Arab women have reached positions of influence in business, politics, civil society, academia and the media. As a result of their success, they have not only been able to impact the industries in which they work, but have also had an important impact on the Arab region as a whole.

“In the past women striving for leadership were looked upon as a novelty. Nowadays, because of the success of Arab women leaders, aspiring women now have the opportunity to succeed.”

Habiba Al Marashi
Chairperson, Emirates Environmental Group, UAE

The following section explores the factors that distinguish Arab women leaders from the broader group of women in the region. Since definitions of leadership can and frequently vary, it was important from the start that this study captures an insight of the views of the women themselves on leadership. The AWLO has given Arab women leaders a chance to present their own definition of leadership and identify the DNA of Arab women leaders. What is it that marks these women out for greatness? What are their success factors, their values, their skills set, the character traits and leadership styles that distinguish them?

The vast majority of Arab women leaders surveyed agreed that an Arab woman leader is a trusted member of her community who is committed to the overall well being of her society and determined to overcome obstacles.

How Arab women leaders define themselves

“An ideal Arab woman leader is knowledgeable, confident, secure, able to empower others, and surrounds herself with a dynamic team more talented than herself.”

Rania Atalla
Executive Director, Women for Women, USA

Behavioural theories of leadership are based on the belief that great leaders are made, not born. Charisma and a special presence, which are considered born traits, are of little significance if they are not accompanied by other skills and characteristics that are learned. In order

to address the key questions, the women were asked how they define leadership; whether they felt that leaders were made or born.

The majority of those surveyed agreed with the behavioural theorists, given the obstacles faced by Arab women striving for leadership positions. They felt that leaders might be born with certain characteristics that give them a competitive edge. Nevertheless, they also agreed that successful leaders are primarily made through hard work, perseverance, determination and extensive experience.

However, because of the unique conditions in which Arab women must operate, respondents made it clear that hard work and a natural ability to lead are not enough. Even if a woman demonstrates the traits, skills and characteristics required for leadership, a supportive cultural and socio-economic environment is essential. Women in the Arab world are not always provided with an environment that nurtures growth and allows for the development of such skills. Only a minority of women are given the support, education and confidence required to become a leader. The remainder, according to many respondents, must learn and acquire their experience directly from the professional arena.

“A bit of both... some people are born with inherent leadership qualities enabling them to be leaders - but I also believe that you can build leaders by instilling the relevant tools and qualities in them and enabling widening access and opportunities.”

HE Suhair Al-Ali
Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan

“I firmly believe that the economic empowerment of women more than anything else, is the key to success. But we ought to be cautious not to leave rural women lagging behind.”

Nabila Freidji
Chief Executive Officer, Cash One, Morocco

But, most important of all, Arab women can only rise to become leaders if they also have the dream and the drive to become one.

"Women leaders are made from a strong personal calling and a sense of purpose with an unstoppable drive that allows them to overcome the huge societal and family obstacles. This allows them to achieve the unachievable by forging across new frontiers."

Soraya Salti
Senior Vice-President
Middle East and North Africa, INJAZ al-Arab, JA Worldwide, Jordan

Taken as a whole, the study results reveal a set of commonalities among Arab women leaders:

- **Sense of responsibility:** The majority of respondents feel it is their duty to encourage tangible change beyond their institutions. This sense of responsibility is particularly pronounced among Arab women leaders.

"Educated women should share the knowledge they gained with others, as they are holding social responsibilities. When women gain power, authorities and knowledge, they are responsible for helping others to reach that stage as well."

HE Wafa'a Dikah Hamze
Former Minister, Lebanon

- **Balance between career and family:** Arab women leaders on the whole strive to maintain a balance between their careers and families. While this quest for balance is a constant struggle, the majority of Arab women leaders receive support from those closest to them.

"It is very hard to juggle between family and career, and maintain time for spirituality, recreation, and friends. This is a difficult balancing act irrelevant of culture or gender. However, it is more pronounced in the Arab region, where family carries a heavier weight and importance than it does in other parts of the world."

HE Reem Ebrahim Al Hashimy
Minister of State, UAE

- **Strong sense of femininity:** Arab women leaders are proud to be women. They are comfortable enough and do not feel the need to behave in a similar manner as their male counterparts. Women feel that they are highly respected in the region and hold a privileged place in society.

"On the one hand we want to be firm, but on the other hand our femininity pushes us not to be that firm."

Radhia Mchirghi
General Manager, 3E Energy & Environment Engineering, Tunisia

- **Determination:** Arab women leaders are determined individuals who perceive themselves as high-achieving professionals, and do not define themselves through the gender lens.

"A leader is educated and very well connected to her environment, to the field she is working in. She needs to be well spoken, logical and penetrate the barriers of

prejudice and sexism. She has to be somebody who can communicate her thoughts and experiences."

Maha Al Ghunaim
Chairperson and Managing Director, Global Investment House, Kuwait

While most of the women surveyed in this report are influential in both their respective fields and the public domain, leadership on the whole is not about influence, wealth or fame. Each day millions of women throughout the region play important roles at home and in their communities. These silent leaders also have an enormous impact on the development of society and the state.

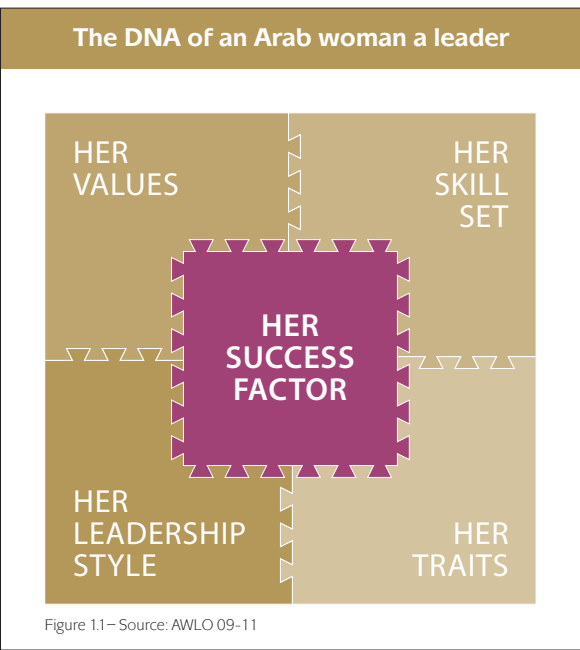
Whether prominent or silent, Arab women leaders have broken new ground across the board and made huge strides against discriminatory customs and traditions. By standing up to numerous challenges, they have helped pave the way for generations to come.

"In the Arab world women are always breaking new ground - it has actually become quite common."

Raghida Dergham
Senior Diplomatic Correspondent and Columnist, Al Hayat, USA

What makes an Arab woman a leader?

For a more specific look at what makes an Arab woman a leader, this section explores the core building blocks that define Arab women leaders. These blocks have been divided into five categories: success factors, values, skills set, traits and leadership style.



Success factors: Secrets to her accomplishments

"The development of the self leads to building one's leadership potential, with parental support, encouragement and commitment early in one's home life being significant factors in contributing to the former."

Huda Ali Redha Al Lawati
Vice President, Abraaj Capital Limited, UAE

"I was not raised as a girl or a woman, but as a human being."

Nada Nashif
Head of Regional Office International Labour Organization, Lebanon

"When people tell me you are doing well for a woman, I tell them: no, I am doing well for a man."

Nashwa Al Ruwaini
Chief Executive Officer, Pyramedia, UAE

Most of the women interviewed are self-motivated, have a solid education and are supported by their families. As outlined below, these influencers, aspirations, strong goals, and education have made a marked impact on their success:

- **Influencers:** Most Arab women leaders attribute their success to a very strong support system, with 67% citing their mothers as the most positive influence in the advancement of their careers, while 66% consider fathers to be of central importance to their career progression. Moreover, 61% believe that the support of their husbands is critical, and 55% emphasise the role of their educators. Reflecting on the support and motivation provided by their mothers, Arab women leaders attribute their success not only to a strong support system based primarily on their mother's encouragement, but also, in many cases, to the traditional roles mothers play.

"My mother, who was unfortunately illiterate, saw the value of education and was the main driving force in my educational achievements, while my father as well played a very positive and supporting role."

Latifa Akharbach
Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Morocco

"The future does not depend on the woman or her qualities alone. It depends on factors around her that help - most of all on the husband's role and the husband's culture."

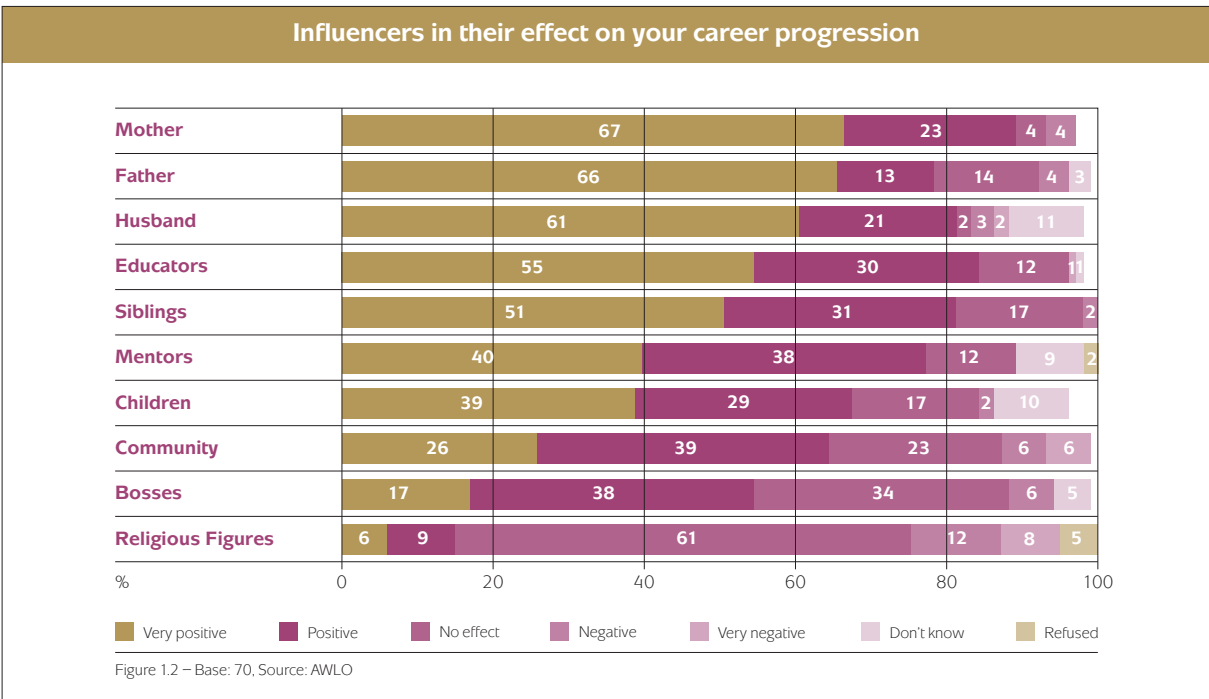
Leila Sharaf
Senator and Former Information Minister, Jordan

- **Aspirations and Goals:** In their path toward leadership, Arab women leaders have been determined and focused on their ambitions and goals. While getting married and raising children is still a priority for Arab women, it is no longer pursued at the expense of their careers. Rather the dream of successfully meeting domestic needs, while excelling in the workplace to become a leader and make a positive difference, distinguishes most of them.

- **Education and Knowledge:** Arab women leaders believe that a strong secondary and tertiary education is essential in the pursuit of leadership. Regardless of where they were educated, whether in the Arab world or the West, these women share a deep-rooted appreciation for education.

Values: Her ethical architecture

Values in the context of this study are defined as a set of ideals, standards and principles that influence behaviour. Countries throughout the Arab world place strong emphasis on specific values and norms that range from



dignity and faith to reputation and modesty. The core values identified by Arab women as playing a central role in their lives are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family values• Dignity• Femininity values• Gratefulness• Modest• Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Justice• Reputation• Self-respect• Spiritual values• Trust in the inherent goodness of others
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Above all, Arab women leaders consider family values the most important drivers of everyday life. Many of those surveyed believe that if a woman is not successful at home, she will never excel professionally.

"If your family is not your priority you will never be able to succeed in your job."

Neveen El Tahri
Chairperson, Delta Rasmala Companies, Egypt

Certain ethical values linked to religion and culture are also considered of great importance to Arab women leaders. They are enormously proud of their femininity and do not try to adopt male characteristics in order to compete or prove themselves. Humility and the importance of preserving one's reputation have also had a major impact on the behaviour of many Arab women leaders who tend to exhibit unique characteristics in the realm of leadership.

Skills: Her strategic skill base

Whether through education or work, Arab women leaders identified the key skills that have enabled their ascent to positions of leadership. It is worth noting, however, that few, if any, of the women surveyed received formal leadership training or relevant continuing education during their careers.

The leadership skills identified by Arab women leaders as being central to their career path are as follows:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical and analytical skills• Decision making• Emotional and social intelligence• Influencing skills• Listening skills• Managing conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi-tasking and being able to maintain a work-life balance• Negotiation skills• Problem solving• Public speaking• Taking initiative• Verbal communication
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The vast majority of Arab women leaders agree that a combination of the above skills is required to become a leader. Although the range of skills associated with leadership is not gender-specific, the interviews revealed that women tend to excel in certain skills more than men. For example, women often have highly developed listening skills. Multi-tasking and the capacity to maintain a work-life balance are also considered areas of strength for many women.

Different industries and fields required different skill sets of the Arab women leaders interviewed. Across the board, Arab women leaders identified communication and public speaking skills, combined with technical knowledge as key elements for leadership development. Arab women political leaders stress the importance of negotiation skills and fund raising/advocacy skills. On the other hand, women business leaders emphasise the importance of developing management and organisational capacity. They also highlighted the merits of maintaining a work-life balance. Hard work and skill development at school were considered critical to the skill-building process.

"A strong personality shines nicely when supported by education."

Dr. Falak Jamani
Member of Parliament General, Jordan

"People should not focus on trying to find themselves; people should focus on creating themselves."

Nadine Hawa
Presenter and Producer, CNBC Arabia, UAE

Traits: Her competitive edge

Traits can be defined as the personal qualities of an individual. Various theories on leadership traits¹ emphasise the importance of being honest, forward-looking, competent, inspirational and intelligent. Arab women leaders consider determination and perseverance to be of primary importance throughout the region and across most professions. Accordingly, the main traits outlined on the path to leadership are as follows:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Broad-mindedness• Charisma• Commitment• Competence• Decisiveness• Determination• Energy• Expressiveness and Openness• Fair-mindedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fair-mindedness• Forward-looking• Honesty• Imagination• Independent thinking• Inspiration• Intelligence• Perseverance• Straightforward• Team-playing
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A large number of those surveyed believe that independent thinking is critical to overcoming obstacles and that leaders must be assertive in both their thinking and actions. From country to country and across a number of fields, most Arab women leaders perceive themselves as active, expressive, practical, logical and charismatic.

Leadership style: How she leads

The following section reviews and compares leadership styles between Arab male and female leaders. It then moves on to distinguish between Arab women and Western women leaders.

Throughout history, leadership has predominantly been associated with men and hierarchical relationships. Recent theories have emerged that examine the difference in leadership styles between men and women. Transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles are central to the gender debate.

- **Transformational leadership:** A practice in which "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation".² The four components of transformational leadership are idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration.³ Transformational leaders focus on emotions, pursue professional relationships with open lines of communication and share fully in their responsibilities.
- **Transactional leadership:** A practice that emphasises exchanges and bargains between leaders and subordinates. These exchanges can be economic, political, or psychological in nature. The primary characteristic that distinguishes transactional from transformational leadership is that there is nothing that holds leaders and followers together.⁴ Transactional leaders motivate their followers by appealing to their self-interest.⁵ This style of leadership is built on the premise that team members or subordinates agree to completely obey their leader.
- **Laissez-faire leadership:** The laissez-faire type of leadership is marked by an overall failure to take responsibility for managing. In this case, leaders or managers leave subordinates to their own devices, and provide little direction.

Contemporary theorists tend to support transformational leadership practices which emphasise qualities like humility, openness, inclusiveness, tolerance and emotions. In this case, leadership is not a measure of power, but a measure of the degree to which a leader serves others.

As such, women tend to adopt the transformational leadership style which encompasses being kind, conscientious, emotionally flexible and open to experience to a greater extent than men. Women are more likely to demonstrate transformational leadership styles because, in general, they are more relationship-oriented. Male leaders, on the other hand, are more likely to manifest transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles.

More recent theories suggest that the management styles most closely associated with women tend to be better suited to the 21st century. These styles, which focus primarily on communication, cooperation, relationship building and team-play, adapt better to high stress environments.

Our survey results indicate that Arab women leaders on the whole exhibit the leadership styles of transformational leaders, particularly given their general emphasis on emotional intelligence. Arab women leaders perceive themselves as open, accessible and relationship-oriented. They demonstrate an exceptional ability to combine the best of leadership styles and it is possible that Arab women leaders are establishing a new form of leadership that may be replicated across gender and borders.

Arab Male compared to Arab Female Leaders

"If you are a man, you can fail; if you are a woman you are not allowed to."

Dr. Soukeina Bouraoui
Executive Director
Center for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR), Tunisia

"Leadership is still a male definition in our part of the world but the increasing number of successful women throughout our region shall convert that into a human definition encompassing both men and women on equal footing."

Anissa Hassouna
Director General, Egypt's International Economic Forum, Egypt

Are women leaders different from men leaders? If yes, what are the main differences, and are they the same across professions and countries?

"I think that in our culture, men are brought up to believe they are superior and leaders."

Elham Hassan
Country Senior Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Bahrain

The majority of Arab women leaders, regardless of country or profession, perceive their leadership styles to be quite different from Arab males. Women have

1. Kouzes, J. M. & Posner, B. Z. (2002). The Leadership Challenge. Jossey Bass.

2. Burns, J. M. (1978). Leadership in Organisations. New York: Harper and Row.
3. Bass, B. M. & Steidlmeier, P. (1998). Ethics, character, and authentic transformational leadership behavior. Binghamton University, New York.
4. Burns, J. M. (1978). Leadership in Organisations. New York: Harper and Row.
5. Burns, J. M. (1978). Leadership in Organisations. New York: Harper and Row.

excelled in leadership positions, not by emulating men, but by drawing on the skills and characteristics that tend to be inherent in them. The differences identified by Arab women leaders between them and their male counterparts can be summarised as follows:

• **Higher commitment:** Most of the women surveyed believe that, their prospective paths towards leadership are paved with more obstacles, compared to men. As such, most have a higher sense of commitment, determination and perseverance.

“Women are more disciplined, productive and achieve their goals faster. They achieve their goals faster because they have suffered a lot of deprivation.”

Fawziah Al Nafea
Owner & Fashion Designer
Fawziah Abdulaziz AlTubayab Trading Est., Saudi Arabia

• **Focus on excellence:** Arab women leaders perceive themselves as meticulous in their work and more analytical in their actions, compared to men. Coming from backgrounds of academic excellence, most of these women leaders have progressed in their careers predominantly through high performance.

• **Better communicators:** Arab women tend to view themselves as better communicators and team-players and stronger in relationship-building in their organisations. Women inherently tend to adopt a more collaborative approach in the workplace.

• **Mediators:** Less aggressive than men on the whole, Arab women leaders employ negotiation and mediation tactics in their approach to conflict resolution.

“Men tend to be more aggressive. With them it’s a ‘take it or leave it’ approach...women tend to be more peoples’ people.”

Randa Ayoubi
Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Rubicon, Jordan

• **Inclusive:** Arab women leaders are inclusive and more likely to encourage participation by empowering others. Women also tend to be more emotionally astute than men and as such take the time to learn about their employees.

• **Less power-hungry:** Arab women leaders believe that they tend to be less power-hungry than men. In general women leaders are more impact and result oriented, and hence their leadership positions are a means, rather than an end goal.

• **Higher ethical standards:** Arab women leaders believe they have higher ethical standards and are not willing to compromise their values and ethics in reaching leadership positions.

• **Multi-taskers:** Arab women leaders believe that they are better at multi-tasking than men. In order to have a career, they have to maintain a balancing act between managing their households and managing their careers, inherently developing such skills.

“In my experience, I have found that women in leadership positions are usually tougher, but fairer at the same time.”

Rania Atalla
Executive Director, Women for Women, USA

With regard to leadership style, a number of Arab women leaders suggest that over time very distinct patterns in leadership style have emerged and will continue to do so, as more and more women attain positions of authority.

Notwithstanding the relationship between traditionally female characteristics and transformational leadership, it is important to note that a small minority of the women surveyed suggest that there are no major differences between men and women when it comes to leadership.

“I don’t see a difference. I see Arab women leaders who are aggressive, rude and I see male leaders who are passionate, compassionate and motivated towards their people.”

Maha Al Ghunaim
Chairperson and Managing Director, Global Investment House, Kuwait

“There is nothing that pre-determines a women’s ability on the basis of gender.”

HE Suhair Al-Ali
Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan

Arab Women Leaders compared to International Women Leaders

Differences between male and female leadership styles are well documented, and, as our research shows, the Arab world is no exception. But in our attempt to grasp what marks these Arab women leaders as exceptional, it was important to compare their leadership styles with those adopted by women outside the Arab world. Survey respondents address the following key points:

• **Femininity:** Arab women leaders perceive themselves as being filled with a sense of femininity much more than their international counterparts. As leaders, these women exhibit their inherently feminine traits and are respected for doing so, unlike in the west, where women in leading positions often feel pressured to behave like men.

“In American women, there is a ‘I have to be a female version of a man’, approach rather than just ‘I can be a woman and do this at the same time.’”

Dr. Lisa Anderson
Provost, American University of Cairo, Egypt

• **Family:** Arab women leaders proudly agree that family must come first and that it is of far greater importance than the pursuit of a career. Arab women leaders strive towards balance and do not feel obliged to sacrifice their family life in order to succeed. In other words, work and family must go hand in hand in the Arab world, as opposed to women from other parts of the world, who are more willing to sacrifice their family life for their careers.

“Unlimited support from families, coupled with the surrounding environment gives Arab women a better chance to become distinguished leaders, compared to non-Arab women.”

Nawal I. S. Bakr
Founder & Director
Al Bashaer School & Owner of Executrain, Saudi Arabia

• **Values:** The environment in which Arab women leaders live plays an important cultural role in distinguishing them from their international counterparts. A positive emotional drive and a higher attachment to Arab values and principles were found to be key differences between Arab women leaders and their international counterparts. Attachment to Arab and religious values and traditions has had a dual effect on the leadership style of Arab women. Due to cultural norms, Arab women leaders may on the one hand adopt a more conservative approach in their decision-making process, venturing less into unknown territories. On the other hand, this attachment has created a value-based leadership style.

Challenges

Vis-à-vis the challenges faced by Arab women leaders, 65% of those surveyed believe that obstacles are more pronounced in the Arab world than in developed countries. Cultural deadlocks, socio-economic issues and politics have all played an important role in enhancing these obstacles. However, around 30% of respondents believe that challenges for Arab women leaders are the same as in developed countries.

“I really do not like to advocate this belief that Arab women are more committed to culture and that we are more accommodating for our families. We accommodate equally to any other society regardless. Maybe the

mandate from the society is different, but all women accommodate.”

HE Sheikha Lubna Bint Khalid Al Qasimi
Minister of Foreign Trade, UAE

“We would have been three times better if we had the same laws and environment.”

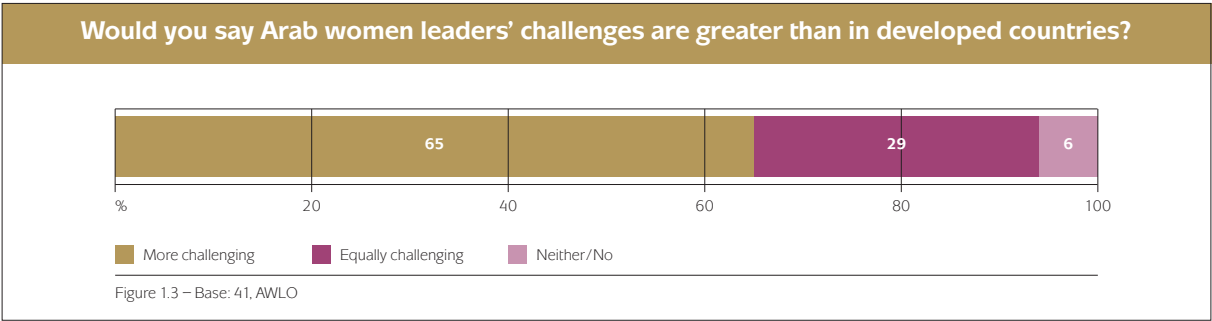
Huda Janahi
Chief Executive Officer
Global Cargo & Traveller’s Services Co. WLL, Bahrain

Arab women reported two common challenges they share, irrespective of country or profession:

• Arab women face a challenge that is very particular to their role as a leader, wife and mother. Most women believe that balancing their personal lives with their work is the most difficult challenge they face. Thus success is very much contingent upon having the right support system and making the necessary sacrifices.

• Arab women leaders face the challenge of being recognised. Many of those surveyed said that they must work twice as hard as their male counterparts in order to be promoted to positions of leadership.

In defining Arab women leadership styles, clear differences emerged between Arab women, their international counterparts and Arab male leaders. Arab women demonstrate a unique style of leadership that has proven to be successful in breaking the glass ceiling and creating a positive impact on the Arab world.





Enabling
Environment:
Creating a level
playing field

Enabling Environment: Creating a level playing field

“The road to leadership is not littered by roses.”

Dr. Isiah Jad,
Director, Women Research Institute, BirZeit University, Palestine

“You can find thousands of women leaders, but the challenge is to give everyone an opportunity.”

Asma Khader,
General Coordinator, Sisterhood is Global Institute, Jordan

It is impossible to estimate how much impact the regional environment has on Arab women leaders and their ability to succeed. As stated earlier, 65% of those interviewed perceive the regional environment in the Arab world to be significantly more challenging for aspiring women leaders than in developed countries. That means that any advance is hard won. The challenge for Arab women leaders is to use their own success to change the environment for other women. All the women interviewed considered this an important part of their position as leaders. This section dissects the enabling environment for Arab women leadership and

attempts to understand the specific roadblocks encountered by women leaders in the region. For each of the enablers identified, a brief overview of key trends and major accomplishments is presented alongside a set of major challenges.

In the last twenty years, Arab countries have made considerable gains, particularly in the health and education of females. Today, Arab women are not only more assertive, but play a critical role in society. The women interviewed reflect the hopes and aspirations of their nations: they want to have an impact because it is important to succeed, not only for themselves, but to enable and empower other women today and in future generations.

With the considerable gains made by women in the last decade, it is not surprising that most feel more strongly about their participation levels in the political and socio-economic sector, compared to five years ago. Crucially, Arab women leaders also feel positive about the next five years.

- 82% of those surveyed believe that the level of participation of women in the political and socio-economic agendas of their countries is moderately to substantially better than it was five years ago.
- 86% of those surveyed believe that the level of participation of women in the political and socio-economic agendas of their countries will increase over the next five years.

But even taking these strides into account, Arab women on the whole are still less economically and politically empowered than women in other parts of the world. According to the 2008 Global Gender Gap Report,⁶ countries of the Middle East perform far below the global average. Tunisia, Jordan, the UAE, Oman, Egypt and Morocco have all shown improvement in their scores, while those of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Qatar have deteriorated since 2007.

According to those surveyed, the top three positive enablers for women striving to reach leadership positions in the Arab world are:

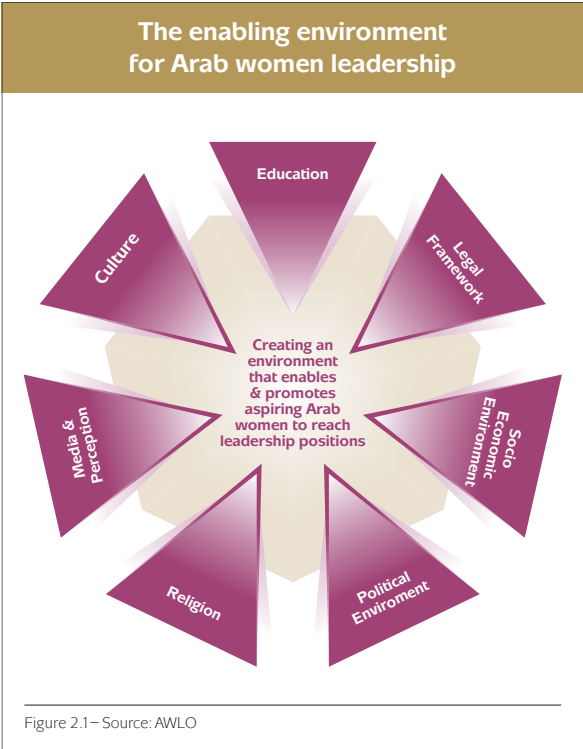
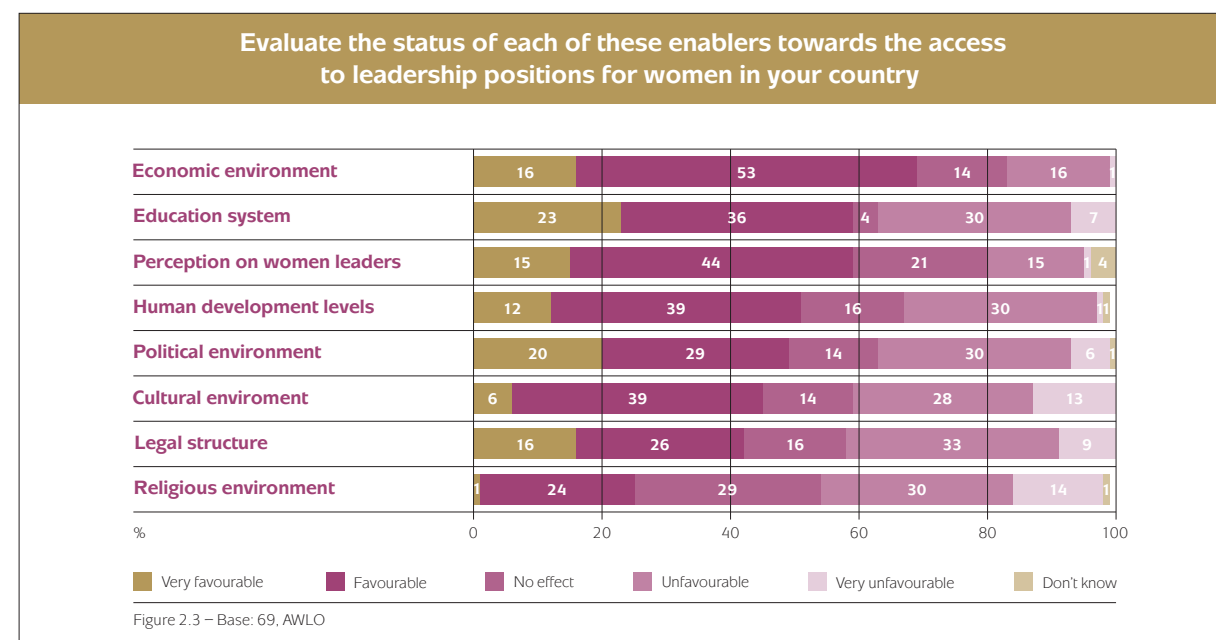
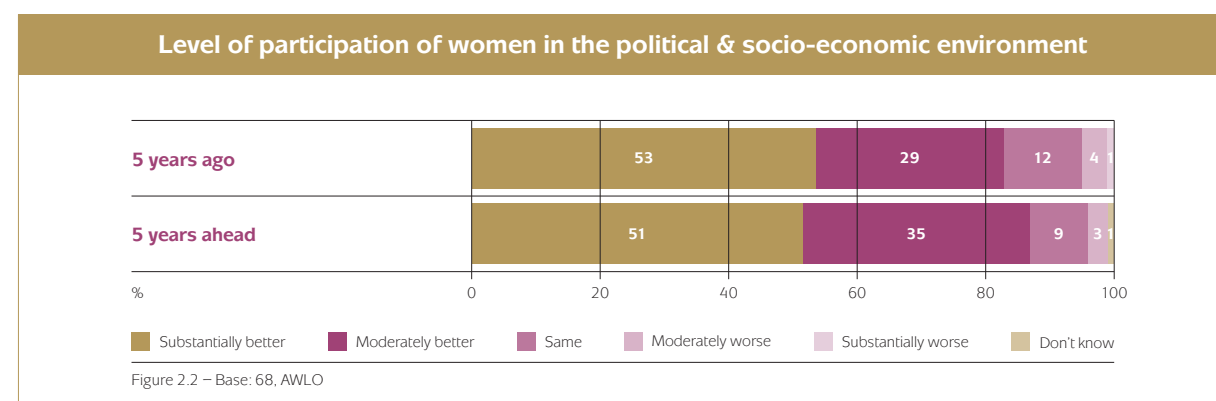


Figure 2.1 – Source: AWLO

6. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap reform measures the size of the gender gap in four critical areas of inequality between men and women: Economic participation and opportunity, Educational attainment, Political empowerment, Health and survival. For more details about the Report results, please refer to the country scorecards.



- The economic environment, 69%
- The perception of women leaders, 59%
- Education, 59%

The top three challenging environments that have emerged are:

- The religious environment, 44%
- The legal framework, 42%
- The cultural environment, 41%

It is interesting to note that, although the religious environment was ranked the most unfavourable enabler, the highest percentage of Arab women leaders ranked it as having 'no effect' on access to leadership positions by Arab women (29%). This point, perhaps more than any other, explains the contradictions faced by Arab women: Islam is very much in favour of women, but the inaccurate interpretation of the religion can do much to hold back their advancement.

In the same vein, although the perception of Arab women leaders was ranked as one of the top three favourable enablers, it received one of the highest percentages as having 'no effect' (21%) on access to leadership positions by Arab women.

Approach to the Enabling Environment

The following section discusses the challenges and opportunities afforded by each enabler. The research presented in the following sections is a combination of the results of a quantitative and qualitative survey of 94 women leaders and various external sources, including The World Bank and The United Nations Development Programme reports. This study takes an unprecedented approach in addressing the issue of women's leadership in the Arab world. This approach views women's leadership in the region from a top-down perspective, as evidenced by the survey sample which is comprised of women who were able to break the glass ceiling. Thus their views are important in order to understand the challenges faced by future women leaders in different Arab countries.

It should be noted that realities on the ground often differ from the findings of factual research. For example, AWLO findings indicate that, while the legal framework may be restrictive towards women in theory, some of these laws (such as mobility laws) are not fully practiced. Hence a trend in modernisation is creating a reality that is

more conducive for women to operate in. Our findings indicate that an enabling environment can be shaped to a great extent by the attitude of a woman's family.

The data presented in some graphs and tables is derived from external research and does not always include statistics for all Arab countries.

Political environment: The road to political representation

Overview

In the last decade, considerable efforts have been made to empower women politically in the Arab world. Legal recognition has been extended to women's right to vote and women are now legally allowed to run for local councils and parliament (See figure 2.4 for details).

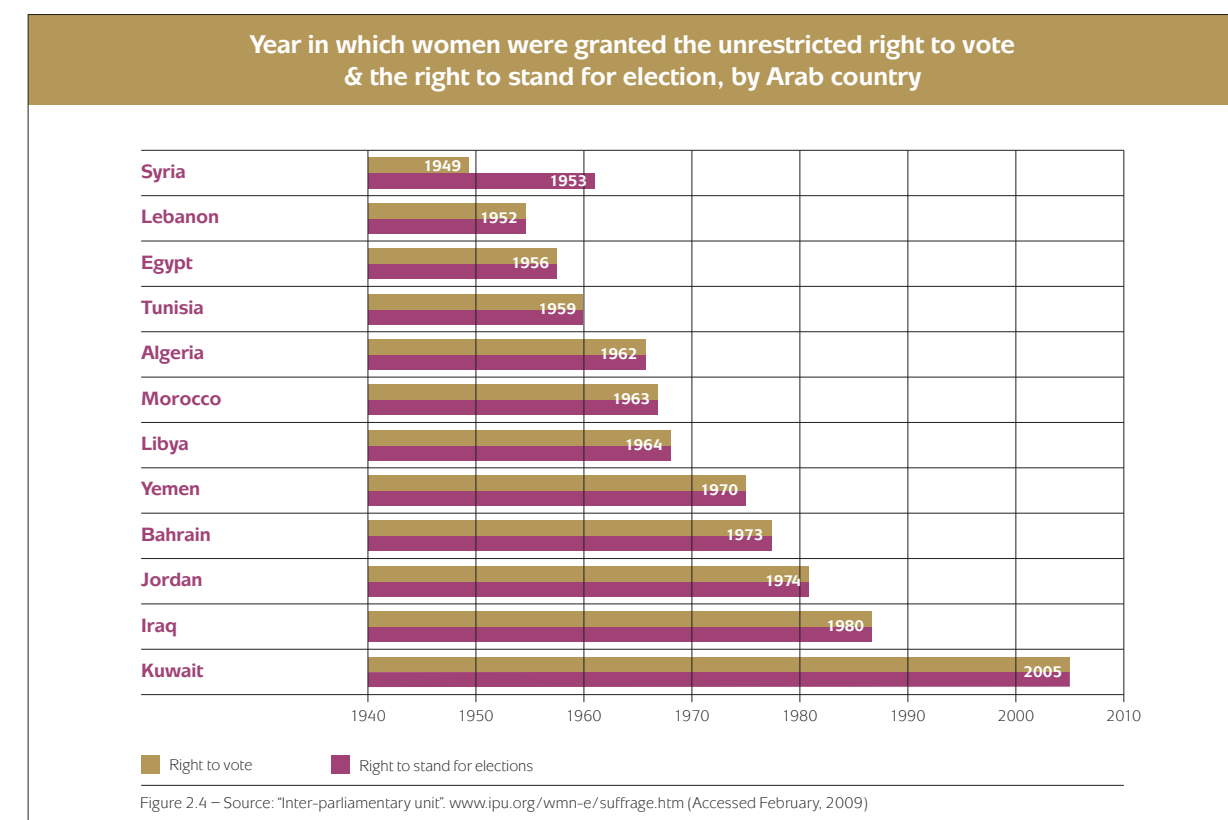
Moreover, in 2006 the UAE induced elections to its political system and granted women the right to stand for election and vote for the Federal Supreme Council.⁷ As a result of this legal recognition, the number of women in Arab parliaments has increased over the years. In addition, most cabinets in Arab countries include women at the highest level of executive authority. Also, since the 1990s, appointing a woman to a ministerial position has been a general trend in most Arab countries. While countries like Tunisia and Morocco embraced women's political participation several decades ago, change is now

also visible in countries like Saudi Arabia, which have traditionally restricted political participation to men.

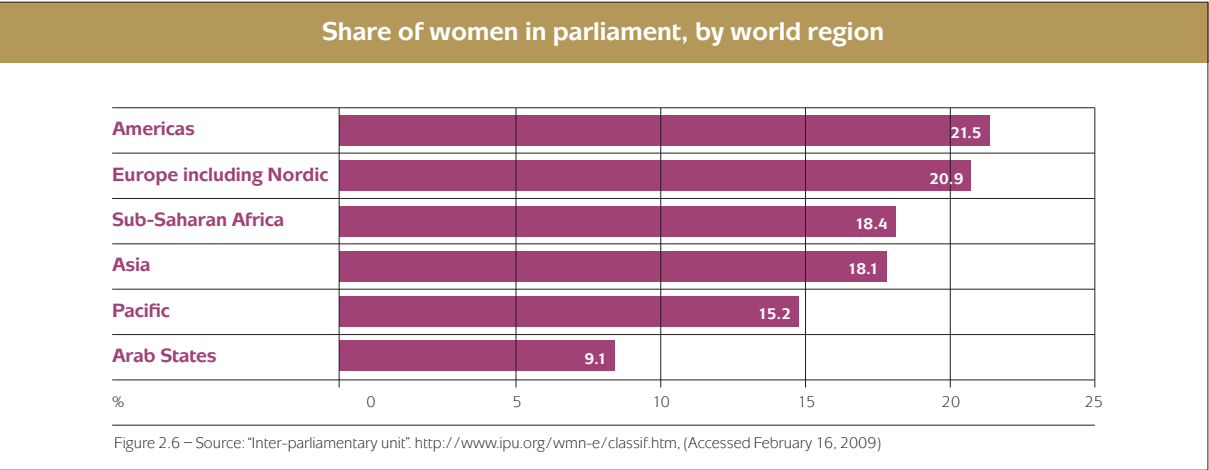
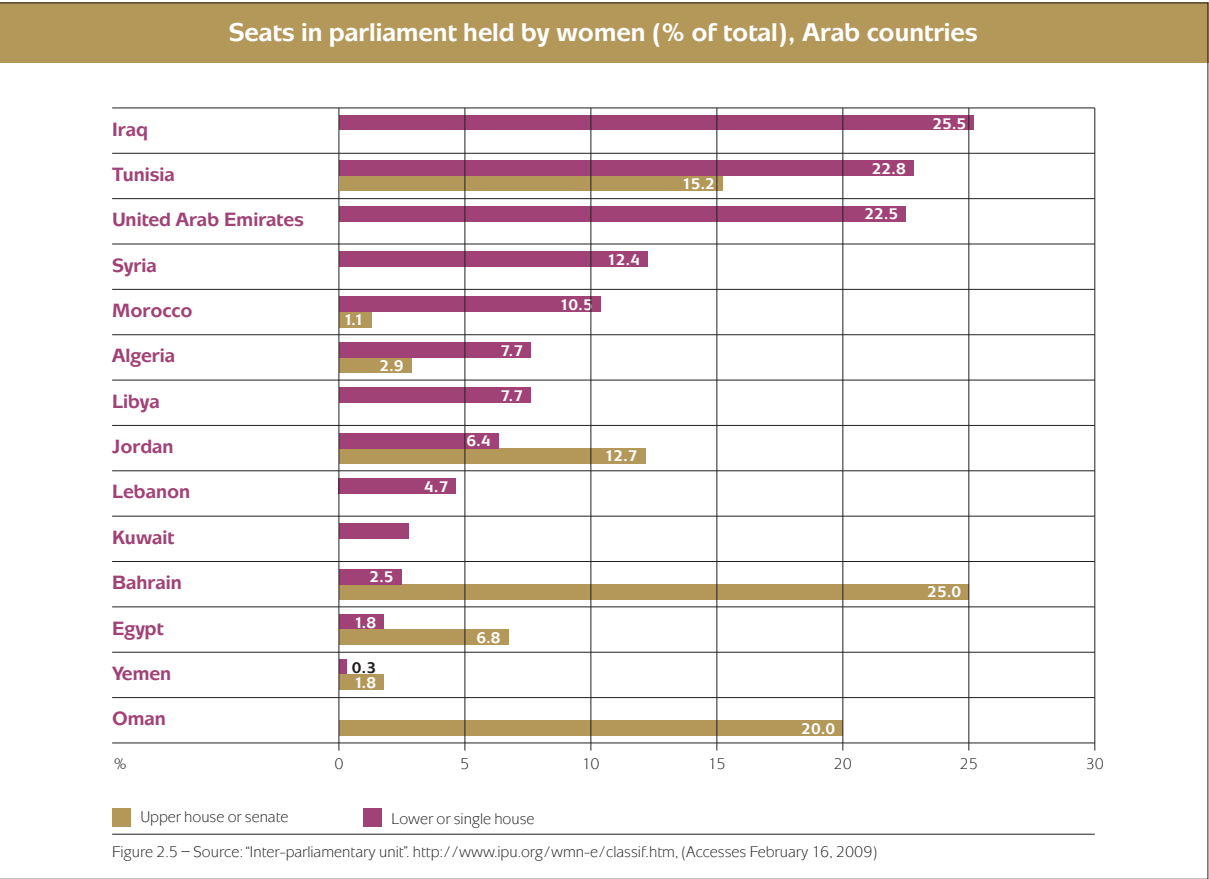
With regards to the future advancement of women's political leadership in the Arab world, it is important to understand the political environment of the region. In order to do so, the following questions must be addressed: Is there a particular political context conducive to promoting women leaders? How does the current political environment affect women striving towards leadership? What are the challenges faced by those who aspire to high positions in the political domain?

Answering these questions is essential in order to understand Arab women's journey to leadership. The political environment has a considerable impact on this journey, as it not only determines the extent of political representation of women, but also has a bearing on decision-making, which can be critical for the issues and challenges faced by Arab women at large.

The political landscape in the Arab world is diverse. While some countries are leaps ahead in introducing initiatives to encourage women to play a part in all areas of society, other political structures have been slow to change. There are high performers like Tunisia, where women were elected to 22.8% of seats in 2004, and there are countries like Bahrain and Egypt which have negligible levels of parliamentary representation of women in the single house (2.5 and 1.8 percent respectively).



7. Freedom House, Women's right in the Middle East and North Africa Report, 2008.



In general, political structures in the Arab world have affected the rise of women leaders to a large extent. A country's empowerment is largely dependent on the political framework. Initiatives in the region have increasingly removed obstacles for women to participate in political spheres. Women in many countries have succeeded in becoming agents of change as a result.

"I grew up with a culture of emancipation for women. We would hear it on TV, on the streets, from our parents... This gave us the willpower to change. Our children do not understand this because everything was ready for them, but it definitely conditioned women of my generation."

Mongia Amara
General Director, Frutidor, Tunisia

Despite these favourable advances, the MENA region has a long way to go. The regional average of women in parliament is only 9.1% in Arab states, compared to a world average of 18.4%, keeping the Arab region dismally behind the target of 30% set by the Beijing Women's Conference 14 years ago in 1995 (See figure 2.6).

Thus a concerted effort is required to achieve an environment that welcomes women leaders and is conducive to the advancement of these leaders in the political arena.

- 49% of the Arab women leaders interviewed found the political structures of their country to be 'favourable to very favourable' for women striving for leadership

positions. All participants from Tunisia found the political environment to be 'favourable to very favourable', while the majority from Morocco, the UAE and Bahrain shared the same view.

"To me democracy is just a westernised version of what we have."

Maryam Sharaf
Group Chief Financial Officer, Dubai World, UAE

HEADLINE NEWS: For the first time in history, the citizens of Kuwait elected four female parliament members. It was only in 2005 that women gained the right to vote and run for office. The past two parliaments have built up frustration amongst the Kuwaitis and changes were wanted. The change came when four women won seats in the parliament and most Islamists lost theirs.

All the female winners were educated in the West and have Ph.D's. Kuwaiti's first women lawmakers include Massouma Al Mubarak, Rola Dashti, Salwa Al Jassar and Aseel Al-Wadhi.

- 36% of those surveyed found their political environment to be 'unfavourable to very unfavourable'. The majority of leaders from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon ranked the political environment as 'unfavourable to very unfavourable' for women aspiring to become leaders, while in Egypt about half the respondents ranked the political environment as 'unfavourable to very unfavourable'.
- Jordan lays between the two extremes, with around half the women leaders perceiving it to be 'favourable to very favourable', and about a third finding it 'unfavourable to very unfavourable'.

Political environment as an enabler for all Arab women

It is clear from the respondents' answers that when it comes to politics, geography is everything.

The political environment of each country in the Arab world has developed at a different pace. While North African countries granted rights to women early on, the situation is not the same in other countries of the region, which has affected the empowerment of Arab women.

North African women leaders continuously refer to the advancement of women in the 1960s as the starting point for their progress.

Over the last few years, a new generation of political leaders has promoted women in leadership positions across sectors. In Bahrain, the UAE, Jordan, Oman and

Qatar, among other countries, political leaders have shown a strong commitment to women's rights and empowerment. Among the youngest countries, the UAE has made many achievements for women in only one generation.

"Across the board, women in Morocco are gaining major strides in their rights and participation with the strong support of His Majesty the King, who has strategically increased women's participation at the highest level of the decision making process in the country's socio-economic and political reform efforts."

Latifa Akharbach
Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Morocco

"Today in the UAE, we have a strong visionary leadership that understands the role of woman as leaders. This concept has to be extensively implemented across the board, in all organisations."

Mona Ghanem Al Marri
Chairperson of the Board, Dubai Women Establishment, UAE

Throughout the Arab world there is a new emphasis on women's issues, and more and more women now are playing an integral part in the socio-economic development of their countries. Institutions and political groups have been established alongside ministries, councils and national commissions that are dedicated to promoting women's empowerment and increasing their participation in the economy.

Most Arab women leaders interviewed agree that the nature of a government, regardless of whether it is liberal, conservative or authoritarian, determines the extent of its openness toward leadership roles for women.

Moreover, the democratisation process prevalent in the region is gradually providing a climate in which women can organise themselves in groups to lobby for their rights and participation in society.

"When you have closed political systems, the issue of freedom in general is a constraint that affects youth, women and everyone."

Roula Khalaf
Editor, Middle East, The Financial Times, UK

Political environment as an enabler for women political leaders

The women interviewed were genuinely convinced that they were able to initiate change, both in their chosen industry and in wider fields. All of them understood the power of positive female role models. As Arab women are increasingly taking positions of authority, the political arena offers a natural platform for such role models.⁸

8. For more information on political rights, see country scorecards in annex.

HEADLINE NEWS: In March 2007, the Supreme Judicial Council in Egypt chose 31 women to be judges out of 124 female candidates who work for the administrative prosecution office and at the department of the state’s legal cases.

HEADLINE NEWS: In 2006, in Morocco the percentage of women participating in the political field jumped from 0.6% in 1997 to 10.8%.⁹

HEADLINE NEWS: By March 2009, 20% of the Council of State is made up of women appointed by HH Sultan Qaboos in Oman.¹⁰

Quota Systems

As far as positive actions are concerned, two types of quotas exist in the Arab world. The first reserves seats in parliaments for women. The other extends party quotas to them. Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco have used their quota systems as a means to increase women’s participation in politics. In Morocco, political parties signed a charter in 2002 that reserves 30 seats on a special national list for women candidates. In Tunisia, quotas have helped to ensure that 14% of the parliament is female.¹¹ The percentage of women in Jordan’s parliament rose from 1.3% to 5.5% in 2006.¹²

While the participation of women in politics has increased quantitatively, the effectiveness or the quality aspect of these quotas must not be ignored. Several factors continue to limit the participation of Arab women in politics and restrain their ability to rise to leadership positions. Constraints on the mobility of women campaigning for elections limit women’s opportunities to participate in elections. In Yemen, the number of women candidates running for elections has nearly halved since 1997. This is attributed to the stipulation introduced in the General Election Law, No. 13 of 2001, which states that an independent candidate must be supported by at least 300 people from his or her constituency. While this was a difficult requirement for all candidates to fulfil, it was most restraining for women who cannot afford to travel far and are less well known in their communities.¹³

Cultural values and the resulting norms also have a role in curbing political participation, even in the absence of legal restrictions on mobility. The Arab code of modesty also restricts women’s participation in the political sphere, as it implies the need for independent travel/ mobility and professional interaction of women with men not related to them. The tribal structure of Arab

society adds to this problem, as the traditional forces of tribalism pose a challenge to modernisation in general. Consequently, women’s political participation is resisted, hence limiting women’s advancement to leadership positions in the political arena.

The dynamics of political parties have an important bearing on the participation of women, not only in elections but in the decision-making process. Political parties in Arab countries have traditionally been dominated by men, and women’s participation at the decision-making level has been low. The internal democracy of political parties is generally weak and women members of these parties identify an obvious division of labour based on gender in the parties’ general activities. In some countries, where ministerial positions are open to women by law, women still cannot acquire posts in key ministries like Civil Protection, National Defence and National Security. Morocco is a rare exception with a woman leading the Ministry of Energy. Jordanian women’s membership in the 32 registered political parties does not exceed 8%, and there are fewer women in the higher echelons. This number is even lower in other countries, like Yemen, where women form only 2% of total political party membership. In the higher echelons, participation of women is extremely low (1 to 2 out of 20 in the highest decision-making bodies in the political party). Reported reasons for this vary, from women refraining from party work, to women feeling that their tasks are limited to mobilising women voters during elections.

Financial constraints also stifle potential women candidates and party members. As a result of lagging party backing, in the form of moral and financial support for election campaigns, these campaigns become prohibitively costly for women candidates, limiting participation to women from well-off classes. Not only is access to finances difficult, but the attempt to seek finances is seen as a potential disqualifier from the political arena. Arab women politicians are generally expected to lack the desire to be financially powerful. Although this is unreasonable, a likely explanation is that, in order to enter into the traditional male territory of politics, women must prove that they can do a better job at it than their male colleagues.¹⁴

“Women (who have been elected through the quota system) are there only because of their gender. They should be able to hold that capacity, regardless of the quota.”

Randa Habib
Bureau in Chief, Agence France Presse, Jordan

“Gain yourself supporters that will support you and help you reach your goals.”

Maryam Sharaf
Group Chief Financial Officer, Dubai World, UAE

Tribalism also poses a strong challenge to moving beyond the token nature of political participation by Arab women. Political parties in the Arab world view themselves as an extension of the tribe. Thus tribal support is essential for women to gain popularity as a politician. An interesting example is that of Jordan, where five of the six winners of the seats reserved for women had the support of their tribes and were fielded as tribal candidates, while only one was a partisan candidate. In countries like Lebanon, where the forces of tribalism are not very strong, a similar role is played by patronage and family ties. Politics in such countries is family-based, and the inheritance of seats from fathers or husbands is common. Thus these women parliamentarians do not have a proven track record in politics and their socio-political status is derived from politically active male kin, deceased or alive. Some argue that the rise of women to positions of political leadership through their association with a tribe or family implies reduced opportunity for Arab women to enter politics in the future. The basic premise of this argument is that these women are token politicians (especially those who win reserved seats), as they are chosen for the seats on the basis that they are safe and will not create trouble for leading parties. As a result, these token appointed women tend to avoid any area of political work which may lead them to become identified as working on ‘women’s issues’, limiting future opportunities for Arab women to participate in politics.¹⁵

The relationship between women political leaders and women’s movements was another factor identified as restraining Arab’s women’s political participation. In the case of Jordan, it is argued that women members of parliament are an obstacle in securing gender equality and are not articulating women’s interests in society. Certain structural and financial deficiencies put women members of parliament at a disadvantage, including the perception that the MP’s role in Jordan is more tilted towards being a ‘service member of parliament’, that is, they seem more preoccupied with securing from the government special services for their constituents (e.g. high-level appointments, or cash assistance for a poor family). It must also be recognised that women in Arab society as a whole often do not vote for women candidates. This is due to both patriarchal values and the notion that women candidates will not address the issues of women at large and will restrict their services to their own constituencies.¹⁶

In light of the above findings, it is clear that, in the long term, quotas are not a sufficient condition for improving the political participation of women. Arab women politicians are clearly confronted with a glass ceiling (made up of several factors), which restricts the extent to which they can rise to leadership positions in national politics.

HEADLINE NEWS: In March 2009, a parliamentary report, co-written by the UAE Federal National Council (FNC) and the Dubai School of Government (DSG), called for quotas to be set for the minimum number of women standing for the FNC. The study recommended “gender-neutral quotas”, which would ensure that neither sex would make up less than a set proportion of parliamentary candidates.

HEADLINE NEWS: In February 4, 2007, Dr. Ali Juma, the Grand Mufti of Egypt, confirmed a woman’s right to become “head of state.” The Mufti stressed at this time that Islam does not prohibit women from heading a state.

HEADLINE NEWS: In September 2008, a UN report revealed that a higher proportion of women are represented in governments throughout the Arab world. This is indeed the case for governments with a single chamber, or lower house, like Iraq or the UAE, where 25.5% and 22.5% are women, respectively.¹⁷

HEADLINE NEWS: In October 2008, Alice Samaan, the first Christian woman in Bahrain’s parliament, was set to keep her post as second deputy chairperson of the Shura Council. In 2006 she made history when she was elected at the opening of the four-year legislative term. Another Christian woman, Maria Cecilia, was elected to the board of the Bahrain Human Rights Watch Society, a watchdog organisation established in 2004.

Challenges

As shown above, politics has not only been an enabler for Arab women, but is also becoming an area where women can achieve positions of authority. The trend toward the integration of women in politics has been very positive and the Arab world now has on the whole a more representatives in Arab parliaments remains the lowest in the world. This is in part because political frameworks in the Arab world vary from country to country.

Below are key challenges identified by Arab women leaders in the interviews:

9. The Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region 2007: A Youth Lens. (2007). United Nations, The Arab League.
10. 26 September, Issue 1443. Retrieved on 26 March 2009 11. Inter- Parliamentary Union. (2008). Retrieved from http://www.ipu.org
12. The Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region 2007: A Youth Lens. (2007). United Nations, The Arab League.
13. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. 2005. “Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers. A Revised Edition”.
14. Karam, A. 1999. “Strengthening the Role of Women Parliamentarians in the Arab World”; UNDP-POGAR Publication.

15. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. 2005. “Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers. A Revised Edition”.
16. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. 2005. “Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers. A Revised Edition”.
17. UNIFEM. 2008. Progress of the World’s Women 2008/2009: Who Answers to Women? Gender and Accountability



- **Lack of freedom, political instability and growth of extremism:** In some countries, these are cited by Arab women leaders as key obstacles to political participation. Most of those interviewed agree that it is naive to assume that democratisation is a precondition for enhanced women's participation, suggesting that there are no guarantees that women will vote for other women. Moreover, women have become increasingly visible in Islamist movements. This suggests on one hand that religion is not an obstacle to women's participation, but there is concern on the other about encouraging the perception that women are agents of extremism.
- **Cultural legacy:** In some countries, Arab women leaders view the cultural legacy and patriarchal system as an obstacle to their involvement in politics. Some also felt that Arab society is not ready for more women to participate in the political domain. Cultural conditioning has created an environment in which Arab women are often resistant to women's political empowerment and do not necessarily vote for female candidates.

"In our region, men are immediately perceived as leaders - especially in the political sphere."

Hanan Saab
Founder, Owner & Managing Director, Pharmamed, Lebanon

- **Ambiguity:** Some Arab women political leaders also suggest that the inclusion of women in the political system is ambiguous. Although actions taken by government have given women rights they never hoped for, the number of women in political positions of leadership is not high enough. Some governments in the region have been criticised for making changes solely for the sake of appearances. Thus some respondents believe that Arab women leaders are appointed more as symbols than real agents for change.

• **Quota system:** Most of those surveyed perceive quotas as a good remedy to raise women's participation in the political arena. Many applauded their introduction, noting that they helped to normalise the image of women in the political system. Those critical of this rationale believe that quotas impose a ceiling women cannot surpass and contribute to a more gender-based society, rather than tackling the core issues.

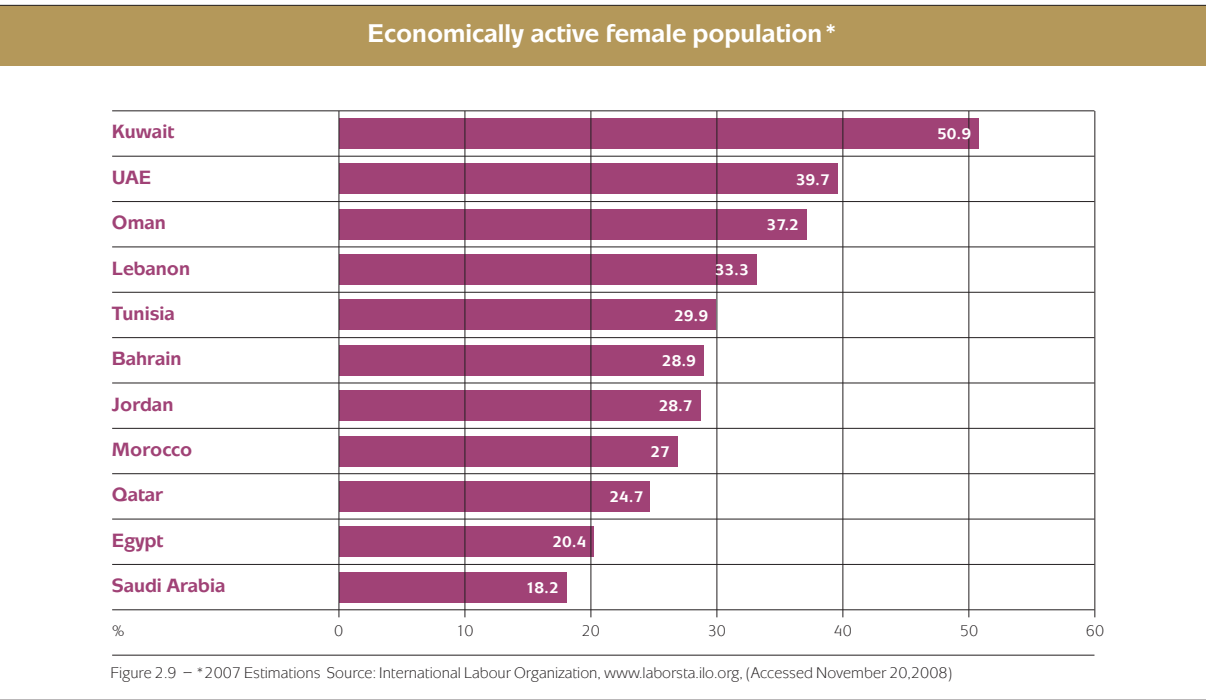
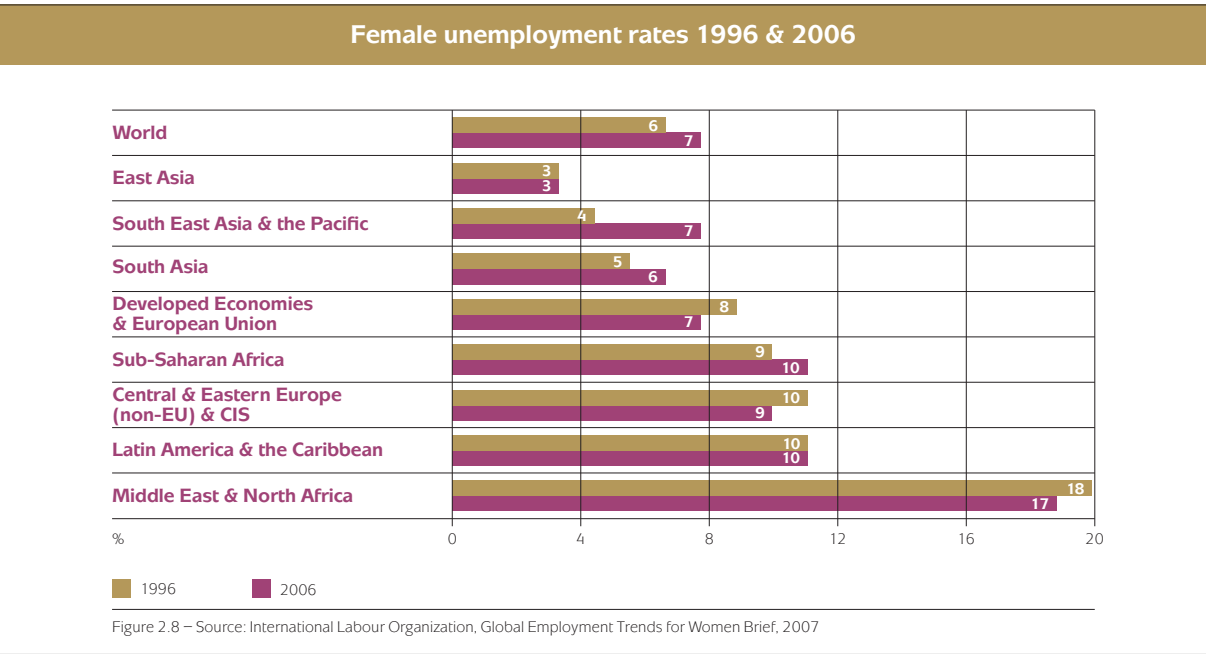
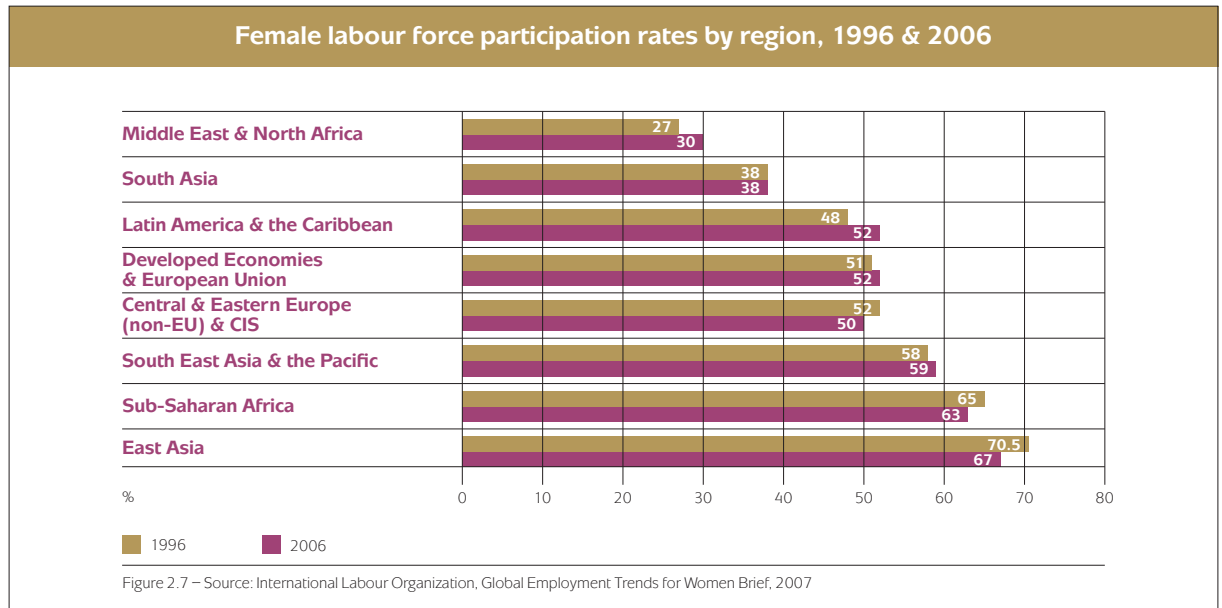
- Women political leaders also identify the lack of party support, media support and financial resources as other challenges.

Socio-economic environment: Towards a female friendly workplace

Overview

The socio-economic environment for women in the Arab world has made considerable advances in the last two decades. More Arab women participate in economic and civil society activities. This is obvious, as the labour force participation rate of women in the Arab world has increased considerably in the last decade (see figure 2.7), while the unemployment rate for females has declined (see figure 2.8). These numbers highlight the growing participation of Arab women in economic activity, which in turn implies greater opportunities for Arab women to attain leadership positions. It is important to note at this point that while the socio-economic environment for women has taken a long time to change in the Arab world, the pace of women's socio-economic advance has been as fast as that of economic development in the region.

At this juncture, it is important to understand the extent to which the social and economic environment of a



country affects women who strive for positions of leadership and creates opportunities for them to attain these positions. Socio-economic development generally affects the trends and attitudes associated with women's leadership in one of two ways. First, there is a positive correlation between the level of a country's development and its openness in welcoming women leaders. Secondly, the socio-economic environment of a country is itself affected by the participation of women.

Countries of the Arab world are a diverse mix ranging from oil-rich countries to human resource-rich countries, to those that are very poor on all indicators. Over the last few years, women have been affected – and have

advanced – by globalisation on the one hand and by two separate economic developments on the other. In some countries, a lagging economy has encouraged them to become part of the workforce and take a more active role in both the business and social domains. In other countries, the oil boom of the 1970s has funded impressive growth and provided women with unprecedented educational and employment opportunities. A high rate of growth in the Middle East and some North African countries has, as a result, led to significant investments in reform, education and employment which has helped pave the way for women in numerous fields.



The majority of those interviewed agree that open economies, liberalisation and globalisation have benefited women leaders in the Arab world:

- **Employment Opportunities:** The transition from public-sector-based to private-sector-based economies has provided Arab women with a wider range of opportunities in the labour market. From 2000 to 2005, annual employment growth reached 4.5% a year, adding 3 million jobs per year. Women's share in the labour force grew from 25% to 27%, and women accounted for 36% of new entrants in the labour market in 2005, up from 32% in the 1990s.¹⁸ A distinction must be made between the rich and the less-developed countries in the Arab world. In the latter, women have no choice but to work and are automatically part of the workforce, as a result of more difficult economic conditions.
- **Women Entrepreneurship:** The transition to more open economies has provided Arab women with the opportunity to become entrepreneurs and open small and medium-sized businesses. A recent World Bank report recognises that women's entrepreneurship is an important factor for economic growth and development in the Middle East and North Africa. Another recent study¹⁹ reports that a little over one in every eight firms in the region is female owned. The Saudi Arabia government, for example, offers 3,000 Saudi Riyals a month for women to start new businesses.

HEADLINE NEWS: In June 2008, a new programme to encourage entrepreneurship in young Emiratis was launched in Dubai. Its founders hope to foster a new generation of high-tech start-up companies. The programme, which is a partnership between the Arab Business Angels Network (ABAN) and Microsoft will partner young entrepreneurs with corporate and academic support, and provide funds from investors for the 'angels'.

HEADLINE NEWS: In July 2008, The Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Foundation (MBRF) and American University of Beirut unveiled plans to establish the Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the university's Olayan School of Business, which will foster entrepreneurship research and knowledge dissemination in the region.

HEADLINE NEWS: In March 2009, Dr. Ahmed Al Mutawa, Executive Director of the Khalifa Fund, announced that in Abu Dhabi the total number of companies/institutions registered under women amount to 4,988. Moreover the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry has a total of 4,160 UAE national women as members.

- **Growth of Civil Networks:** The new economy has also triggered the creation of stronger civil networks in favour of women. From associations to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and micro-finance institutions, the number of women's civil networks has flourished in the past few years. In addition, women's movements have broadened their messages and benefited from new forms of media, such as the Internet, chat rooms, and television channels. In some countries, the participation of women in the social sphere is central to the overall development of the country. Women in Saudi Arabia, for example, have demonstrated a strong determination to play a central role in civil society.

"We don't want to work in politics. We need Saudi women leaders in civil society. We need women leaders in education and health sectors. We want to see business leaders in Saudi companies and not only in multinational companies. We want women leaders to lead Saudi companies and manage Saudi employees."

Rajaa Momana
General Manager
Future Institute of Higher Training for Ladies, Saudi Arabia

Across the region, Arab society is more receptive to women leaders in business and social disciplines than to women in the political domain.

Nevertheless, compared to the rest of the world, the MENA region still has a long way to go. While women constitute 49.1% of the total population in the MENA region, their labour force participation rate is only 29.5%, which is amongst the lowest in the world. Hence the gap between male and female labour force participation is high (more than 40%).

Another trend demonstrated by the gender gap is the number of economically active females per 100 males²⁰, which is 36.7 for the MENA region, compared to the world average of 66.9. The female share of total employment in the region is 25.4%, while the female unemployment rate is 17% (the world average is 6.6%).

Most employed women work in the services sector (49.2%), followed by agriculture (39.1%), with only 11.7% employed in industry. These statistics clearly indicate that

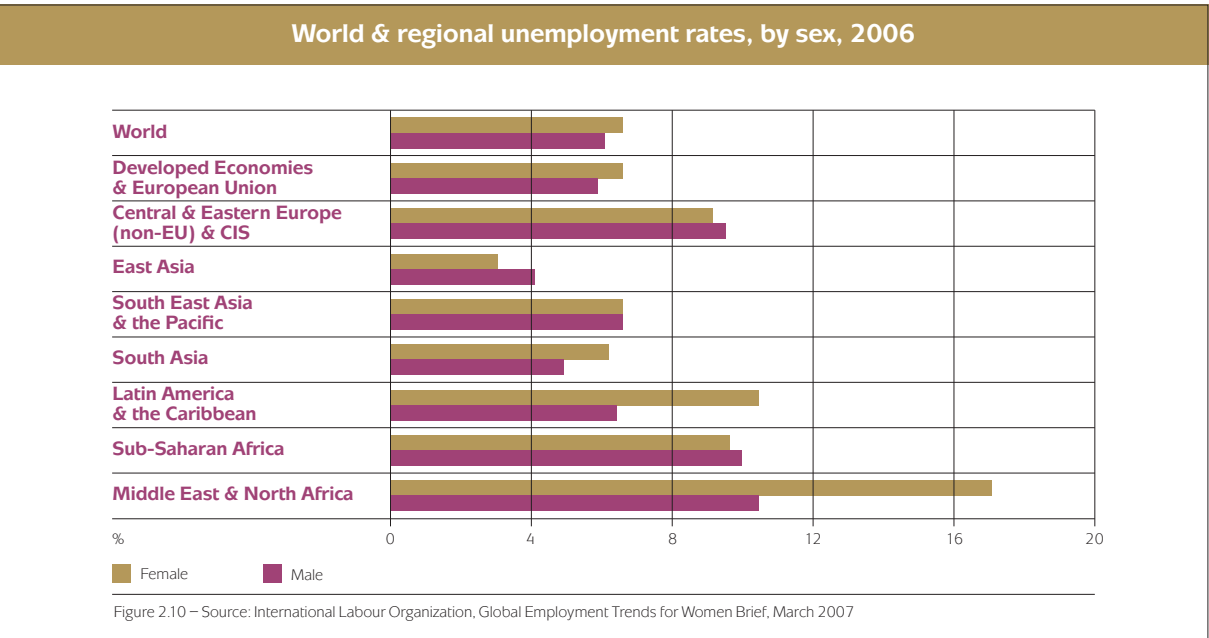
18. The Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa Region, (2008). The World Bank Group.
19. The Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa Region, (2008). The World Bank Group.
20. A lower gender gap statistic indicates worse performance.

Male & female labour force participation rates (%) & the gender gap in economically active females per 100 males, 2006			
	Female LFPR (%)	Male LFPR (%)	Gender gap in economically active females per 100 males
Developed economies	52.7	68.8	81.4
Transition economies	49.4	68.7	81.0
East Asia	66.8	81.4	79.3
Sub- Saharan Africa	62.8	85.9	74.8
South- East Asia	58.9	82.8	72.7
Latin America and the Caribbean	52.4	79.4	69.5
World	52.4	78.8	66.9
South Asia	36.0	82.2	41.8
Middle East and North Africa	29.5	77.3	36.7

Table 2.1 – Source: International Labour Organization, Global Employment Trends for Women Brief, March 2007

Male & female total share in employment by sector 1996 & 2006						
	Employment in agriculture (%)		Employment in industry (%)		Employment in services (%)	
Females	1996	2006	1996	2006	1996	2006
World	45.4	40.4	17.4	17.2	37.2	42.4
Developed Economies & European Union	4.3	2.5	16.8	12.4	78.9	85.1
Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) & CIS	25.5	21.6	22.1	19.7	52.4	58.7
East Asia	58.4	52.1	24.0	24.7	17.6	23.3
South East Asia & the Pacific	52.5	47.2	13.7	15.4	33.8	37.3
South Asia	72.6	64.5	12.0	17.7	15.4	17.9
Latin America & the Caribbean	14.0	9.9	14.5	14.3	71.5	75.8
Middle East & North Africa	33.0	39.1	17.7	11.7	49.2	49.2
Sub- Saharan Africa	69.4	64.2	5.8	5.5	24.7	30.3
Males	1996	2006	1996	2006	1996	2006
World	41.6	37.5	23.9	24.0	34.5	38.4
Developed Economies & European Union	5.8	3.7	37.3	33.6	56.9	62.7
Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) & CIS	26.8	22.4	32.7	34.3	40.5	43.3
East Asia	50.4	45.3	26.2	26.8	23.3	27.9
South East Asia & the Pacific	49.9	46.8	18.3	19.5	31.8	33.6
South Asia	53.9	46.4	16.8	19.3	29.3	34.3
Latin America & the Caribbean	28.5	24.7	23.7	23.4	47.9	51.9
Middle East & North Africa	28.8	26.7	22.8	26.5	48.4	46.8
Sub- Saharan Africa	67.0	62.1	11.4	11.3	21.5	26.6

Table 2.2 – Source: International Labour Organization, Global Employment Trends for Women Brief, March 2007





The global gender gap index 2008 rankings Economic participation & opportunity sub index (total 130 countries)		
Country	Rank	Score
Kuwait	92	0.5697
Syria	107	0.5084
Jordan	109	0.4889
Tunisia	113	0.4757
Algeria	115	0.4680
Egypt	120	0.4367
United Arab Emirates	121	0.4198
Oman	122	0.4149
Qatar	123	0.4146
Bahrain	126	0.3988
Morocco	127	0.3926
Saudi Arabia	129	0.2589
Yemen	130	0.2523

Table 2.3 – Source: World Economic Forum. Global Gender Gap Report, 2008.

the opportunities for economic participation available to women are not on par with those available to men.

The findings of the Global Gender Gap Report 2008, which measures Women’s Economic Participation and Opportunity, confirm this lack of opportunity,²¹ stating that the Arab world has been the worst-performing region of the world in terms of granting opportunities for economic participation to women. However, significant intra-regional variations exist with respect to the economic participation of women in the Arab world. Kuwait, the UAE, Tunisia and Jordan have made considerable progress, especially in their efforts to achieve wage equality for similar work. Saudi Arabia does not fare well on the Women’s Participation and Opportunity Index, especially regarding the gap between the number of males and females working as professional and technical workers: 6% females as opposed to 94% males. Yemen ranks last in the world in enhancing women’s economic participation and opportunity with a score on the index of 0.25.

HEADLINE NEWS: On March 1, 2009, Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, chairman of Kingdom Holding Company and Trade Center Company, appointed Nada Saleh Al-Ateegi as general manager of Kingdom Center. Nada has become the first Saudi lady to hold a top position in the trade and administrative field.

There are various reasons for Arab women’s low socio-economic participation. Cultural values have played a pivotal role in limiting the opportunity for such participation and have generated a gender paradigm that is based on the separation and mutual exclusion between the roles/spheres of men and women in the Arab world. The centrality of the family and importance of the man as

the sole bread-winner are the main elements of the traditional gender paradigm in the Arab world.

These cultural values manifest themselves in wage discrimination and occupational segregation, in which different groups work in different industries (horizontal segregation) or in which one group tends to dominate in supervision and the other in production activities (vertical segregation). Consequently, the gender paradigm determines to a great extent the decisions of employers, who assume a woman’s departure from the workforce at the time of marriage or child birth. Thus, employers become hesitant to offer jobs to young women. Those young women who do manage to get jobs before they are married are encouraged by their employers to quit their jobs when they get married, to avoid paying for potential maternity leave, which they are legally bound to provide. In Saudi Arabia, a woman who quits her job at the time of marriage receives a benefit equal to 11% of her annual salary over the years she served. In Bahrain, an employer may not terminate a woman when she marries, but can change the nature of her work. In most Arab countries, maternity leave policies allow for generous leave after childbirth. In theory these provisions are positive, in that they encourage women to continue working while taking care of their families. However, their practical application translates into higher costs for employers. These costs encourage the development of informal employment arrangements in which legislated benefits are not paid. In addition, another disincentive for women to continue working after starting a family is the lack of non-wage employment benefits. In most Arab countries, the tax and employment-related benefits that families receive can generally be channeled only through the man. In the UAE, for example, only male employees may receive allowances for children’s education and

21. Composite of the following variables: 1) Ratio: female labour force participation over male value. 2) Wage equality between men and women for similar work (converted to female over male ratio). 3) Ratio: Estimated female earned income over male value. 4) Ratio: female legislators, senior officials and managers over male value. 5) Ratio: female professional and technical workers over male value.

housing. As a result of these mindsets, women do not have steady career paths. This restricts their ability to reach leadership positions.²²

According to the Arab Human Capital Challenge, CEOs in the Arab world acknowledge the need of increasing the role and participation of women in societies and economies. However, CEOs in Saudi Arabia are still restrained from hiring women due to logistical constraints imposed on employers such as the arrangement for special entrance for women and segregated seating arrangements. Nevertheless, the country deserves true applause for its recent significant progress towards women’s participation.²³ Regulations restricting travel and mobility, working hours, and the nature of jobs tend to disadvantage women in the labour market and reduce economic efficiency by effectively denying women strategic professional opportunities, such as training in new production or teaching

techniques.²⁴ Consequently, women are less likely to be part of official training programmes. As a result, they remain relatively ill-equipped as far as management and business skills are concerned. Mentoring and coaching programmes are almost absent. Some women leadership programmes are being developed by the Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR) and universities in the region, but these tend to bring together women who are already leaders, and do not address the issue of capacity building for potential women leaders in the economic sphere.

In many cases, human resource policies are also skewed in favour of men as opposed to women. This manifests itself directly in wage differentials and discrimination. Wage differentials for men and women with the same qualifications tend to discourage women from (1) participating in the workforce and (2) trying hard to attain leadership positions in the workplace. While wage

Wages & discrimination in MENA countries & world regions, 2000 or most recent year				
Location	Ratio of women's wages to men's wages	Percentage of wage gap unexplained by productive characteristics	Percentage increase in women's wages if discrimination were eliminated	Estimated ratio of women's wages to men's wages in the absence of discrimination
Industrial countries	0.77	79	24	0.96
East Asia and Pacific	0.71	71	29	0.92
Europe and Central Asia	0.77	103	31	1.01
Latin America and the Caribbean	0.76	78	25	0.95
South Asia	0.54	70	60	0.86
Sub- Saharan Africa	0.71	63	26	0.90
MENA	0.73	117	32	0.93
Egypt	0.96	324	14	1.09
Jordan	0.83	167	35	1.12
Morocco	0.86	100	17	1.00
Yemen	0.64	13	7	0.68
Tunisia	0.82	71	15	0.95
West Bank and Gaza	0.56	109	86	1.04

Table 2.4 – Source: The World Bank, Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa, Women in the Public Sphere, 2004

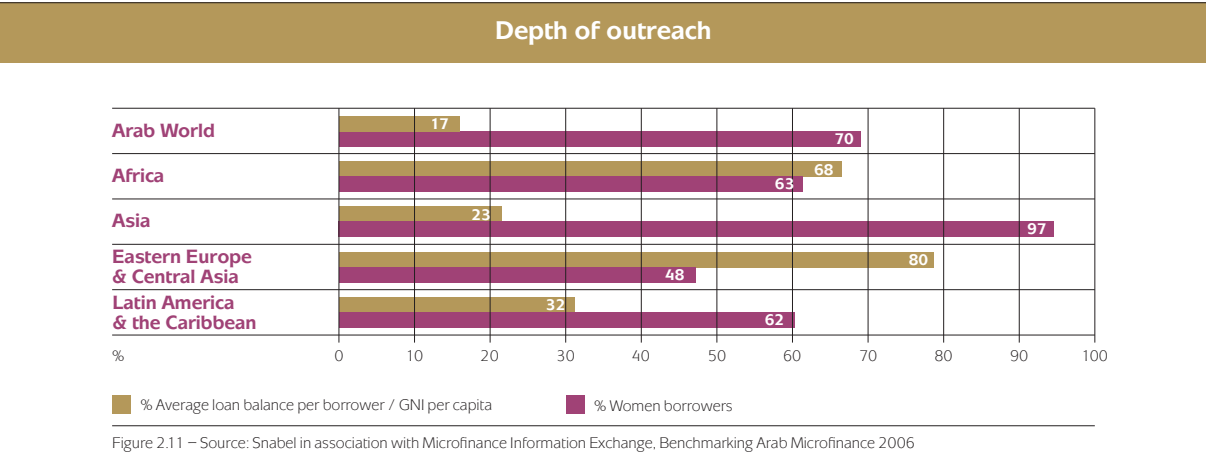


Figure 2.11 – Source: Snabel in association with Microfinance Information Exchange, Benchmarking Arab Microfinance 2006

22. World Bank. (2004) Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa.
23. Mohamed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation (in association with PricewaterhouseCoopers). Arab Human Capital Challenge. Published in 2009.
24. World Bank. (2004) Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa.



differentials between men and women exist all over the world, the MENA region is different, in that among its wage earners, women generally have more education than men, while they hold the same job level.

Women entrepreneurs who want to set up their own businesses also face challenges, including a lack of financial support. Micro-finance options are limited in most Arab countries, so entrepreneurs must rely on retained profits or family support to set up or expand their businesses.

However, women’s access to microfinance in the region is increasing, especially in Yemen, Egypt and Jordan, where women constitute 97%, 75% and 72% of total borrowers. Consequently, the percentage of women borrowers in the Arab region is high (second only to Asia, as shown in figure 2.11), but in absolute terms the finances available to these women are limited, due to the low supply of microfinance in the Arab World as a whole.²⁵

25. Microfinance Information Exchange. (2006) Benchmarking Arab Microfinance.



Case Study

CAWTAR	Tunisia
<p>The Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) was established in Tunisia in 1993 as an independent regional institution promoting gender equality through research, training, networking and advocacy. It was established as a direct response to the longstanding need for a specialised centre to promote the participation of Arab women in the development process. CAWTAR’s mission is to generate knowledge and enhance the capacity for Arab institutions to empower women. To achieve these objectives, CAWTAR promotes Arab governance systems to support women’s rights and fully integrate them into the workforce. CAWTAR’s Board members consist of HRH Prince Talal Bin Abdel Aziz (AGFUND) as Chairman of the Board and other institutions such as UNDP, UNFPA, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), and the League of Arab States (LAS).</p> <p>CAWTAR partners with international institutions like UNPD, the World Bank, UNFPA, Arab League and AG Fund in order to build up new opportunities of cooperation.</p>	

The Center undertakes its multi-faceted objectives through five main programs:

- **Research:** Developed on the main topics or related ones of the Arab Women Development Reports (AWDR).
- **Training:** The training programs are tailored to serve the Center’s multi-dimensional tasks as a regional service-provider and founder of special training programs. The current training priority areas are: gender mainstreaming; poverty and women’s economic participation; women and decision-making; adolescence; and gender and the media.
- **Networking and Partnerships:** CAWTAR’s networking program is tailored to leverage the Center’s advocacy campaigns and reinforce its capacity building programs across the Arab region. CAWTAR structures its networking activities through its network @NGED (Arab Network for Gender and Development) including more than 300 members, which was established in 2002, and its through spin-off specialized networks.
- **Media and Communications:** The media is a dynamic source for promotion and awareness-raising about gender equality and development in the Arab region. The program plays a pivotal role in three ways. It engages the Arab media community in promoting gender equality and development in the Arab region. It contributes through training to reinforce the capacity of the media community to promote positive images of Arab women. Finally, it supports media products based on the Center’s Arab Women Development Reports and networking activities in partnership with Arab media agencies.
- **Documentation and Databases:** The Center’s library has a rich collection of books, research materials, studies, reports and technical papers published in and outside the region on gender and development. This collection

comprises works in Arabic, English and French.

In 2001, CAWTAR began producing the Arab Women Development Reports (AWDRs). The primary objective is to address the knowledge gap in gender-related research in the Arab region.

AWDRs are valuable references based on in-depth national case-studies conducted by experts from in and outside the region. They consist of structured analyses of gender-disaggregated data, indicators, charts and statistics compiled from several Arab countries. In consultation with its regional and international partners, the Center has selected the following as priority themes for AWDRs.

- Globalization and Gender: Economic Participation of Arab Women
- Arab Adolescent Girl: Reality and Prospects
- Arab Women and the Media
- Arab Women and Decision-Making
- Arab Women and Legislation

Over the years, CAWTAR has enhanced confidence in women by providing access to knowledge and capacity building workshops. CAWTAR’s handbooks have become a useful tool for all women striving towards positions of leadership. Soukeina Bouraoui, Executive Director, CAWTAR, identifies time and money as the main challenges associated with the establishment of her organisation. Seriousness, openness and credibility were central to her success.

“CAWTAR’s success can be duplicated by each country and each context has its own needs. The solutions towards furthering women’s roles in society should be innovative and complimentary given the diversity of the region.” Soukeina Bouraoui, Executive Director.

• Source: The Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), Tunisia



Challenges

“A tough woman in the workplace is perceived negatively when compared to a tough man.”

Zakie Karam
General Manager, IDMI (Broadband Solutions), Lebanon

Despite the clear advantages that are now presented to Arab women, most respondents agree that the socio-economic environment is not entirely favourable to women’s participation in society. Certain challenges, whether related to the overall economic conditions of the country or to its business environment, must be overcome in order for women to pursue their ambitions. These obstacles have impacted Arab women in both business and civil society.

Even though several countries like Tunisia since the 1960s have laws that guarantee wage equality between men and women, inequalities still exist.

At the macro-economic level, our survey identifies common challenges faced by Arab women leaders across countries and professions:

- **Unemployment:** The lack of professional opportunities in the Arab world is perceived by most Arab women leaders as a major obstacle to their advancement. According to a recent study by the International Union of Arab Labour, the Arab labour force, which reached 65 million at the turn of the century, is set to reach 96 million in 2015, an expected increase of 3.3% a year. With unemployment now estimated at just above 12%, the ambitious goal of creating jobs for the unemployed will take more than 4.5 million jobs a year to reach. In addition, the region has the second lowest labour force participation rate for women, at 33.3%. There are 61

million women and 67 million men of working age in the Middle East, but only 17 million women are employed, compared with 47 million men.²⁶

- **Business Environment:** A number of difficulties specific to the Arab world, which also affect men, have prevented women from pursuing their entrepreneurial ambitions. These difficulties include high operating costs and bureaucratic obstacles. The lack of financing and the need to have a guardian were also ranked by respondents as key challenges. Market access difficulty was also perceived as a significant obstacle for countries with large rural populations.

Chanllenges faced by Arab women business leaders

“In a situation where a company has to lay off people, everybody thinks that the women should be the first to go.”

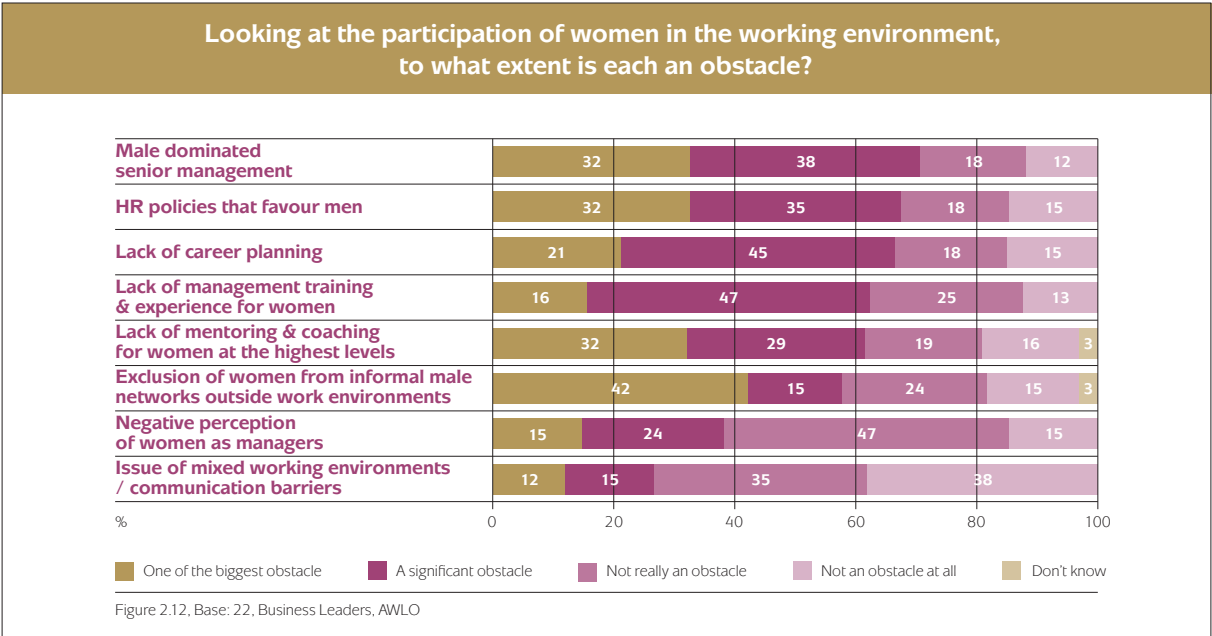
Mona El Shinnawy
Vice President, Sharjah Islamic Bank, UAE

“One of the challenges I faced was the stereotype that women are not tough enough to handle workloads, long hours, or make decisions on a timely basis.”

Elham Hassan
Country Senior Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Bahrain

At the micro level, Arab women business leaders identified the following challenges:

- **Male Dominance:** 70% of the Arab women business leaders interviewed ranked male dominance in senior management positions as a significant challenge to women’s leadership. Many respondents report that most professions in the region are still dominated by men.



26. Global employment trends for women. (March 2008). International Labour office, Geneva.

“The biggest challenge for us is to prove to our superiors or clients/shareholders we are here for a career, not a job.”

Maha Al Ghunaim
Chairperson and Managing Director, Global Investment House, Kuwait

- **Human Resources Policies:** 67% of those surveyed ranked Human Resources policies in favour of males as the second largest challenge faced by women leaders. The lack of flexibility on the part of women to adopt a more effective work-family balance has been cited by many organisations as a major concern. Women are also considered a costly investment, if they decide to terminate their work as a result of marriage or children.
- **Coaching & Training:** While career planning and coaching were also seen as a challenge for the majority of interviewees, they were not considered gender-specific challenges. On the whole, few options exist in the region for training and coaching, except perhaps for countries such as Morocco, Tunisia and Lebanon. This challenge applies to both men and women.
- **Networks:** The exclusion of women from informal male networks outside the work environment emerged as a major obstacle for women, whereby 57% of the women considered it to be the biggest obstacle.
- **Perceptions:** 62% of women from the private sector reported that the ‘negative perception of women as leaders’ was not an obstacle. However, many mentioned that they must continuously prove themselves, to be taken seriously and integrated in the decision-making process by male colleagues and superiors.

“We all need to be ambassadors of our own country, wherever we are; and it is possible only through a profound realization of what we represent. In this aspect, a woman may have a better chance to play her part as an ambassador, simply because she is perceived to be more as a factual representative than a man”.

Mona Ghanem Al Marri
Chairperson of the Board, Dubai Women Establishment, UAE

On a more positive note, 73% of Arab women leaders do not cite mixed working environments as a barrier or challenge for them, with Saudi Arabia being the exception.

“Arab women have proved for generations that they can successfully lead a family, and therefore being able to lead something else is not even considered a challenge for them.”

Dr. Maha Nabhan, Head of the Math & Computer Department
Foundation Programme, Qatar University, Qatar

“In Bahrain, it is very normal for a woman to be working.. but like all women, the burden of family and social commitments is heavier on them than on men and sometimes this limits them from progressing further in their careers. Usually, those who manage their time

properly – with some sacrifice on the part of their social leisure time – accompanied with sustained family support have better opportunities to progress to senior positions in their jobs.”

Kubra Ghuloom Jassim Shehabi
Head of Risk Management, First Energy Bank, Bahrain

Challenges faced by Arab women civil society leaders

“The civil society is fragmented, we need to work together and strengthen our change movement.”

Sylvana Lakkis
President, The Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union, Lebanon

The challenges for women civil society leaders can be identified as follows:

- **Lack of implementation:** 93% of respondents cite the lack of implementation as their greatest challenge. In their opinion, civil networks do not yet have the capacity to change the system and lack the influence and credibility to act as real agents for change. This is accompanied by a lack of coordinated action among civil society organisations.
- **Lack of finance:** 79% of respondents perceive the lack of finance as a major obstacle.
- **Lack of management skills:** 69% of respondents cite the lack of management and business skills among women as a major challenge. In other words, civil society leaders believe that women do not possess the management tools or necessary business skills to take their organisations to a higher level.
- **Cultural and social barriers and lack of awareness:** 65% cited cultural and social barriers as key challenges, while 64% ranked a general lack of awareness as a major roadblock.

On a more positive note, only half of those surveyed perceived the lack of support from government, as well as various regulatory constraints, as having an impact.

In Focus

The Emirati Women Business Leaders Project

By: Dr. Lynda Moore, Professor, Simmons School of Management, USA

For more than 30 years, Dr. Lynda L. Moore has focused her research, consulting, and teaching on the leadership and advancement of women, diversity management, as well as cross cultural differences in organizational behavior. Dr. Moore teaches undergraduate, graduate, and executive courses focusing on managing diversity, gender and leadership at Simmons College School of Management, Boston, Massachusetts, USA and is a faculty affiliate of the Center for Gender and Organizations. Professor Moore also teaches at the Indian School of Business, Hyderabad and was recently awarded a Fulbright fellowship at Zayed University, UAE. Her articles appear in numerous academic journals, book chapters and international conference proceedings. Other areas of research include women in global leadership and the development of culturally sensitive leadership models.

Voices of women leaders in the UAE and Arab region: implications for leadership education and development.

Introduction and background

There is a call throughout the Arab world for increased participation of women in the labour force, maximising the talent pool and contributing to the economic vitality of the region. While there are nuanced variations of cultural norms within the region and GCC countries, it is generally agreed that the inclusion of women into the workforce, and indeed their progression into leadership roles is a prerequisite for a thriving economy and the ability to compete globally. Few studies exist which provide roadmaps to guide informed decisions to develop and implement women's leadership education in the region, from secondary education through executive levels. The purpose of the study described below is to provide primary research on Emirati women business leaders to inform policymakers in higher education, government and business to shape an agenda for effective programmes, policies and practices for women's leadership education and development.

Women's employment varies significantly across the Arab world, and within the GCC. Research from GCC countries shows that although women are exceeding men in university enrolment and 65% of graduates in the region are women, their participation in the labour force still lags behind the world average of 40-50%. Although in 2002-2003 women's enrollment in higher education had surpassed men's at 77% this has not translated to economic participation. In 2003, only 23% of UAE national women were participating in the labor force. However, according to government sources, women constitute 20% of the public sector and only 4% of the private sector. Government support has been very strong - and crucial, along with cultural change and perceptions about women in employment. Given the growing need for women in leadership yet the pronounced lag between education and work force entrance, there is clearly a compelling need for research.

The need for research

There are limited studies on leadership in the region, and very little work exists which examines the attributes and characteristics of leadership with a gendered and culturally appropriate lens. The Emirati Women Business Leaders project, funded by a Fulbright Scholarship and affiliated with Zayed University, examined women's definitions of leadership, their leadership traits and experiences, motivations and perceived individual and organisational challenges. In-depth interviews of senior female business leaders revealed that stereotypical notions of ascribed and patriarchal leadership common to the region were not accurate. Strong family support and a sense of faith heavily influenced by self confidence and a strong identity with religion was never perceived as a barrier. Their definitions of success included having a balance with one's family.

These women leaders were motivated to gain new experiences, challenges and opportunities, but also to give back to their country, and to change the image of Arab women. Their definitions of leadership included being democratic, sharing ideas, being passionate about work, and having a vision based on three factors: having a sense of role and responsibility in family and business, having a sense of faith, and the ability to give back. Many of them acknowledged the importance and difficulty of the leadership role that women must play at home with their families. Many of them also acknowledge the traditional strengths and virtues of their mothers and grandmothers: resilience, a strong work ethic, excellent negotiation skills, ability to juggle work and family. This legacy of leadership provides an important context for Emirati women. As leaders, they recognised the importance of being participative yet decisive, delegating work and empowering employees to make decisions, and treating employees like family. Many of these practices are touted as critical skills necessary for effective management in today's organisations. Barriers included stereotyping, and work/family conflict.

Many of these findings mirror similar issues facing women leaders around the globe. However, it is important to note that the context for understanding the definitions of leadership and leadership success are embedded in their roles as Muslim women. Although many of these attributes may be considered traditionally feminine, many traits and characteristics also reflect cultural and religious values and contribute to the leadership qualities and success of Emirati women business leaders.

Implications for women's leadership education

So what are the implications of this research for women's leadership education in the UAE and the region? Best practices in leadership education include building a curriculum that is based on research and identifying women's needs. In higher education, special courses that focus on gender dynamics within a cultural context are particularly important. Country specific data should inform strategies and context for preparing women for leadership roles.

Education for women leaders must incorporate relevant and timely research to inform curriculum content and delivery. Government policies can help to encourage leadership education at an early age by supporting a curriculum based on critical thinking. Both curricular and extra curricular programmes can develop leadership skills and competencies, provide strong female role models and help women in their interaction with male peers. Gender segregated learning environments are useful in the empowerment of women yet learning to work in mixed gender and diverse environments is equally important to provide a wide array of experiences from which leaders learn and grow.

Additional research is needed to inform curriculum content in higher education and prepare young women leaders for the private sector. In addition to rigorous management education, young women need internship experiences and leadership education which focuses on understanding their strengths as Arab women leaders, with integrated identities as wives and mothers.

Individual and organisational factors that influence women leaders must also be addressed within managerial education so that all future leaders, both male and female, understand their responsibilities within diverse organisations. Likewise, a curriculum is needed to educate men on how to negotiate changing personal and family roles, as well as become sensitised to embedded notions of masculine workplace norms.

Strategic and collaborative alliances between higher education, NGOs and government sponsored programmes will enable research, and encourage the examination of best practices from the West. Personal and organisational strategies for leadership success must include a respect for traditional cultural values and heritage while incorporating and adapting best practices from the West. Research should also identify the needs of men with regard to their attitudes and behaviour towards women as colleagues, peers, managers and leaders.

The need for national talent and skills to manage the explosive economic growth and rapid social change in the UAE will require utilising the full potential of Emirati women. Their powerful and successful leadership vision and voice is essential both in the region and globally.

Education: Cultivating tomorrow's leaders

“One of the main reasons why the situation of women in the Arab world is improving is due to the increase in the number of females receiving higher education.”

Dr. Fatima Al Shamsi
Secretary General, UAE University, UAE

Overview

Education is a key enabler for all women and a core requirement for women leadership. An increase in female educational attainment leads to women’s empowerment and more gender equality in several ways. Female education, especially beyond the basic primary stage, leads to greater participation of women in the workforce. Their increased earning capacity contributes to household and national income and has a positive impact on health and child nutrition. Formal education instils a sense of competitiveness and teamwork, important leadership qualities/skills. Female education can also have a positive impact on reproductive choices; an increase in female education is statistically correlated with declining fertility, a fall in child mortality, slower population growth and better family health. Declining fertility can in turn lead to greater participation of women in the labour force, civil society and/or politics, allowing for more women to reach leadership positions in their careers. Educated women tend to be more politically active and better informed about their legal rights and how to exercise them. All these factors can potentially contribute to the advancement of women leadership, which can contribute significantly to the future development of the Arab world.

The Arab world has witnessed considerable advancement in women’s access to education. These advances can shape the future of women’s leadership in the Arab world, as education improves access to leadership positions.

Figure 2.14 shows that female literacy rates in the region have increased. Enrolment at the secondary and tertiary level for females has also increased, implying a greater access to higher education for Arab women. (See figure 2.15) Tertiary education, in particular, is an important stepping stone for women leaders, as a university degree or diploma implies better chances of getting a job and developing a career. Thus, an increase in enrolment in tertiary education improves the employability of women and motivates them to pursue a career. In the Arab world, these outcomes are manifested in the increasing labour force participation of women and declining female unemployment, as shown in the previous section.

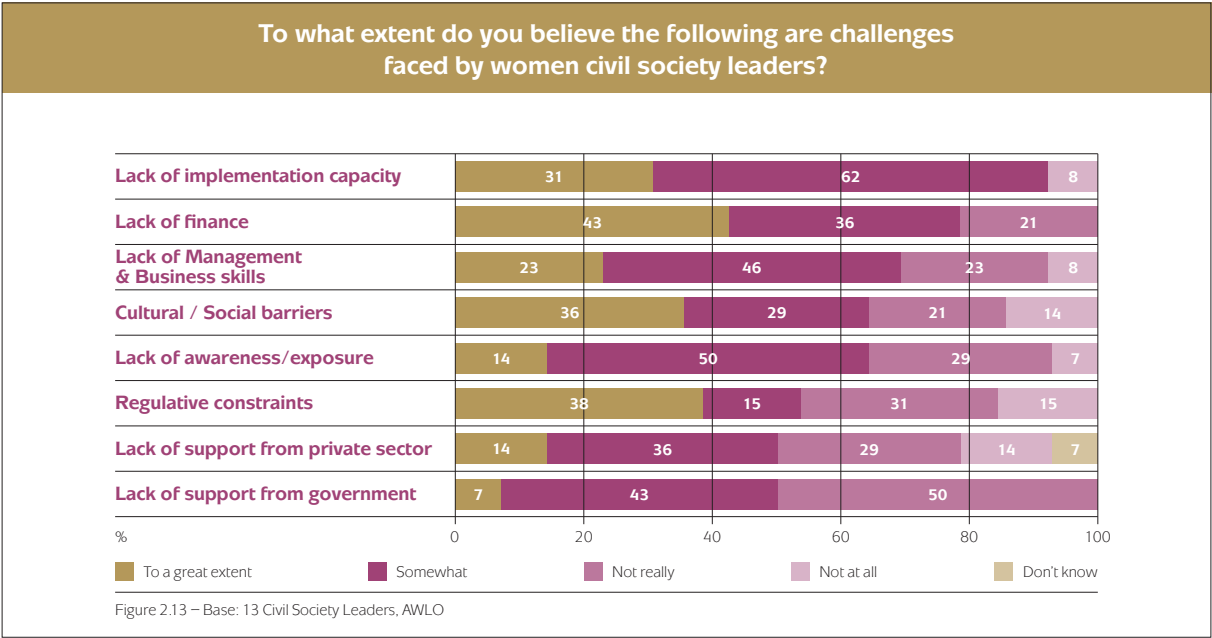
One must move beyond the improvement in educational statistics, however, in assessing education with regard to women’s leadership. To address this issue, the following questions must be asked:

Is education in the Arab world offering the right tools for women to access leadership positions? How are women affected by the current conditions of secondary and tertiary education in the Arab world?

The Arab women interviewed for the first edition of the Arab Women Leadership Outlook are renowned leaders in their countries. They also happen to be, for the large majority, highly educated. It is acknowledged however that they may not be fully representative of Arab women leadership across the Arab world. Many women leaders may not have received the same level of education but could still be highly successful.

“In order to improve women’s status in the Arab World, it is vital to further improve the education system in the region.”

Moudi I. Diab
Executive Manager, Ibrahim Diab Trading Co., Saudi Arabia



Female regional adult literacy rate (%)

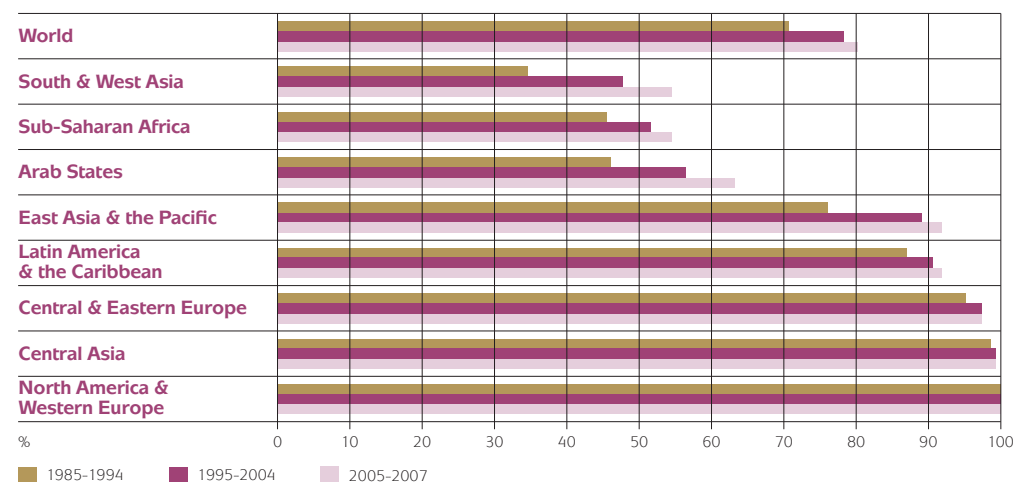


Figure 2.14 – Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. <http://www.uis.unesco.org>. (Accessed February 02, 2009)

Arab states % of female enrolment 1999 – 2006

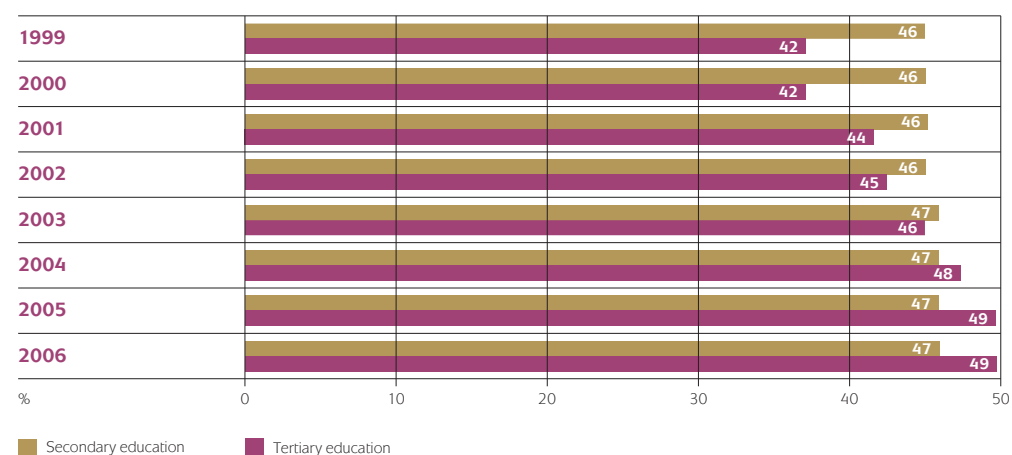


Figure 2.15 – Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. <http://www.uis.unesco.org>. (Accessed February 02, 2009)

The Arab women surveyed in this report value the educational opportunities they have had. Regardless of their professions and countries, a good education is perceived as a prerequisite to success, especially for women aspiring to positions of leadership. Due to its focus on leadership, the Arab Women Leadership Outlook addresses the developments and perceptions linked to secondary and tertiary education.

Few women leaders attained their positions without having attended secondary school or university. Over the last ten years, the Arab world on the whole has invested heavily in education. According to a 2004 World Bank Report, governments in the MENA region spent an average of 5.3% of their gross domestic product (GDP) on education – the highest in the world. Some countries

such as Tunisia began this process fifty years ago, while Bahrain and the UAE have invested significant resources into women's education recently.

Significant challenges remain, however, regarding women's education in the region. The most pressing issue pertains to the quality of education. Education in Arab countries often fails to equip students with the ability to analyze or think out of the box. Gender sensitivity is a critical aspect of the quality of education. Educational systems need to be sensitive to the specific needs of girls and women. In order for women's leadership to prosper, countries should encourage female education and the eventual participation in the labour force or public sphere.

Gender gap subindex – enrollment in tertiary education, female & male value

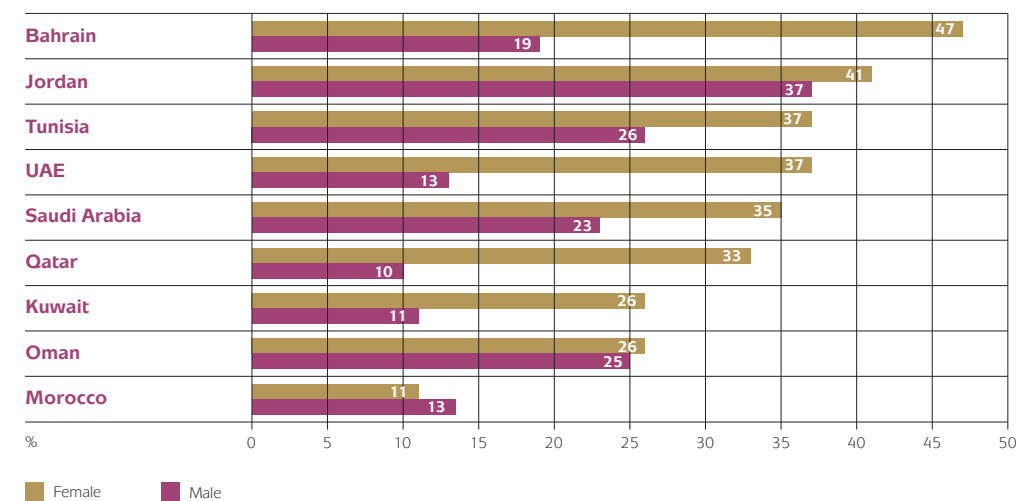


Figure 2.16 – Source: World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2008

Gender parity index of gross enrolment rate in secondary & tertiary education (female as a proportion to male)

	1970		1985		2003	
	Secondary	Tertiary	Secondary	Tertiary	Secondary	Tertiary
Algeria	0.41	0.25	0.74	0.47	1.07	1.08
Bahrain	0.72	1.29	0.99	1.70	1.06	1.84
Egypt	0.49	0.37	0.70	0.46	0.93	-
Iraq	0.43	0.3	0.57	0.6	0.66	0.45
Jordan	0.57	0.49	1.08	0.93	1.02	1.10
Kuwait	0.81	1.16	0.91	1.16	1.06	2.72
Lebanon	0.68	0.32	0.98	-	1.09	1.12
Libya	0.23	0.13	0.94	-	1.06	1.09
Morocco	0.42	0.19	0.67	0.47	0.84	0.87
Oman			0.49	0.6	0.96	1.37
Qatar	0.72	-	1.10	2.63	0.97	2.86
Saudi Arabia	0.26	0.1	0.65	0.78	0.88	1.50
Syria	0.39	0.26	0.70	0.57	0.93	-
Tunisia	0.38	0.25	0.7	0.58	1.05	1.28
Unites Arab Emirates	0.32	-	1.00	1.96	1.06	3.24
Yemen	-	-	-	-	0.49	0.38
Mean	0.48	0.42	0.79	0.95	0.94	1.40

Table 2.5 – Source: The World Bank, The Road not Travelled in MENA, 2008

Instead, in the Arab States region, the curricula, teaching materials and the media, which plays a strong role in shaping society's opinions, tend to reinforce traditional stereotypical roles that deny women the opportunity to participate equally in society.²⁸ However, Arab countries differ in adjusting education curricula. Even in Tunisia and Morocco which started to modify curricula for women decades ago, disparities still exist in the quality of public education. Many Arab countries have a long way to go and are still in the process of adjusting education and curricula for women.

27. Education For All Global Monitoring Report, (2007). United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

28. Population Reference Bureau. Empowering Women, Developing Society: Female Education in the Middle East and North Africa.



Case Study

Young Women Leaders Academy

Qatar

In July 2008, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) launched the Young Women Leaders Academy, a unique programme that provides young women with the intellectual tools, comparative knowledge and practical skills to participate in the political process. Building on the intensive academic and training component of the programme, NDI seeks internships for participants with parliaments, political parties or civil society organisations to help them utilise their newly acquired political, advocacy and leadership skills. Based at Georgetown University in Qatar, whose academic and learning environment makes people feel free to discuss and interact with each other. Although the Young Women Leaders Academy is a regional programme, it can be developed into specific programmes for any university or country in the MENA region.

The programme is designed to

- Strengthen young women's ability to engage in politics and civil society.
- Expand their opportunities to gain practical work experience, while promoting to host institutions to benefit from the internship programme.
- Create and promote an active network of young women engaged in politics and civil society in the Middle East and North Africa.

The two phases of the Programme

- **Training Academy:** An intensive training academy that:
 - 1) establishes the intellectual foundation of women's political leadership and addresses relevant policy issues;
 - 2) provides practical, skills-based training for leadership and politics. Led by experienced academics and practitioners from around the world, the intensive programme incorporates interactive and practical learning and training techniques and models. The mostly female trainers develop an in-depth understanding of the issues women face.
- **Internship:** A central component provides participants with a hands-on opportunity to use their newly acquired skills and gain on-the-job experience in their home country. Following the summer training academy, they return home to complete an internship with their parliament, a political party or civil society organisation. Over a six-month period, participants spend a minimum of two months in their internship to gain hands-on experience in political processes, build relationships with political parties, identify mentors, build leadership skills and learn to engage more effectively in politics.

The Programme's added values

- It brings young women together to interact with like-minded peers from neighbouring countries and to learn from each other.
- It provides an opportunity to fill the gaps in the education system and equips participants to utilise their skills and reach their full potential.

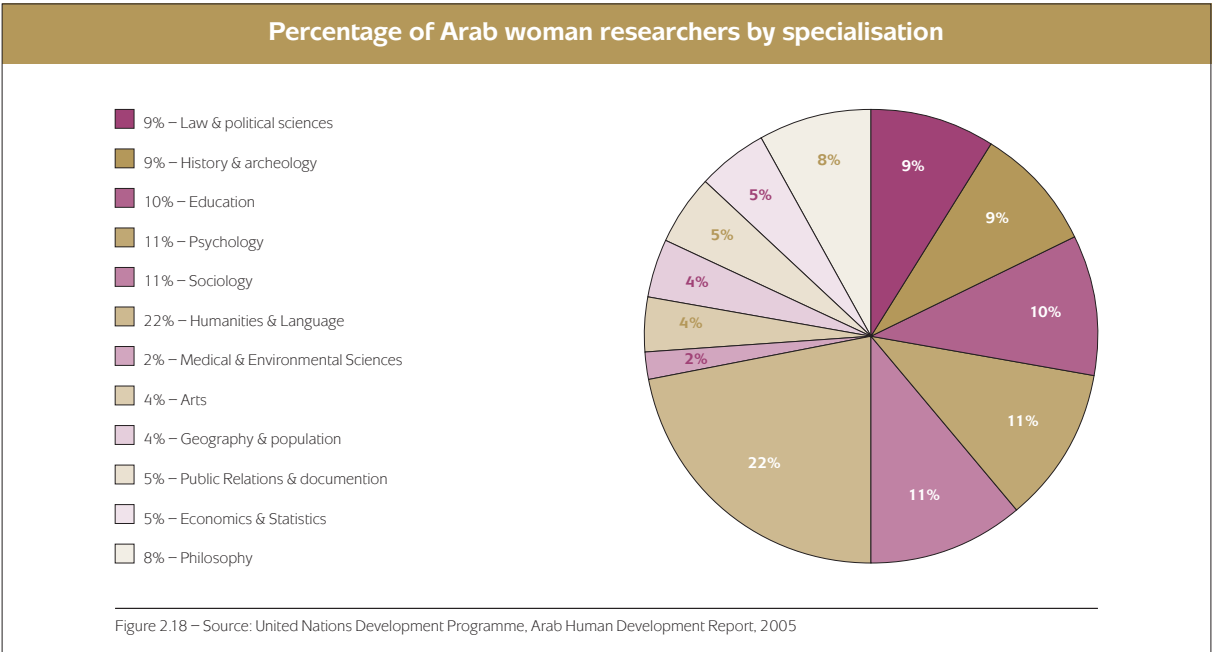
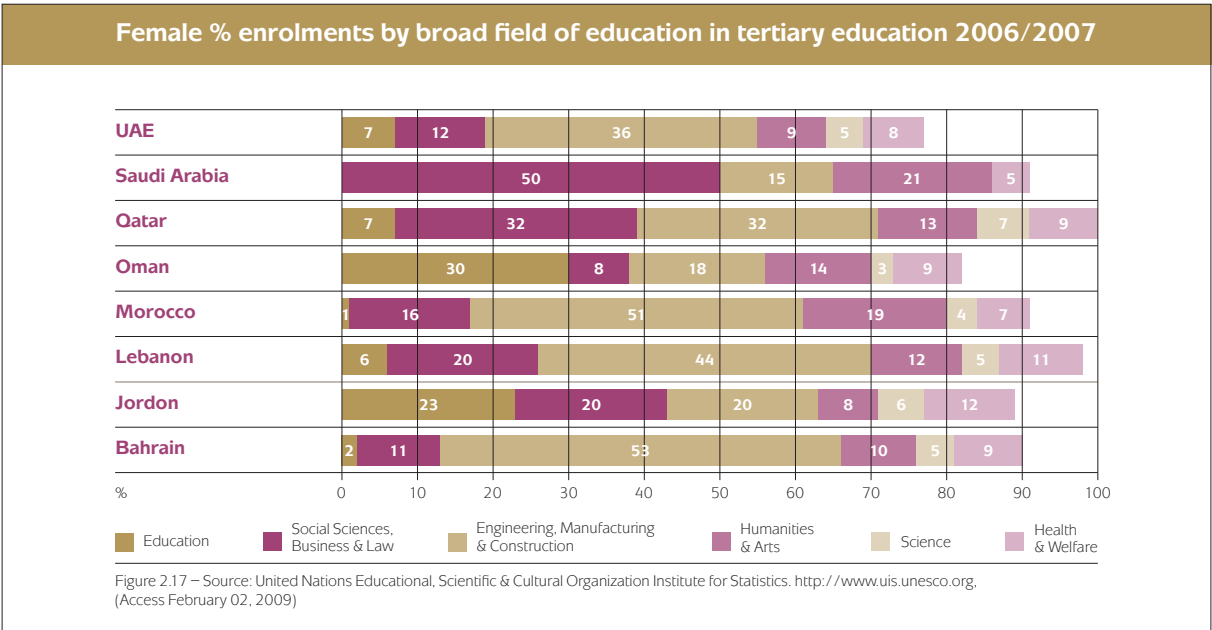
• Source: Katie Croake, Program Manager, Middle East & North Africa, National Democratic Institute (NDI), USA



The content of education is a major concern in female education, particularly with regard to furthering women's leadership. At the school level, there is considerable disparity in the kind of training courses girls and boys receive. Curricula for girls are designed to reflect their domestic responsibilities. They are often geared towards domestic subjects and may have levels of difficulty adjusted downward. On the tertiary level, women make their academic choices according to the likely ease of obtaining a future husband's permission to work. Another key consideration when making academic decisions is whether they will be able to reconcile work with family obligations in the future. Thus the choice of subjects tends to be made with a view to working part

time in the future, with little or no attention given to their career growth and leadership aspirations. Consequently, women in the MENA region tend to be channelled into subjects like the humanities, arts and social sciences, for which market demand is limited (see figure 2.17).

In Jordan, for example, the percentage of tertiary education students graduated in education was 100% women in 2005, while in Morocco 29% of the graduates in social science, business and law were women.²⁹ In recent years, more women are opting for science, engineering, business and law degrees, but their numbers are far fewer than those of men, which restricts their employability and potential to rise to leadership positions in these fields. An example is shown in



29. Education Digest. (2007). United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. This is the percentage of tertiary education students that graduate in the specified field and are females. It can be interpreted, for example, that 30% of the students graduating in "Science" are females.



figure 2.18, which demonstrates that the majority of Arab women researchers focus on non-science subjects (such as humanities and languages, sociology, political science, etc) as opposed to medical and/or environmental sciences.

While the education environment for women in the Arab world has progressed considerably, targeted efforts to build and enhance women's leadership capacity are still lacking. International best practices in pedagogy focus on the importance of group projects which allow students to learn how to work in teams and develop their leadership skills. These best practices emphasise the development of student councils, in which students gain a sense of responsibility, by participating in school governance and the decision-making process, and improve their public speaking, planning and organisational abilities. Student-initiated forums and extra-curricular activities also instil a sense of organisation and management among students. Teams and clubs for co-curricular activities, particularly for sports and debates, enhance leadership capacity, as they allow students to work in teams and adopt the role of team leaders. Opportunities to participate in forums and activities, such as the Model UN, represent another important step for team-work and leadership development.

International and regional exchange programmes for college and university students are employed by educational institutions in several countries. These exchange programmes enable students to hone their leadership skills, by raising their confidence and allowing them to face unfamiliar challenges. Erasmus – the European Commission's flagship programme for higher education students – is a key example that encourages mobility of college and university students within Europe.³⁰ Internships and mentorship programmes are also important in building leadership capacity. They allow students to gain practical and professional experience, raise their employability and develop realistic expectations about professional life.

Some efforts to incorporate leadership development in the educational system are being made in Arab countries. The activities of the International Association of Students in Economics and Business Management (AIESEC), which is an international, not for profit, organization run by students to discover and develop their potential, are transforming students into leaders through international exchange programmes. In the region, the AIESEC has programmes in Jordan, UAE, Qatar, Lebanon, Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Morocco.³¹ Individual governments are also undertaking initiatives, such as

scholarships for international education, which do not discriminate between men and women. However, these efforts are still piecemeal, and they have not been incorporated into the mainstream education system. Mentorship, career counselling and coaching programmes for female students, that can link existing and potential future Arab women leaders (i.e. Arab female students), are virtually non-existent in the region. Student councils and associations exist in some schools (mostly foreign or private), but are not a mandatory part of school governance in Arab countries. Sports teams, debate clubs and similar activities are restricted to a few schools, as a result of which leadership development for women remains restricted. The absence of these elements in the education system restricts not only leadership capacity of female students in the region, but also imposes a ceiling on their knowledge/perception of career choices and the development of their aspirations and vision for the future.

The Arab women leaders interviewed for this report confirm these trends in the region's educational environment. While believing that the role of education was central to their personal development, they feel that the education system is under-utilised. In addition, most Arab women leaders agree that education is only effective if combined with opportunities in the labour market and a favourable political environment. Unlocking the potential education can offer women in the Arab nations is an important mission for coming generations.

- 59% of the Arab women leaders surveyed consider education in their respective countries to be favourable for women striving for leadership.

A number of differences in the region were observed by those surveyed:

- In Tunisia and Morocco, the education systems are considered highly favourable.
- In the UAE and Jordan, half the respondents considered education systems to be favourable.
- In Lebanon and Bahrain, the education systems are considered favourable to a lesser degree.
- In Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the education systems were considered as unfavourable for women striving to attain leadership positions.

HEADLINE NEWS: In June 2008, initiated by the Dubai Women Establishment (DWE) and designed by the Mohammed Bin Rashid Programme for Leadership Development (MBRPLD), the UAE Women Leadership Development Programme (UAEWLDP) was launched, which is the first-ever comprehensive leadership development programme for UAE women nationals. MBRPLD developed UAEWLP's unique training module after more than a year of research work and consultations with experts from Asia, North America and Europe. The programme aims to ensure long-term systemised leadership development for women across society, lead change to suit the needs of the progressive and productive society, increase women leaders' personal and business impact, empower the Dubai government to successfully implement the Dubai Strategy Plan and secure a pipeline flow of Emirati women.

HEADLINE NEWS: In October 2008, the Bahrain Economic Development Board launched a programme to train 1,000 Bahraini youths in leadership skills. It will cost \$2.6 million and participants, aged 24-28, were selected to participate. The goal is to develop the capabilities of young Bahrainis preparing to take on management positions.

Challenges

Access to education and improvements in the education that is offered have improved dramatically. Only 37% of Arab women leaders surveyed perceive the educational environment in their respective countries to be unfavourable for women.

Saudi Arabia recently allocated SR11.8 billion (US\$3.1 billion) for education improvement, of which SR4.2 billion (US\$1.1 billion) is to improve the educational environment, SR3.58 billion (US\$954.6 million) for extra curricular activities, SR2.94 billion (\$784.8 million) for training and development of teachers and SR980 million (\$261.3 million) for curriculum development.³² With an increasing number of young people, and over 100 million jobs to create by 2020, governments across the Arab world realise that education is a key driver of socio-economic development. The UAE federal government has likewise earmarked Dh7.4 billion (\$2 billion) for education in 2009, with salaries, infrastructure and strategic initiatives recently undertaken by the ministry, accounting for the major share of the allocation.³³

In order for education to become a positive enabler of women's leadership, however, the following challenges must be addressed:

- **Illiteracy:** The rate of illiteracy in the Arab world is among the world's highest, when compared to other developing nations, and more than two-thirds of adult illiterates in the region are women. Low access to primary schools guarantees no access at all to secondary or tertiary education, which are key components on the path to leadership.
- **Quality of education:** The quality of education was repeatedly cited as a key challenge to women who aspire for leadership positions. Those surveyed complained that the Arab educational system has traditionally placed little value on innovation, critical thinking or problem solving, and many of those based in Gulf countries left the region altogether to study in foreign schools and universities. The most prevalent quality challenges can be summarised as follows:
 - Education does not encourage independent thinking or creativity.
 - There are major gaps between the quality of public and private sector education.
 - There is no link between the public and private sector and the education system, creating a skills gap.
 - Teachers must be better trained and engage in creative thinking with students.
 - There is a lack of leadership training. Few, if any, leadership programmes for young women exist in the Arab world.
 - The curriculum for girls and boys places heavy emphasis on domestic responsibilities for women and work responsibilities for men and boys.
 - Women tend to study social sciences, arts and humanities, making them less competitive in the labour market.
 - There is a lack of high calibre educational institutions.

"Hands-on-learning and critical thinking is vital for young women during their education."

HH Sheikha Hessa Bint Khalifa Alkhalifa
Executive Director, inJAz Bahrain

30. About Erasmus. Retrieved from <http://www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus-about-erasmus.htm?mtlink=zerasmus-homepage-mt-link-about-erasmus> on February 18, 2009.
31. AIESEC. See www.aiesec.org

32. Saudi students studying abroad to get 50pc more allowance, November 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.khaleejtimes.com> on November 20, 2008.
33. Shamaa, D. Education is the right investment, November 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.gulfnews.com> on November 20, 2008.



Legal framework: Promoting equality and ensuring equity

Overview

Around the world, globalisation and the trend towards modernisation has improved the legal framework as it pertains to women. The Arab world has not been an exception in this trend and regulatory changes which favour women in all aspects of their lives are being implemented in all Arab countries. While countries like Tunisia embraced these changes decades ago, other Arab countries are catching up. Emphasis is being placed on women’s personal, political and economic rights, and traditional laws, derived mainly from theological interpretations, are being modified to ensure these rights to Arab women.

“There are things that we do not like in our laws, but comparing current rules and regulations with those of the past five years is favourable.”

Dr. Rowaida al-Ma’aitah
Senator Upper House of Parliament, Jordan

Nevertheless, the influence of the legal system on women’s opportunities to attain leadership positions and succeed as capable leaders cannot be underestimated. It is critical to understand if the laws in place are favourable for women striving to access leadership positions. In addition, regional differences are key for evaluating how conducive the legal environment in different Arab countries is for advancing women’s leadership.

Women’s ambitions are dependant to a large extent on a country’s legal framework, which is indicative of how a country perceives gender equality. Out of the 22 countries of the Arab world, 18 have signed the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However, this is one of the ‘weakest links in the chain of international human rights law’, firstly because its implementation systems lack strength, and secondly because it allows states to enter reservations at the time of signing and ratification. Almost all Arab states entered reservations at the time of ratification (especially with regard to establishing the principle of gender equality), which casts doubt on their willingness to abide by the provisions of Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. Different countries in the region have justified their reservations with various arguments, the most common being (a) the contradiction of national legislation, and (b) conflict with the provisions of the Sharia (Islamic law).³⁴

Once again this is an area that struck a chord with the Arab women leaders.

- Although the legal environment emerged as the second most unfavourable enabler compared to all other enablers, the percentage of Arab women leaders who considered it as favourable was higher than those who considered it unfavourable. Accordingly, 46% considered the legal environment to be ‘favourable to very favourable’, while 42% considered it to be ‘unfavourable to very unfavourable’.

34. United Nations Development Programme. Arab Human Development Report 2005



In Focus
Arab Women’s Rights – Lessons from Tunisia and Morocco.

By: Dr. Mounira M. Charrad, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Texas at Austin, USA

The award-winning author has been studying women’s rights and the evolution of family law for the last half century in Morocco. In her research, Dr. Charrad has shown how different patterns of nation-building contributed to divergent interpretations of Islamic law, which led to the expansion of women’s rights in Tunisia, but not in Algeria and Morocco, at the end of French colonial rule.

In the Arab world in general, many women are struggling to change family law. A major issue they face is whether they can make decisions about their own personal life, such as in marriage and divorce, or whether the law places the power of decision in the hands of someone else, such as fathers, other relatives and husbands. As we know, there are many interpretations of the Sharia, both historically and today. A simple way to think about the law in our countries is that liberal and contemporary readings of the Sharia give women a degree of autonomy, whereas conservative interpretations deprive them of it.

My comments in the statement below are based on my research on Tunisia and Morocco. These two countries have made substantial reforms in family law. They have successfully expanded women’s rights in the family domain and by extension within society at large. We can draw lessons from their experiences.

Reforms in Tunisia started in 1956 with the adoption of the Code of Personal Status (CPS) and have continued at a good pace since then with subsequent amendments, all increasing women’s rights in the family. In Morocco, similar reforms did not occur until 2004 with the promulgation of a new Family Code. We should note that the new Code in Morocco came close to the Tunisian CPS but did not go quite as far in terms of being favourable to women. A common temptation is to see the Maghreb as a whole to be more liberal than the Mashreq because of the French influence. Yet, this view is misleading because it overlooks considerable differences within the Maghreb. Algerian women have been living for a long time with conservative family legislation and Moroccan women had to wait until 2004 to see significant changes in the law, half a century longer than women in Tunisia.

To understand what prompted the liberal reforms in Tunisia and Morocco, we have to consider the context of the 1950s in Tunisia and that of 2004 in Morocco. Different explanations apply to the two countries, with different implications for what women can or cannot attempt to replicate in other Arab countries today. In Tunisia, the reforms had much to do with the leadership of the nationalist movement and the kind of society that it wanted to create right after independence from French colonial rule in the 1950s. The CPS was part and parcel of the formation of a national state. Once the laws were in place, women’s rights advocates emerged in Tunisian society in large numbers in the 1980s. Nowadays, women are very active in protecting the rights that they have in family law and their personal status. For example, they disseminate information about the CPS, help less educated women with the application of the law, and generally watch over its implementation. They have also participated in national debates on amendments to the CPS from the 1980s to today.



Developments were quite different in Morocco in 2004. There, women's rights advocates played a key role in the transformation of the law. They organised themselves into associations. They worked within the culture and within an Islamic framework. Most of them avoided open confrontation with social and cultural norms. They used a gentle approach to mobilise women and voice their demands. They made statements such as "we are Muslim, we want to keep Islam, and we want an Islam that takes women into account." Some of them studied interpretations of the Sharia. They became well versed in religious doctrine and thus were able to discuss the religious texts with conservative men. The fact that some women did that kind of intellectual work was very important in the case of Morocco. Also, women leaders were in touch with a broad range of women whom they brought into the debate. Women from small towns or from underprivileged groups became involved. Finally, the King of Morocco was receptive to reform. For reasons too complex to summarise in this brief statement, he was open to the possibility of changing family law. The openness to change on the part of the King was a contributing factor, even though women's rights advocates were clearly instrumental in making the change happen.

The Tunisian model of the 1950s is unlikely to be replicated in other countries today. This was a particular moment in history when nationalists were committed to creating a new nation-state after colonial rule. Even when women were involved in national politics at that time, they were united with the men in fighting against colonisation rather than for gender equality. We cannot recreate these historical conditions. We can learn, however, from the Tunisian experience since the 1980s and from the reforms of 2004 in Morocco. Tunisian women today show us that, once reforms have been made, women's rights advocates can play a major role in protecting the reforms and preventing reversals. They can also be instrumental in keeping an eye on the application of the new laws.

In 2004 in Morocco, women's participation in public life was directly addressed by gender issues and women's rights in family law. The experience of Morocco teaches us some useful lessons. First, women can make a difference when they are involved in the public discourse on the law. There are constantly national and international debates going on. Women should be part of them. Second, women who have educated themselves in interpretations of the Sharia and the reading of religious texts are in a better position to construct convincing arguments in favour of reforms. This suggests that more women should have access to careers as lawyers and judges. Third, women's rights advocates are more likely to be effective if they reach out to a broad range of women in their country. Fourth, working within the system by respecting the Islamic tradition while demanding change increases chances of success. Although no country can ever duplicate the conditions of another, women leaders in the Arab world can learn from the experience of their counterparts in countries other than their own.



Given the scope of this report, the survey explores only those laws that affect women leaders.

What makes the study of the legal framework of Arab countries difficult is the fact that the laws are intertwined with religion, while the sections on Islamic law dealing with marriage and divorce were not codified until the twentieth century. Hence the context in which these laws were originally written must be taken into account, such as the fact that women have historically been perceived as the responsibility of their fathers or husbands rather than the responsibility of the state.

"When personal laws were drafted in the 50s, the position adopted by the legislator was that the male was considered an intermediate in the relationship between the woman (as a citizen) and the state. Personal status law was the first line of protection for women."

Reem Abu Hassan
General Director
Arab Centre for Development of Rule of Law and Integrity, Jordan

"The law was created by a man and therefore was custom-made for a man."

Safa Abdurrahman Al Hashem
Chairman & Managing Director
Advantage Consulting Company, Kuwait

• **Political rights:** The legislative framework of most countries in the MENA region guarantees women's political rights and stipulates the principle of gender equality in political participation (in electoral processes and the right to stand for public office). At this point in time, all Arab countries grant rights of political participation to their women. However, according to United Nations Development Programme, despite these legislative guarantees of women's right to political participation, the actual level of participation is limited, due to a number of reasons. Cultural and religious ideologies have not allowed for an environment that is conducive to women's active participation in politics. As a result, even when the legislative guarantees exist for women to participate in the political sphere, the actual rate of participation is low. This demonstrates that simply allowing women to be active in politics is a necessary but not sufficient condition for actual participation. Countries like Egypt, Jordan and Morocco have followed the example of Finland, Norway, France and Sweden in taking affirmative measures, by stipulating quotas for political party electoral lists. These countries have increased the ratio of women to men in parliament. While there is much debate regarding quotas and how they discriminate against men, they can serve as critical temporary measures to accelerate "de facto equality between men and women".³⁵

However, reality is changing on the ground, even in countries with the most restrictive policies towards women's participation. In Saudi Arabia, the appointment of a woman as deputy minister for education is indicative of the changing political environment. In addition, the Saudi Consultative Council, a traditionally all-male advisory council, now invites women to discuss issues related to Saudi women (e.g. the cost of marriage dowries, etc). Thus social transformation is resulting in the passage of laws that allow women to participate in the political sphere.

HEADLINE NEWS: On February 14, 2009, Saudi Arabia named a woman as Deputy Minister for Education - the most senior role ever held by a female in the kingdom. Norah al-Faiz, currently an official at the Saudi Institute for Public Administration, was named as the deputy minister responsible for women's education, during a reshuffle of the cabinet, military and judiciary.

HEADLINE NEWS: In February 2008, His Majesty the King of Bahrain, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, issued a royal decree naming Fatima Hubail as the third female judge in the country, after Ms. Muna Al Kawari and Dr. Duha Al Zayani.

HEADLINE NEWS: On August 2009, Morocco's Marrakesh elects first women mayor Fatima Zahra Mansouri, obtaining the second elected female mayor in the history of Morocco.

• **Personal Laws:** Personal status laws in the MENA region are derived mainly from theological interpretations, the traditional cultural gender paradigm, and judgments issued by men tend to be conservative and gender biased. Thus culture becomes the primary driver of the legal orientation of laws in the region, while religion becomes the main vehicle through which cultural values are translated into the legal framework. In states such as Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, the personal status code is derived from theological jurisdiction, and matters are left to the judiciary ("religious judges" in the case of Saudi Arabia), which is heavily influenced by the conservative viewpoint of classic Islamic jurisprudence. However, change is gradually taking place. Egypt is redrawing the personal status code to make it more favourable to women. Family law was promulgated in Qatar in 2007, giving women more rights in marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance.³⁶

35. United Nations Development Programme. Arab Human Development Report 2005.
36. United Nations Development Programme – POGAR. Gender and Citizenship Initiative: Women in Public Life- Arab Countries. Retrieved on 18th February, 2009 from: <http://gender.pogar.org/countries/country.asp?cid=15>



Case Study

Modawana

Morocco

The Moroccan Family Law (Modawana) was passed in 2004. The law represents a structural change that serves as a model for other countries across the region by introducing a range of women’s rights with respect to divorce and family responsibilities. The new law is the product of many years of debate by religious leaders, two reigning monarchs, grassroots men and women activists, journalists, and political and non-governmental organization (NGO) leaders. It comes in response to women’s demands to promote their rights, safeguard their children and their property, and reduce the discrimination and marginalization that prevent their full participation in society.

Since the introduction of the new law, women have been able to retain custody of their children even upon remarrying or moving away while adult woman became entitled to self-guardianship, rather than depend on the guardianship of a male family member. The new Modawana incorporates the following reforms:

Equality

- Family is placed under the joint responsibility of the husband and the wife;
- Equality with respect to the rights and obligations of both parties;
- The adult woman is entitled to self-guardianship, rather than that of a male family member, and may exercise it freely and independently;
- The minimum age of marriage is 18 for both men and women;
- Possibility for the grandchildren on the daughter’s side to inherit from their grandfather just like the grandchildren on the son’s side; and
- Both girls and boys can freely choose their custodian at the age of 15.

Divorce

- The right to divorce is a prerogative of both men and women, exercised under judicial supervision; and
- The principle of divorce by mutual consent is established and under judicial supervision.

Polygamy

- Polygamy is subject to the judge’s authorization and to stringent legal conditions, making the practice nearly impossible;
- The woman has the right to impose a condition in the marriage contract requiring that her husband refrain from taking other wives; and
- If there is no pre-established condition, the first wife must be informed of her husband’s intent to remarry, the second wife must be informed that her husband-to-be is already married, and moreover, the first wife may ask for a divorce due to harm suffered.

Enforcement of Law

- The Family Law assigns a key role to the judiciary in upholding the rule of law and provides for the public prosecutor to be a party to every legal action involving the enforcement of Family Law stipulations.

Children’s Rights

- The woman is given the possibility of retaining custody of her child even upon remarrying or moving out of the area where her husband lives; and
- The child’s right to acknowledgment of paternity is protected in the case that the marriage has not been officially registered.

Source:

- Morocco Adopts Landmark Family Law Supporting Women’s Equality (2004). Women’s Learning Partnership. Retrieved on Nov. 16, 2008 from <http://www.learningpartnership.org/advocacy/alerts/morocco0204>
- Comparison of former Moroccan Family Law with the new provisions, as prepared by WLP’s partner, l’Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM). Retrieved on Nov. 16, 2008 from <http://www.learningpartnership.org/docs/moroccoamlaw.pdf>



The case of Morocco demonstrates the importance of women’s movements in furthering the cause of legal reform favoring women in the Arab world. These movements combined with consistent state willingness, have resulted in progressive policies in Tunisia and Morocco, and contributed to a favorable legal environment for women. The Maghreb’s affinity with the Euro-Mediterranean region has been a contributing factor in the region’s success in improving women’s status, as guidelines for the improvement of women’s status and situation in the Euro- Mediterranean area were developed by the inclusion of specific recommendations in the Five-year Work Programme adopted at the Barcelona Summit of Heads of State and Government, in November 2005.³⁷

Regarding women’s leadership in particular, the synergies between the different categories in the legal framework are important. Family law can influence economic legislation, as women are sometimes considered legal minors. In some cases women’s ability to travel alone and associate with unrelated men (or associate with them only through a male representative) are restricted, limiting their sphere of activity. This is particularly challenging for women entrepreneurs and political leaders, as interaction with the opposite sex and independent travel are unavoidable. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the legal environment not only affects women leaders in the region, but Arab women in general.

• **Labour laws:** Many Arab countries ensure legal protection for working women through provisions

regarding labour legislation. In Jordan and Egypt this protection is stipulated in the national constitutions, while explicit provisions prohibiting gender discrimination in the workplace are part of Tunisia’s labour laws. Tunisia, Egypt, Kuwait, Morocco and Bahrain guarantee women’s right to maternity and childcare leave. The Jordanian labour law provides a male/female worker with the right to take extended leave to accompany his/her spouse, if the spouse has moved to a new workplace located in another part of the country or abroad.³⁸

Several Arab countries have restrictive labour laws, which are not conducive to the development of Arab women’s leadership. In Saudi Arabia, women are prohibited from participating in every field of work, other than female education and health (doctors/nurses). Saudi laws also assert that strict segregation of the sexes be observed in the workplace. Change is taking place in Saudi Arabia with the formulation of a Women Committee in the Council of Saudi Chambers,³⁹ that aims to increase Saudi women’s participation in the labour market and to widen areas of opportunity and employment for these women.

National legislation on equal remuneration varies between Arab countries. Kuwait, Libya, Syria and Iraq provide for equality in remuneration in the same job, while others like Bahrain have no legal provision for this. Saudi Arabia and Qatar only guarantee equality in remuneration in the civil service sector.⁴⁰ This provides disincentives for women striving for leadership positions and for all working women in general.

Legal restrictions on women's work & mobility in Arab countries, 2003			
Country	Restrictions on time and hours of work	Restrictions on types of work	Restrictions on mobility (husband or guardians permission required for travel or passport)
Algeria	Yes	Yes	No
Bahrain	Yes	Yes	No
Egypt	Yes	Yes	No (as of 2000)
Jordan	Yes	Yes	No (as of 2003)
Kuwait	Yes	Yes	No (as of 2009)
Lebanon	No	Yes	No
Libya	Yes	Yes	No
Oman	Yes	Yes	Yes
Morocco	Yes	Yes	No
Qatar	-	-	Yes
Saudi Arabia	Yes	Yes	Yes
Syria	Yes	Yes	No(a)
Tunisia	Yes	No	No
United Arab Emirates	Yes	Yes	No
West Bank & Gaza	Yes	Yes	No (as of 2003)
Yemen	Yes	Yes	No

Table 2.6 – (a) A man can obtain a letter from the Ministry of Interior to present to Immigration Control to prevent his wife or female relative from leaving the country. Source: The World Bank, Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa, 2004.

37. European Commission, (2005) EuroMed Five Year Work Programme.
38. United Nations Development Programme. Arab Human Development Report 2005.
39. BBC. Saudi women advise on marriage crisis. Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle-east/1735965.stm> on February 17, 2009.
40. United Nations Development Programme. Arab Human Development Report 2005.



Thus, while the Arab region has come a long way in establishing gender equality in labour laws, there are still issues that need to be addressed. A large part of the female working population is employed on a temporary contract-basis, implying that the labour laws do not protect them. A considerable proportion of the female working population in the agricultural sector or is involved in domestic service, which has no legal protection. In some countries, various positions of leadership (mayors, governors, university deans, etc) are either not accessible for women, or are exclusively accessible (posts in certain ministries cannot be granted to women in Morocco by law). Sexual harassment in the workplace also exists, as it is not punishable by law unless it overlaps with sex crimes that are punishable under Arab penal codes.

In addition, it is against the law in some Middle Eastern countries for women to act as judges and, in some cases, even as public prosecutors. (See table 2.7) In countries where it is not illegal, women can face numerous restrictions in their judicial capacity and do not attain prominent and key positions in higher courts. In some regions, where there may not even be a professional group of judges; instead, self-appointed religious or tribal figures may “legislate” and adjudicate locally. Most of these traditional adjudication systems exclude women. Another issue is that male judges may have enormous arbitrary power in applying and interpreting the law. The lack of female presence in the courts gives women limited access to the legal system, especially regarding issues directly related to their lives, that is, family and personal laws.⁴¹

“I respect our Saudi Government as they wish for women to be in respected positions. They are trying to implement that by offering job opportunities in the most suitable environments, and not to be in a position where women’s progress is slow and useless.”

Rajaa Momana
General Manager
Future Institute of Higher Training for Ladies, Saudi Arabia

Results of the Arab Women Leadership Outlook study indicate that the legal structure is considered as being highly favourable towards women in Tunisia, and to a lesser extent in Morocco and the UAE. Strong women’s movements in Tunisia and Morocco have helped facilitate women’s access through economic and political empowerment, as well as gender equality within the legal system. North Africa’s close proximity and affinity to Europe has also played a role in the development of progressive policies towards women. The legal structures in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Lebanon and Egypt, however, were considered by respondents as generally unfavourable for women.

HEADLINE NEWS: On March 2009, Judge Ebtisam Al Bedwawi was appointed as the first national female judge in Dubai and the second across the UAE.

HEADLINE NEWS: In September 2008, Yemeni women refused to accept a new format for marriage contracts that did not require the wife’s signature but only the consent of the husband or guardian. The chairwoman of the Yemeni Women’s Union, Ramzia Al Eryani, has demanded that the Ministry of Justice nullify the law and replace it with a provision for the wife’s signature.

Challenges

“All Arab countries, in general, should update and amend their laws and regulations periodically to accommodate for evolving social developments.”

Lena Al Rahbany
Economic & Business Editor
Al Hayat Pan-Arab newspaper, Lebanon

What are the legal hurdles that Arab women leaders encounter on their path to leadership? Why is the legal framework considered as one of the least favourable enablers for Arab women leaders?

Limitations of women’s participation in the judiciary	
Country	Limitations
Bahrain	In June 2006, Mona al-Kawari was appointed to the High Civil Court as Bahrain’s first female judge. A second, H.E. Dr. Duha al-Zayani, was appointed to the Constitutional Court in 2007, and Fatima Hubail was appointed in 2008 as a Lower Criminal Court judge. In all, there are seven women in the judiciary and none in the Sharia courts, which hear the cases that most often and most directly affect women.
Kuwait	There remain prohibited from surving as judges.
Oman	Customs and traditions forbid women from acting as judges.
Qatar	There are no female judges in Qatar, the result of social rather than legal norms.
Saudi Arabia	Women are currently not allowed to be judges or to act as lawyers..
UAE	In early 2008, UAE law was amended to allow women to serve as federal prosecutors and judges, and in March, Kholoud Al-Dhahiri was appointed as the first female judge in the Abu Dhabi Justice Department.

Table 2.7 – Source: Freedom House, Women’s Right in the Middle East and North Africa Report, 2009.

41. Global Justice Center: Women’s Unequal Access to Justice in the Middle East.

It is clear that the legal framework is difficult to navigate. Change has in some cases been effected only by the powerful persuasion of women’s groups. But there are some fundamental challenges that must be overcome before there is broad-based change. Most women agree that family protection laws are very weak for women across the region. Given the focus of the report on leadership development, these laws will not be directly addressed. Arab women leaders reported the following legal challenges:

- **Personal laws affecting women leaders:** Mobility laws, or a woman’s inability to travel alone or to associate with unrelated men, as in Saudi Arabia, are considered limiting. This is particularly challenging for business women, entrepreneurs and politicians campaigning for office.
- **Participation in the legal framework:** High judicial positions remain out of reach for women in certain countries. A number of women leaders stressed the need for more women in the legal debate to help improve laws and facilitate the advancement of women.

“The problem is not with religion, but with how the legislator interprets religion.”

Reem Abu Hassan
General Director
Arab Centre for Development of Rule of Law and Integrity, Jordan

- **Political Rights:** Cultural ideologies have not been conducive to women’s participation in the political arena. Even when a woman’s right to participate in the political sphere is guaranteed, the actual rate of participation is very low. Women interviewed said that the legal framework must move beyond lifting restrictions on women’s political participation and take affirmative action measures similar to the quotas introduced in Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. At the same time, laws on political parties are not always fair to women, as in Lebanon where women are subjected to limitations in the electoral process.
- **Labour laws:** When establishing their own businesses, women are confronted with challenges in a number of countries. In addition, national legislation on equal remuneration and access to leadership positions varies between countries.
- **Inconsistency:** The majority of women leaders also agree that while countries may have advanced legislation, the problem lies in the implementation of the laws. Despite the fact that Sharia law – the body of Islamic religious law and the legal framework in which public and private aspects of life are regulated – contains many safeguards for women, most of which are not being implemented. Although most Arab states have signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All

Forms of Discrimination, they impose many reservations based on the fact that the articles concerned contradict national legislation or conflict with the Sharia law.

- **Interpretation:** Vast numbers of Arab women leaders view the absence of a clear relationship between women and the state as being the underlying source of the problem. Most of the laws were drafted by legislators in a very different cultural and historical setting. Several decades ago, it was believed that the family would protect women, but that is no longer the case. According to most Arab women leaders, the benefits, rights and obligations of women should be stipulated in a law that takes into account that times have changed and society has evolved.

“If Sharia laws are interpreted correctly, they would emerge as the biggest support for women.”

Awatif Murad
Owner & General Principal
My Little House & The House of Knowledge Schools Group, Saudi Arabia

Religion: Recognising the power of women in Islam

“Arab women leaders have a sense of pride of their culture, religion and values. There is no question that Islam calls for respect for women. At the time of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) women were business leaders and used to fight in wars alongside the Prophet, nursing the wounded.”

Hala Badri
Executive Vice President – Brand and Communications Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company, PJSC, UAE

“Religion is a personal relationship between me and God. It should never affect the way I judge and treat other people with different beliefs.”

Anissa Hassouna
Director General
Egypt's International Economic Forum, Egypt

“We cannot change our society unless society recognises women leaders - but in an Islamic framework.”

Rajaa Momana
General Manager,
Future Institute of Higher Training for Ladies, Saudi Arabia

Overview

Does religion have a role to play in promoting women's leadership? What perceptions do women have toward religion with regard to their career choices? Has religion influenced the choices of women leaders in attaining positions of leadership?

Religion is part of the very fabric of Arab life. It plays a pivotal role in constructing women's position in the Arab world and is a key determinant of the cultural norms and gender relations underpinning this position. Women in the Arab world hold a positive view of Islam, the religion of the majority in the region. Drawing from the examples of Prophet Mohammed's (Peace Be Upon Him) wife Khadija bint Khuwaylid, who was a successful and powerful businesswoman, Arab women see Islam as a source of empowerment for Muslim women. The code of modesty suggested by Islam is perceived in a positive light, as it is seen as a source of advancement that allows women to participate in public life as long as they adhere to the code. As a result, most Arab women leaders interviewed agree that Islam is on the whole pro-women. Arab women mention that Islam embraced openness toward women's empowerment. They are all unswervingly proud of who they are, and religion is a large part of this. They are proud of their religion and what it brings to their lives, and believe that public participation of women is not disallowed in Islam, as long as it is in accordance with Islamic norms (pertaining mostly to modesty).

Nevertheless, most Arab women leaders agree that some interpretations of Islam by certain movements are

far from female-friendly. These movements, which have gained momentum in the last decade, due to the rise of Islamic radicalism around the world, have interpreted Quranic texts and Hadith (the sayings of Prophet Mohammed, Peace Be Upon Him) in a way that insinuates the inferiority of women and supports the segregation of the sexes between different societal spheres (the public sphere for the man, the private sphere for the woman). United Nations Development Programme has done extensive research on these movements and the impact of varying interpretations of Islam on women in the Arab world for the Arab Human Development Report 2005. However, this report will not enter into an in-depth analysis or debate in this regard, as it would not contribute to understanding the status of Arab women's leadership from the perspective of Arab women leaders themselves.

Thus, from the trends identified in the interviews, it would not be incorrect to conclude that it is religious interpretation and the manipulation of religious texts, and not religion per se, that restricts women leadership in the Arab world. Most Arab women leaders interviewed agreed in fact that if Islam is interpreted progressively, it can be highly favourable to the advancement of Muslim women.

- Only 25% found the religious environment of their countries to be favourable when it comes to accessing leadership positions. However, 29% of women found it to have no effect, and 44% found the religious environment to be 'unfavourable to very unfavourable'.

Islam does not discourage women from working but encourages them to be guided by a certain value system and to adopt leadership positions.

“The Quran had a great influence in my chosen career and my current role. There are specific verses in the Quran on how and why man should take care of the environment, on how we are called upon to be stewards of the land, and on our duty to provide for the next generation.”

Habiba Al Marashi
Chairperson, Emirates Environmental Group, UAE

Arab women leaders were asked if religion influenced their career choices, specifically in their accession to positions of leadership. Many agree that the misinterpretation of religion has often led to certain obstacles. That said, even Islamist political parties have promoted women members as parliamentary candidates across the region. While the majority of Arab women leaders in the UAE found the religious environment to be favourable to accessing leadership positions in their country, in both Morocco and Tunisia the religious environment was perceived as having no impact on women's careers. The majority of those surveyed in

Jordan, Lebanon, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia found the religious environment to be unfavourable for women striving for positions of leadership.

Challenges

“At the time of its revelation, Islam's view of the status of women was revolutionary. Under Islam, women enjoyed several rights, the most pertinent of which is the right to own property, undertake trade and engage in professions. If there are any inhibitions, they are the result of culture and gender bias.”

Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani
Founder and Chairman, Arab International Women's Forum, UK

As stated above, 44% of those surveyed perceive the religious environment to be 'unfavourable to very unfavourable' towards women's leadership. The following religious challenges were cited by women leaders in numerous professions in the region:

- **Interpretation:** Respondents cite religious interpretation as the most important challenge. In many respects, Islam is a faith that can be adapted to every circumstance and sometimes portrayed in a regressive way, while at other times, it is portrayed quite progressively. Many Arab women leaders believe that certain movements have interpreted the Quran too rigidly, causing numerous restrictions, when it comes to freedom of expression and women's rights. In some cases, the precedence of culture over religion has provided for assumptions that have no roots in the Quran or in the authenticated practices of Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him).
- **Participation in the religious debate:** The lack of women's participation in the religious debate has also been cited as a major challenge and has, to a large extent, led to further misconceptions about a woman's role in society.

“I believe we need a lot of educated women in Sharia. Currently, the field is dominated by men who consequently address issues from a male point of view.”

Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh
Senator & Secretary General,
National Council for Family Affairs, Jordan

It is important to note that, although the religious environment is considered as a barrier, it was cited by 29% of those surveyed, as having no effect on women's access to leadership. For these women, challenges are not derived from the religious environment, but from the cultural fabric of society.



Case Study

Murchidat Program, Dar Al Haditha Al Hassania
A Pioneering Program for Female Preachers

Morocco

The Murchidat (female preachers) program was launched in 2005 by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs in Morocco, in which women were permitted to obtain a religious education and become certified preachers. The program was created as a vanguard in Morocco's fight against the slide towards Islamic extremism, to promote the 'true face of Islam' and foster a moderate interpretation of Islam.

About the programme

- Each year 50 women preachers are trained for 12 months by 14 teachers in 3 semesters.
- Candidates must have an undergraduate degree and be able to recite at least half the Quran, and be under 40.
- Classes cover: the Quran, Fekeh, Sunna, the History of Islam, Geography, Arabic, a foreign language, Media, History, other religions, cultures and Sociology.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs finances the programme with scholarships of 2,000 dirhams (\$190) for each Murchida and pays them 5,000 dirhams (\$560) a month once they graduate.

Murchidat's responsibilities

- These religious guides will be in charge of leading religious discussions, giving lessons on Islam, giving moral support to people in difficulty, and guiding the faithful toward a tolerant Islam.
- They will give literacy lessons and contribute to the cultural and social activities in mosques.
- They are not authorised to lead prayers or hold the post of Imam.
- The Ministry of Islamic Affairs sent 9 Murchidat and 176 Imams to preach to Moroccan communities in France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Switzerland, Canada and the UK in 2008 during Ramadan.

Source:

- Data retrieved on Oct. 15, 2008 from www.islamonline.net/serivet/Satellite?c=ArticleA_C&cid=1217798772995&pagename=Zone-Arabic- News/NWALayout
- Data retrieved on Oct. 15, 2008 from www.islam-moroc.gov.ma/ar/detail.aspx?id=571&z=117&s=102
- Obelhassan. Moroccan Women. (2006). Retrieved on Oct. 15, 2008 on <http://obelhassan.blogspot.com/2006/12/moroccan-women-31.html>
- Chakir, M. Morocco women preachers to teach tolerant Islam. (2006). Retrieved on Oct.15, 2008 from www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2006%5C04%5C29%5Cstory_29-4-2006_pg4_13
- Morocco introduces women preachers. (2006). Retrieved on Oct. 15, 2008 from <http://forums.marokko.nl/archive/index.php/t-915420.html>



Culture: Breaking the barriers

"It is essential to change the mentality, not only with men but with the societies at large and offer a woman the opportunities she equally deserves."

Nabila Freidji
Chief Executive Officer, Cash One, Morocco

Overview

To what extent does culture in the Arab world impact on women striving for positions of leadership? How can certain cultural norms benefit women?

Culture, defined as the attitudes and behavioural characteristics of a given society, has a dual yet equal effect on the empowerment of women leaders across the Arab region. On the one end it entails unique norms that enable women to progress in their career, while on the other it may act as a barrier. Although each country has its own distinct cultural fabric, certain common features can be observed across the region. The traditional gender paradigm in the Arab world determines gender roles and power dynamics in and outside the household. This paradigm is based on the notion that (a) men and women differ biologically and their biological differences define their social functions, (b) men and women bear different responsibilities and, as such, are complements to each other, and (c) these responsibilities are associated with a different, but equitable, set of rights. The paradigm is based on the following elements:

- Centrality of the family, as opposed to the individual, making family the primary building block of society. This value placed on the family and the separation of roles between men and women implies that a woman's primary priority should be the family, and her economic participation will depend on her ability to combine work with family. For example, in Arab countries where women's hours of work are not regulated by law, women face pressure from their families to avoid working long hours and to take up part-time work instead.
- Establishment of the man as the sole breadwinner and head of the household, which in some Arab countries is codified by the law. This cultural value establishes the position of women and children as needy of protection, implying that women cannot and need not provide for themselves. A woman's participation in the workforce has also been viewed as the inability of the man to provide for her and the family, putting the man's honour and reputation at stake.

As a result of these cultural stereotypes that assign different roles to the two sexes, women face family and societal pressure (including pressure from other women in the family and/or social circle) for early marriages and

childbearing. Given the established position of the man as the sole bread earner, early marriages and child-bearing responsibilities restrict women's participation outside the private sphere. Thus, the traditional gender paradigm is a serious constraint faced by Arab women on their journey towards leadership, as it discourages women's participation in economic and/or political activity, which is a core requirement for leadership to flourish. However, the strength of these cultural norms varies across the region. Women in Tunisia and Morocco, which embraced progressive policies towards women's rights and education in the 1950s and 1960s, do not face the kind of cultural challenges faced by women in other countries of the region.⁴²

"The gender biased distribution of household chores, is the biggest obstacle for career women in Morocco. However, as a result of the country's progressive women's rights, there has been a visible cultural shift in the mindset of Moroccans even in the rural areas. With that said, there are still major challenges that exist in the implementation of these laws."

Latifa Akharbach
Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Morocco

On the other hand, certain cultural practices in the Arab world can also be seen in a positive light with regard to leadership. The joint family system, whereby the newly married couple lives with the extended family, is common in the Arab world. Consequently, women tend to have support of other family members in the day-to-day management of the home and raising children. This sharing of responsibilities implies that the family unit provides the infrastructure to support working mothers, thus allowing them to participate in the public sphere. Other cultural traits, such as emphasis on a modest dress code, respect for women and special privileges reserved for women are viewed as a source of empowerment for women participating in economic and political activities.

The Arab women leaders interviewed agreed that culture has both a positive and negative role to play in furthering women's leadership in the region.

- While 45% of Arab women leaders found the cultural environment to be favourable to very favourable for women's access to leadership, 41% considered it to be unfavourable to very unfavourable.

Although the sample size per country was not large enough to give a clear picture by nation, a few regional trends emerged from the survey. According to women leaders in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Morocco, the cultural environment was perceived to be most unfavourable. In Lebanon and Tunisia, however, the cultural environment was considered most favourably.

42. World Bank. (2004) Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa.



With regards to the cultural norms that have helped Arab women leaders, many believe that women have benefited from the support system provided by their families. The following cultural traits have also contributed to the success of Arab women leaders:

- Respect for women
- Modest dress-code
- Support system from family
- Special privileged systems for women in society
- Favourable HR policies toward working mothers
- Financial support and support system from family

Challenges

“I had to understand the Middle-Eastern men’s mentality and psychology and to deal with them accordingly, while observing our Arabic Islamic culture.”

Afnan Al Zayani
President & Proprietor, Al Zayani Commercial Services W.L.L, Bahrain

Despite its generally positive role, Arab culture can still hinder women’s access to leadership positions. What negative cultural pressures do women face on their path to leadership in the Arab world?

As seen throughout the report, this may differ from country to country but, for the most part, cultural stereotypes, patriarchal systems and conservative trends have built strong barriers against women’s participation in society. Set this against the achievements of the women who were surveyed and it is clear that their drive and passion has been essential in their rise to the top.

As discussed earlier, Arab society places more emphasis on communities and families than on the individual. The path toward self-development and independence is therefore much more difficult for women confronted by cultural backlashes for being perceived as sacrificing their family life.

The cultural pressures identified by Arab women leaders across countries and professions can be summarised as follows:

- **Pressure to get married:** According to 67% of those surveyed, the pressure to get married is considered the

highest obstacle for career advancement. However, the age at which women get married has increased from age 20 in the 1970s, to an average age of 24 in 2007.⁴³ The exception to this rule is Lebanon, where pressure to get married is not at all seen as an obstacle.

- **Pressure not to travel and not to work long hours:** 60% of those surveyed cite pressure not to travel and 55% cite pressure not to work long hours as major challenges for women. The pressure not to work long hours is pronounced in the UAE, Bahrain and Jordan, while it is hardly considered an issue for women in Lebanon, Tunisia and Morocco. The pressure not to travel is considered an obstacle for women across the region, particularly for women in Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Morocco.

- **Pressure not to continue higher education:** 80% of respondents did not perceive the pressure not to continue higher education as an obstacle. A significantly small number of those surveyed perceive it to be a major challenge, however, especially in Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

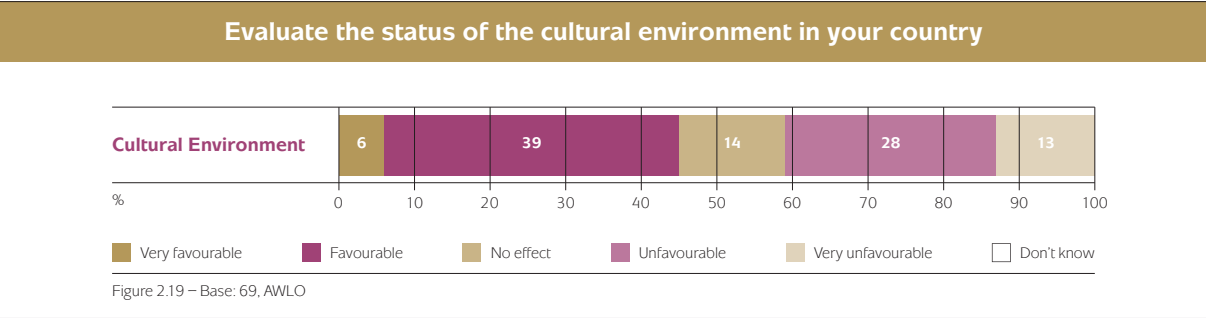
- **Pressure to stay at home and pressure to not work with males:** 68% of respondents do not consider the pressure to stay at home as an obstacle, and 66% do not consider any pressure from working with men. The exception is Saudi Arabia, where the legal system prohibits men and women from working together, a major challenge for women wishing to advance in their careers.

Media and perceptions: Redefining the stereotypes

Overview

How are Arab women leaders perceived in society? How can one compare the perceptions of Arab women leaders to that of male leaders? Has the media strengthened or hindered Arab society’s image of women leaders?

Positive examples of women in positions of authority, who are serving capably as leaders, have some influence on societal biases and are serving to counteract stereotypes.⁴⁴ With regard to vehicles of perception and



43. Livani, T. (2007) Middle East & North Africa, Gender Overview, The World Bank Group.
44. Freedom House. (2005) Women’s Rights in the Middle East and North Africa.

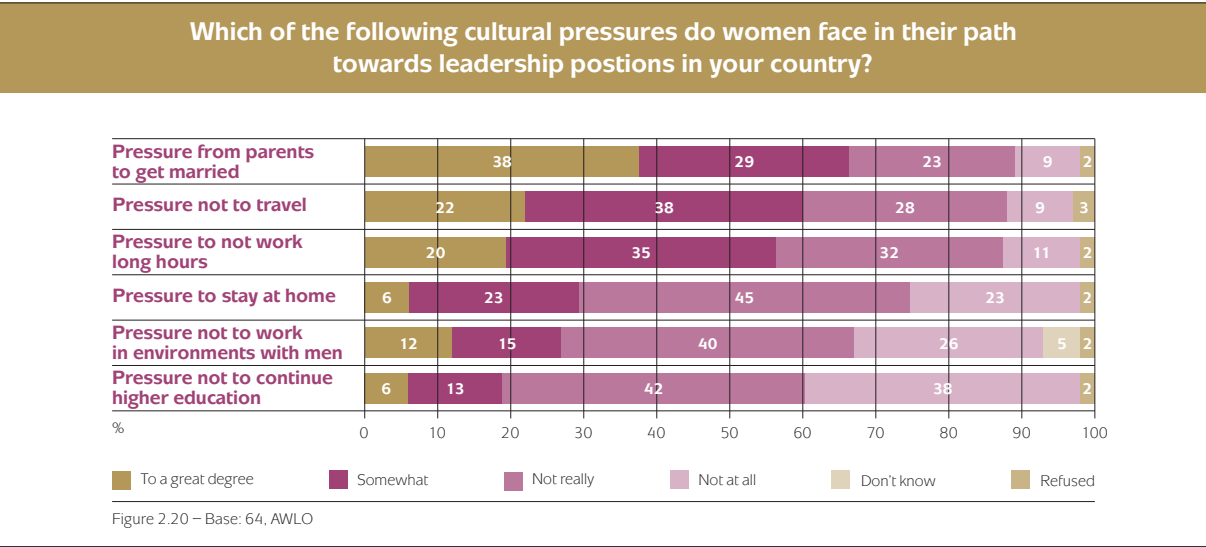


image projection, it is important to understand the crucial role played by the Arab media. Traditionally, the region’s media has portrayed stereotypical images of Arab women. These stereotypes have either emphasised the role of women as housewives and mothers, through soap operas and drama serials, or have depicted women as physical bodies and mere commodities, through indecent advertisements and/or video clips.⁴⁵

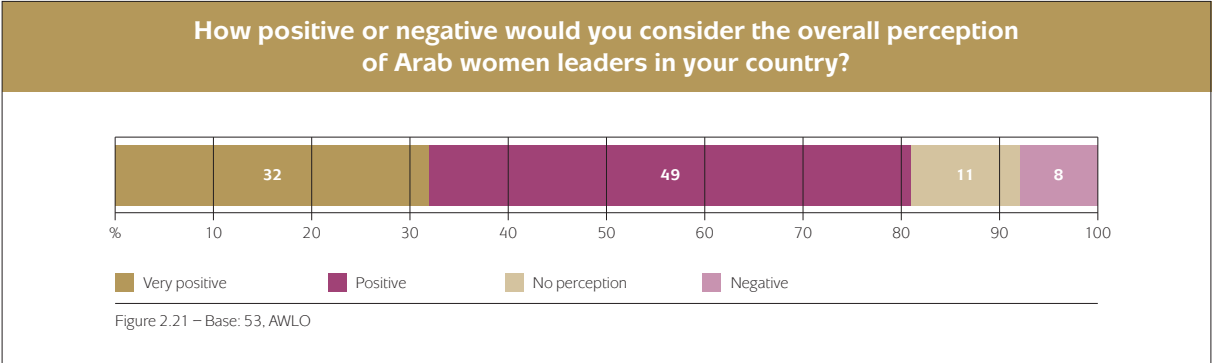
However this perception is changing with the increased participation and representation of women in the media. A growing number of Arab women presenters, who are highly educated and professional, are being seen on TV channels around the region, making a positive impact on the image of Arab working women, especially those employed in the media. In addition, while they still face traditional hurdles regarding late working hours and interaction with the general public, Arab women journalists are also growing in number. These journalists are increasingly focusing on women’s issues in the region and are writing to promote the image of the modern, non-stereotypical Arab woman. Even countries, that have traditionally adopted a conservative approach to women’s entry into the field of media, are altering their stand to be more inclusive of women. A recent competition for the production of films in Saudi Arabia, for example, allowed female college students to produce films revolving around the challenges facing Saudi women and their dreams and aspirations. This competition, launched by Al Aan TV, will allow Saudi girls to engage in media work through free one-year training provided to the producers of the films selected by Al Aan TV.⁴⁶ Thus more and more women are participating in the media around the world. This will result in a more realistic and less stereotypical image of Arab women being projected through the media.

Arab media is increasingly showcasing successful women leaders in the region, which is generating a positive image of women participating in the economic and political sphere. Arab women leaders themselves are employing digital media to promote a balanced image of Arab women.

The Arab women leaders interviewed agreed to this gradually changing perception of women leaders in the Arab world. When asked to comment on the image of women leaders in their respective countries, a high 81% of respondents suggest that Arab women leaders are on the whole perceived positively. 32% of the total respondents perceive the image of women to be very positive, while only 8% considered it to be negative. For the Arab women leaders addressed in this study, the importance of communicating their achievements to help other Arab women gain the confidence to follow their own dreams cannot be underestimated.

Recent initiatives, like those introduced by HM Queen Rania of Jordan, have made marked progress in the way Arab women use the media. In an effort to dispel negative associations of women and to encourage dialogue, she communicates some of her messages through “YouTube,” the popular video-sharing website where people can share and upload videos. Many of those surveyed discuss major progress in the manner in which Arab women are represented in the media. While in the 1980s, very few women were represented in the media, the number has increased significantly from the 1990s onward. Women are now represented in commercials, soap operas and television shows and play a major role in the media industry as broadcasters, anchors and editors. Arab women leaders are also represented across the print media via a number of

45. United Nations Development Programme. Arab Human Development Report 2005.
46. Al Aan Channel fulfils Saudi girls dream in entering in media field, Retrieved on 18th February, 2009 from <http://www.ameinfo.com/185230.html>



acclaimed publications, such as Arabian Business and Forbes Arabia. Therefore most Arab women leaders consider the media an enabler.

Although 59% of respondents consider the perception of women leaders to be favourable in accessing leadership, most Arab women leaders suggest that the general image of women portrayed in the media, primarily television, can be defined by three stereotypes: beautiful icons, helpless and emotional victims and reproachfully strong and career-oriented professionals.

Challenges

“Society does not believe in women.”
Dr. Aisha Abbas Natto
Chairman of the Board, Eye 2 Eye Optics, Saudi Arabia

“Ten years ago, when I travelled to Europe to meet with my suppliers, they used to ask me whether I was really the CEO. The problem is not only in the Arab world, but all around the world.”

Leila Khaïat
Chief Executive Officer, Plastiss, Tunisia

“The majority of TV channels are owned by politicians who want all the media exposure for themselves and not for Lebanese women. Unfortunately, the media is too intricately tied to politics.”

Ghada Eid
Editor and Presenter of ‘Al Fasad’ programme, Al Jadeed TV, Lebanon

Despite the considerable advances outlined above, Arab women leaders agree that negative stereotypes against them are still prevalent. If a woman is a high achiever in her work place, she tends to be perceived generally as negligent towards her family, and if a woman is assertive, she is considered difficult to work with.

Most of those surveyed believe that the media should play a key role in helping to dispel negative associations of women. Arab women leaders addressed the following challenges with respect to the media:

- Arab women leaders perceive the media to be largely controlled by men and that women are often assigned secondary roles as a result. Women’s power to influence

is further challenged by the financial resources and technical training required to enter the industry.

- Arab women leaders believe that the media places too much emphasis on women’s beauty, rather than her capabilities. This is very much the case in Lebanon, where Arab women leaders recognise that looks play an important role for women trying to acquire jobs in the media. Many of those surveyed also cited concern about advertisements and television commercials.



Recommendations

Recommendations

Key recommendations to further Arab women’s leadership have emerged from the research as well as interviews conducted with Arab women leaders for this report. The following are some of those recommendations:

Targeted Leadership Development through Education

“Over centuries, women, even if illiterate, have proven their leadership capabilities. So just add proper education and you will see them perform to the best of their capacities.”

Nabila Freidji
Chief Executive Officer, Cash One, Morocco

Secondary and Tertiary Education

- Improving employability through the matching of demand and supply of skills is essential if Arab women’s leadership is to be advanced. Educational institutions must encourage women to enroll in programmes, other than arts, humanities and social sciences.
- Introduce career counselling to guide female students in their educational choices, particularly in aligning their choice of subjects to market demand.
- Emphasise life-long learning.

Educational Curriculum and Teaching Methods

- Promote a gender-neutral educational curriculum that does not reinforce the social stereotypes regarding the different roles and responsibilities of men and women.
- Incorporate human rights and women’s rights into the subject matter of educational curricula.
- Introduce innovative pedagogy or teaching and assessment methodology that emphasise practical work which includes working in teams/groups to complete assignments and projects.

“I think the changes in education in the Arab region are going to be absolutely crucial because they are going to reflect the change in the character of the labour market; they are going to reassure families that they aren’t really damaging. In other words the changes in education will have cultural effects that will make parents feel that

overeducating their daughters is not going to be bad for them.”

Dr. Lisa Anderson
Provost, American University of Cairo, Egypt

Co-Curricular Activities

- Form sports and activity teams, which have great potential in developing leadership capacity, and encourage female students to join these teams.
- Establish debate clubs/societies which are crucial in building confidence and public speaking ability.
- Develop student councils and associations, as these instil a sense of leadership combined with responsibility in students.
- Encourage female students to participate in forums/ events, such as Model United Nations/Young Leaders Programme that can hone their team-playing and leadership skills.
- Opportunities for internships and exchange programmes (local, regional and international) should be targeted towards female students.
- Incorporate mentorship programmes (especially those focused on career development) led by successful Arab women leaders, in the education system of the region, as these programmes have a key role to play in improving women’s employability in the region.
- Introduce national scouting programmes to identify potential leaders at the school and university levels and extend follow-up activities, such as targeted and customised leadership training.
- Introduce community leadership/service programmes for female students at the secondary and tertiary levels.

“If you give a child confidence in his/her ability to do something, to take control of his/her future, you have an entrepreneur who can do anything...There is a huge difference between education that qualifies and education that only certifies.”

Randa Ayoubi
Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Rubicon, Jordan

Executive Education

“A passion for reading develops at an early age...and books like “Harry Potter”, but written by authors inside the region, could instil solid reading habits among the region’s youth.”

Nadereh Chamlou
Senior Advisor, The World Bank, USA

- Introduce programmes at the tertiary level that enhance leadership capacity by improving negotiations, project management and decision-making skills of women executives.
- Design targeted courses for Arab women, focusing on media and public speaking training, that guide political leaders in handling the media (in interviews, etc) and in advocating/raising funds during campaigns.

Leadership Development in the Workplace

Making the Workplace Gender Neutral

- Ensure gender neutrality in the workplace. This can be achieved through several means, including the adaptation of human resource policies that suit and support women.
- Senior leaders must develop the mindset to recognise the issues that limit women’s ability to build lasting careers.
- Organisations should arrange focus-groups and informal get-togethers to discuss the issues of their female employees, and shape HR policies according to the common problems identified in these focus groups.
- More women should be included on company boards and in political parties. Research shows that this allows for greater gender neutrality in the workplace.

Better HR Policies

- Greater flexibility at work should be allowed for women employees through flexi-work/telecommuting schemes, especially for younger workers.
- Childcare support (through the establishment of day-care centres at work/subsidy for child-care support) should be provided to retain women in the workplace, as it allows them to develop their career without sacrificing their family life. This is particularly important for Arab women, as the dominant cultural paradigm in the Arab world places great emphasis on the woman’s primary role as a mother and wife.
- Promotion process and remuneration decisions should be based on meritocracy and be gender neutral.

Top Talent Programmes, Mentoring and Coaching for Women

- Top-talent/scouting programmes should be introduced in organisations to identify potential future leaders.
- Short-listed women leaders should have access to targeted opportunities for leadership training and development.
- Provisions should be made to ensure that women are able to attend executive education programmes and/or workshops that improve their management and organisational skills.
- Introduce mentoring and coaching programmes to build leadership capabilities and guide potential women leaders in their career paths.

Enabling Women Entrepreneurs

- Access to microfinance must be enhanced for Arab women aspiring to start their own businesses.
- Create incubators to provide funds and capital for entrepreneurial women.
- Train potential entrepreneurs in the processes and procedures for setting up businesses.
- Specialised executive education programmes should cater to these women to develop their management, business development and leadership capacities.
- Design and implement local and international exchange programmes for businesswomen to develop business management skills and knowledge.
- Promote women entrepreneurs’ access to new markets through training on E-Commerce, export promotion, etc.

Development of Women Leader Networks

- Create women-specific or women-friendly networks where women leaders can share their issues, challenges and experiences in and outside the workplace, to provide a platform for support and knowledge sharing.

“We must change our working methods and operate in networks. We must build associations to support women and share more our views on challenges and opportunities. It is through a strong network of women leaders, who have the will to politically and culturally advance the gender agenda, that we can make a real impact.”

Amina Ouchelh
Member of Parliament and Former State Secretary
General for Women Affairs, Morocco

Improving the Legal and Regulatory Framework

- Labour laws pertaining to type of jobs, working hours and independent mobility should become less stringent. While one cannot undermine the value of these legal restrictions which were originally enacted to protect Arab women, it must be noted that in the modern world, these restrictions can become less stringent to facilitate the participation of more women in the economies.
- Laws restricting women’s access to leadership positions (especially in the political realm) must be modified to allow capable women to attain these positions.
- For women working in the judicial sector, special legal/legislative courses and training programmes must be developed to increase female participation in the legislative and judicial branches.
- The process of drafting legislation should be more inclusive of women.
- Attract additional female legal professionals to take up judicial office.
- Establish specialised institutions managed and run by experts/specialists in legislation to amend discriminatory laws against women.
- Undertake a detailed study to identify and highlight existing laws and legislation that are supportive of women, but have been marginalised/ overlooked by the executive, and work on making them enforceable.
- Develop a comprehensive database of statistics on Arab women’s legal challenges and achievements.
- Establish women’s legal centres that provide free legal consultation and undertake field visits to increase awareness of women on their legal and judicial rights.
- Grant short-term quotas to women to allow for greater participation in the political arena. Examples of countries like Tunisia and Morocco, that have taken short-term affirmative action measures to increase women’s political participation and leadership, should be emulated by the rest of the Arab world (especially in countries where discriminatory clauses are embedded in the legal structure).
- Sharia principles must be thoroughly studied and understood as a basis to advocate women’s rights in the political, economic and personal spheres.

Promoting a Conducive Political Environment

Short-term Affirmative Action

- Extend short-term affirmative measures, such as quotas and reserved seats for women in parliament, as a first step to ensure greater political participation of Arab women.

Support for Women from Political Parties

- Political parties should provide financial and moral support to women candidates.
- Incorporate a formal mechanism which prioritises meritocracy instead of tribal associations as the basis for political selection in the structure of political parties, to reduce the tokenisation of the quota system.

Role of Women Politicians

- Women politicians must start addressing the issues and challenges facing women in the region, and advocating pro-women measures.
- Political parties should incorporate gender issues in their platforms, institutional set-ups and internal procedures.
- The relationship between women politicians and women’s movements must be developed into a mutually collaborative one.

Employment of the Media as a Change Agent

“Leaders are those who communicate a vision and inspire others to act.... What helped Benazir Bhutto’s rise was not only that she was the daughter of a prominent person, but that she had ideas, courage, could deliver her message through powerful speeches and, above all, she handled the media effectively...More Banazirs are needed and can be developed.”

Nadereh Chamlou
Senior Advisor, The World Bank, USA

Breaking the Gender Stereotypes

- A concerted effort to move away from the media’s construction of gender stereotypes should be made. Soap operas and drama serials have an important role to play in this regard, as they have typically focused on portraying Arab women as housewives and fulltime mothers.
- The media should project images that show how Arab women can participate in economic and/or political activity while maintaining a work-life balance to be successful wives and mothers.



- Public service messages promoting women’s causes (e.g. labour force participation, gender neutrality, etc) should be broadcasted in the media. Private organisations such as companies can work with the government to sponsor/support these messages.
- Media should focus on promoting and showcasing successful Arab women who are serving capably as leaders in all fields (through interviews, talk-shows, documentaries, etc)
- **Media Monitoring**
- Strengthen and prioritise the methods for monitoring and analysing women’s image in the Arab media. Creating a media-watch organisation would be a crucial step in this direction.

Incentivize Participation in the Media

- More women should be encouraged to enter the field of media. Women journalists, presenters and talk show hosts, in particular, have an important role to play in altering the perception of Arab women and breaking the cultural stereotypes depicted by the region’s media.
- The media should play an active role in educating the public about the rights of women under both the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and Islamic law. Specialised channels and/or shows should be developed for this purpose.

“We need more strong Arab women in the media.”

Dr. Bahiya Al Jishi
Member of the Shura Council, Bahrain, Member of the Supreme Council of Women, Member of the Board of Trustees, Institute of Political Development, Bahrain



Case Study

International benchmark of leadership development programmes	United States & Europe
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1. Women’s Leadership Program – George Washington University / USA¹

Known as the Elizabeth J. Somers Women’s Leadership Program, WLP is a freshman-year long academic program. Participants explore issues related to women’s leadership, its nature, its expressions, and its exercise in various intellectual, artistic, social, political, and technological contexts, while meeting some of GW’s general curriculum requirements, school requirements and prerequisite courses for many majors.

The program focuses on four areas of study: arts and culture, development (economics), politics or science. The unifying academic experience that makes WLP much more than a set of courses, is the WLP seminar, designed to provide knowledge about, and experience in, leadership as related to women. The fall term is devoted to learning the theories and components of leadership. The spring term provides many hands-on activities with continued opportunities to define and refine the concept of leadership. The WLP faculty meets regularly to insure that there is a connection among all aspects of the program.

The program offers guest speakers, special events, and field experiences that bring the students together with women of achievement and leadership from many areas. These programs also have external links with relevant outside organizations that work on issues significant for women in the focus area and provide opportunities for connections, mentors, and future internships.

WLP students live together in dormitories on the Mount Vernon Campus. The graduate students who support the academic program live with the students, providing additional academic and social leadership.

2. The Institute for Women’s Leadership – Rutgers / USA

The Institute for Women’s Leadership is a consortium of teaching, research, and public service units at Douglass Residential College, the women’s college of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. The six members of the consortium include Douglass College, the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies, the Center for American Women and Politics, the Institute for Research on Women, the Center for Women’s Global Leadership, and the Center for Women and Work. Together, these entities generate new knowledge about women’s leadership and identify the skills and approaches that enable women of all generations to embrace responsibility for positive change.

Over the years the Institute has produced a variety of working papers, research reports, and books etc on women, leadership and empowerment. Some of these publications are as follows:

- Talking leadership: Conversations with powerful women
- Are leaders born or made? Educating women for leadership
- Power for what? Women’s Leadership – Why should you care?

The Institute for Leadership also offers several programs, seminars and courses to promote leadership for women, designed for a wide range of women, from college students to working women, policymakers and activists, to learn from local, national, and global leaders, including the programs listed below:

- Senior leadership program for professional women
- High school leadership certificate program
- National dialogue for education women on leadership



Case Study – Continued

International benchmark of leadership development programmes	United States & Europe
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3. The Women’s Leadership Forum – Harvard Business School / USA³

This forum brings together an elite group of successful businesswomen to nurture innovation and enhance leadership skills. It assembles a diverse group of successful women business leaders from around the world, including corporate officers, business owners and entrepreneurs, and non-profit executives. Participants can share their insights and experiences with these experienced, influential businesswomen, and try out new ideas on them. It provides a unique opportunity to work and develop a plan of action that addresses specific key business and personal leadership challenges, allowing women to return to their workplace stimulated, energized and ready to lead.

Lectures, case studies, and group discussions prepare participants to inspire colleagues, act with confidence and lead with lasting impact, when they return to their organizations. Through this intensive program leaders analyze management and leadership challenges and explore topics such as negotiations, the strategic impact of innovation, and moral leadership.

By introducing women to leading-edge research on innovation and leadership from some of the nation’s foremost authorities, the leadership forum helps organizations succeed by helping women become more effective leaders.

4. Women Leading Change in Global Business – INSEAD / France⁴

This three-day workshop provides an extraordinary opportunity for personal and professional development. It addresses leadership issues that affect all executives in a forum that creates a network of today’s senior women leaders. It enables participants to exchange personal experiences and insights, and to make comparisons with others in similar situations.

The objective is to help businesswomen better understand and lead change in their respective industries, organizations, careers and lives. Through case studies, interactive discussions, group exercises, coaching and 360° feedback, the program engages participants in thought-provoking debate as they discuss the tough challenges facing leaders, focusing on change at the macro, organizational, and personal levels. Women leave with a new perspective on creating personal and professional change and are able to construct personal development plans, develop greater confidence and build a network of senior women from around the world.

Participants are senior-level executives from a range of disciplines and managerial backgrounds such as senior corporate officers, senior general managers and top executives from non-profit organizations etc.



International benchmark of leadership development programmes	United States & Europe
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5. A Pioneer in Educating Women Leaders – Simmons School of Management / USA

The mission of SOM is to educate women for power and principled leadership. Simmons undergraduate management education began with the founding of the college in 1899, and remains a pioneering programme designed specifically to educate women for leadership roles. This mission is fulfilled through two degrees (a Bachelor of Arts or Master of Business Administration), its Executive Education leadership programmes, and its post-MBA certificate programmes in Entrepreneurship and Health Care Management. The undergraduate and graduate academic programmes equip women with the skills and knowledge to manage organisational gender dynamics strategically and build successful and rewarding careers.

In support of its mission, the SOM offers public conferences, including an annual Leadership Conference widely regarded as the United States’ premier conference for professional women. The SOM also includes the Center for Gender in Organizations, an innovative research centre that advances understanding of the link between gender equity and organisational effectiveness and helps organisations create work environments that foster advancement and leadership opportunities for women. The School’s unique and powerful mission enables it to garner the commitment and engagement of a wide range of stakeholders – students, alumni, and professional associations and companies who are committed to advancing women’s leadership.

The School of Management has an entrepreneurial, collaborative learning environment for women who want to accomplish something meaningful for their organisations, communities, and themselves. The SOM is for women of purpose who intend to use their leadership skills to make a lasting difference in the world.

6. Institute for Women’s Leadership – USA

Founded in 1991 by Rayona Sharpnack, the Institute is renowned for its groundbreaking work in the US, Australia and Canada. More than 20,000 professionals from Fortune 500 companies have relied on Rayona and the Institute to produce breakthrough results at work and in their personal lives.

The Institute organizes 1-4 day programs, workshops and reunions for women to share their wisdom and knowledge for each other’s benefit. Through the programs, women leaders are able to better harness the resources in their own environments. They are able to examine the context underlying their business and personal decisions and learn how to change the context which eventually changes reality. In all, women get to collaborate and co-create critical business and leadership strategies while improving their leadership skills. Their programs include:

- Women leading change
- Executives leading sustainable change
- PER-K for leaders
- Women leaders changing in the world
- Leading through influence
- Professionals trade up
- Executives trade up

Over the years their clients have included:

- Harvard University
- Hewlett Packard
- Cisco Systems
- Barclays Global Investors

The founder is affiliated with:

- Women Leadership Board – Harvard University
- The Women’s Foundation of California
- Alliance of Technology and Women
- WITI
- Generation Five



Case Study – Continued

International benchmark of leadership development programmes	United States & Europe
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7. The Women’s Leadership Program – Center for Creative Leadership / USA

Since 1970, the Center for Creative Leadership serves 20,000 leaders annually from 2,000 organizations – both public and private, including two-thirds of the Fortune 500. In a 2008 Financial Times survey, CCL earned an overall Top 10 ranking worldwide among providers of executive education.

The leadership program, designed for and staffed by women, brings together the powerful assessment and feedback tools found in other Center programs, coupled with research-based content that centers on issues and perceptions unique to women.

It is especially designed for mid to senior level women managers who want to become stronger leaders through a feedback-intense learning experience. Through the program women explore the choices and tradeoffs they face in their professional and personal lives and learn how to use more effectively the power of influence to lead. They leave with a strategy for the future and a network of women they can turn to for advice and help in the future.

The 5-day program begins with self assessment to gain an honest picture of one’s strengths and development needs which enables women to identify priorities for change.

The CCL also hosts leadership coaching for individuals participating in one of the programs. This consists typically of 3-6 confidential telephone sessions and is structured to last from 3 months to a year based on participants needs. An additional customized coaching process can be arranged, with the option of face-to-face sessions.

8. Women’s Leadership Network/ UK

The Network is for women who hold or aspire to leadership and management roles at all levels in the further education and skills sector. Established in 2007 as a successor to the original Women’s Network, it raises awareness of women’s issues in the sector. It eventually aims to provide a network for female leaders and managers nationally and regionally, to lobby all stakeholders to recognize women’s issues and to provide training and development that focus on issues faced by women.

In May 2008, the Network held their first conference in London where nearly 100 leaders and managers gathered to learn about the experiences of top female leaders in education and to examine ways to promote more women to leadership roles in the further education and skills sector. Conference workshops focus on the attainment of leadership for women.

In association with Center for Excellence and Leadership, the Women’s Leadership Network published a report on gender related factors in career progression, based on research conducted by the Learning Skills Network which identified key trends in the further education system.

Source:

- Data retrieved on October 15, 2008 from http://iwl.rutgers.edu/programs_senior_leadership.html
- Data retrieved on October 15, 2008 from <http://www.exed.hbs.edu/programs/wlf/curriculum.html>
- Data retrieved on October 15, 2008 from http://executive.education.insead.edu/women_leading_change/index.cfm
- Data retrieved on November 10, 2008 from www.simmons.edu/som
- Data retrieved on February 10, 2009 from <http://www.womensleadership.com/index.php>
- Data retrieved on February 11, 2009 from <http://www.ccl.org/>
- Data retrieved on February 11, 2009 from <http://www.ccl.org/>
- Data retrieved on February 16, 2009 from <http://www.wlfe.org.uk/index.html>



Expert insights & perspectives

Expert insights & perspectives

During the course of the research conducted for the Arab Women Leadership Outlook, we conducted interviews with several regional and international experts to gain their insights about women's leadership in general and Arab women's leadership in particular. The following are some of these insights.

Political Participation, By: Dr. Lisa Anderson

Lisa Anderson is a renowned specialist in Middle East and North African politics and the current provost of the American University of Cairo. The bulk of her academic research has been focused on state formation and regime change in the Middle East and North Africa. Lisa Anderson has made a series of recommendations with regard to increasing women's participation in the Arab world.

Is the path towards good governance and democracy a necessary condition for women leadership to flourish in the region?

Not necessarily. Democracy is good in itself, and women's participation is good in itself, but they are not particularly closely correlated. Throughout history women have been active in politics in socialist regimes, democratic regimes and monarchical regimes. That said, women certainly benefit from the extension of the rights associated with democracy, as do men. It is thus important to advocate for both democratic rights and women's rights, and not to assume that one will follow naturally from the other.

How can the Arab world replicate experiences around the world that have applied legislative and quotas instruments to enhance the participation of women in politics? What kind of system do you recommend?

Parliamentary quota systems are too often merely cosmetic—this is, of course, particularly true when the parliaments themselves are cosmetic—and a diversion from issues of real political power. If governments are serious about efforts to enhance the role of women in political life, they can ensure that women are well represented in cabinet, for example, in positions of genuine authority (I look forward to more women interior and defence ministers), and in other important and high

visibility executive offices, at both the national and the local level. The question of parliamentary representation is too often a distraction, particularly where parliaments are weak.

What needs to be done to bridge the gap between favourable legislation empowering women and the lack of implementation of these laws?

As with all government-sponsored reform, follow-up is crucial. There is no improvement in health care, education, women's status or any other such initiative without concerned efforts to ensure that the law is enforced at the local level. This requires commitment and resources. There need to be public awareness campaigns, government officials at all levels must be persuaded that this is important, and they need to say so often and publicly. Failure to implement new laws should be dealt with swiftly and decisively.

How to ensure that women striving for political positions benefit from enough financial resources?

In part, access to resources will reflect the extent that women play an active role in the marketplace. Some of the resources that will support women's political advances will come from women in the private sector who see themselves better served by a greater presence of women in government. With committed leadership, political parties can also nominate and provide resources to women candidates. Keep in mind, though, that most political parties (and most businesswomen) have a number of interests and concerns, of which improvement of the status of women is only one, and probably not the most important. Women need to be able to operate in politics because of their expertise in particular policy domains—education, finance, security, etc.—as well as "as women" as such.

What skills are required for a woman to become a political leader?

Like men, women need patience, judgment, ambition, vision. In addition, they probably need more than men to be able to manage multiple roles and tasks simultaneously. Since that is enabled by the new information and communication technologies, I would

recommend that all ambitious young women become technologically proficient at an early age, and keep up with new developments.

Leadership Skills Development, By: Dr. Linda A. Hill

Linda A. Hill is a professor at the Harvard Business School. She is the Faculty Chair of the Leadership Initiative, whose mission includes bridging the gap between leadership theory and practice. She is also the Faculty Chair of Harvard's High Potential Leadership Program and Leadership Initiative. She has been playing a leadership role in building the MBA curriculum and e-learning platform for executive education. Her current research is focused on leadership for innovation and leadership in emerging economies. She has written extensively on leadership, leadership development, cross-organisational relationships, and team building. Linda A. Hill provides a series of recommendations.

What is leadership?

The most compelling definition of leadership that I have heard is from an executive at Pixar Animation Studios: "The art of leadership is creating a world to which others want to belong." Individuals want to belong to a world where they can express their unique identity and talents, and where they can be part of something larger than themselves. Leadership is therefore about social architecture, shaping experience such that people can find meaning in their work. The key question is not "Am I leading?" but rather, "Am I creating a context where others are willing and able to lead?" This is especially important in the context of innovation—an imperative in today's economy. By definition, when doing innovative work you do not know exactly where you want to go. The leader's role is not so much to be the visionary who sets direction, but rather to create an environment where the collective talents of the group can be unleashed, leveraged and channelled towards some shared purpose. Innovation is the result of integrative problem-solving where the solution is not the result of compromise but rather is the result of debate and honest exchange such that a mosaic or collage of the diverse ideas of the group results.

What are the qualities, skills and values that are required to become a leader?

In order to create this type of world, leaders must be willing and able to take a new stance, one I call leading from behind. Leading from behind is not abrogating responsibility. Leaders who choose to lead from behind are perfectly capable of leading from the front, but they understand that certain circumstances—like the ones we are increasingly seeing in the business world today—require that the diverse "slices of genius" inside their team

or organisation be channelled towards a collective purpose. I have spent over a decade studying leaders from different countries and industries who are indeed creating worlds to which others want to belong. These leaders share some important characteristics: they are pragmatic idealists who are quite generous, especially with sharing power. They are action-oriented systemic thinkers. They are comfortable with diversity, and they are emotionally, socially and cognitively very mature (but fear not, they are not perfect; they are human too). Perhaps most importantly, they see the extraordinary where many others just see the ordinary. This is why they lead as if everyone matters—because they do.

What are some international best practices for developing women leaders?

For women and men alike, while some of the qualities of effective leaders may be innate (or learned very early in life), much of leadership is learned. This learning is hard work and women must take charge of their own development, at every stage of their careers. They choose to work in organisations that fit their values, and this requires introspection and reflection about what really matters to them. This also means making strategic decisions about which positions they seek out and accept, where they work, and with whom they build relationships. For example, the most successful individuals seek out stretch assignments, ones that require them to take risks and allow them to leverage their current skills while developing new ones. They develop deep expertise about some domain, but also are always eager to broaden their perspective and knowledge; because they understand that much of value created in organisations today comes from working horizontally (collaboration across organisational functions, geographies). Successful leaders also devote time and attention to growing and nurturing a diverse network of relationships. This helps them obtain and manage the risks associated with stretch assignments. Instead of fretting about finding the "perfect mentor," effective leaders focus on being the "perfect protégé" so that others will be attracted to working with them.

What role do educational institutions play in this process?

Many students—like many first-time managers—are blinded to the realities of what it means to lead. Some think leading can only happen from "the front," others fail to appreciate the political nature of organisations, yet others do not understand that leadership is about creating contexts and managing interdependencies, not simply exercising formal authority. Schools should expose students to the realities of organisational life. And while schools cannot make leaders, they can provide students with the developmental framework and tools they will

need to develop themselves as they enter organisations. The leaders capable of leading from behind that I have been studying devote attention to introspection, debriefing their life experiences, and are committed to continually reinventing themselves. These leaders know who they are (values, strengths, weaknesses) and they have well-developed moral compasses that guide them through the complex, ambiguous waters of organisational life. To develop a truly effective cadre of leaders, schools need to engage students on the systemic issues of exercising moral leadership, where normative questions about the role of business in society and the means and ends of capitalism are brought into sharp relief.

What role do organisations play in this process?

Organisations need to think more broadly about who has leadership potential. In the past, there was a consensus about the kinds of places effective leaders are formed. In the US, we have traditionally looked to companies like GE and McKinsey, as well as institutions like the military, and schools like Harvard. But the world has changed: markets are much more global and dynamic; decision-making is broadly distributed across an organization; leveraging diversity for collaboration and innovation is critical. Organisations need to re-examine their images of the ideal leader in light of these shifts. Think about the qualities of individuals capable of leading from behind. Because these people do not exhibit the take-charge, direction-setting behaviour many often think of as inherent in leadership, they can easily be overlooked when an organisation selects the people it believes have leadership potential. The leaders we need today may be those who know how to be team builders and players, who are willing and able to share credit or do the "invisible work" that is often critical to organisational success. We need leaders who are builders and investors for the long-term. Like emerging leaders everywhere, Arab women have to take responsibility for their own development. At the same time, the organisations in which they work must fundamentally rethink what it means to lead and who has leadership potential. We need all the leadership we can get.

Work Environment, By: Nadereh Chamlou

For the last 27 years, Nadereh Chamlou has worked in technical and managerial positions throughout the World Bank Group. She is co-author of numerous reports including on "Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa Region – Women in the Public Sphere" and "The Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa Region."

What HR policies and procedures should companies in the Arab world adopt in order to give high achieving women in their firm a fair chance at reaching leadership positions?

The first issue is whether the company wants to hire more women. If the company understands that it needs the best person for the job, a number of mechanisms could be put in place to ensure that the hiring and promotion process is fair.

Hiring policies for professional positions (permanent or positions requiring specific skills), can include panels that would interview and vet the candidates. The interviewing panels could include both women and men.

Companies that want to hire more women can also conduct some internal studies into the reasons why women may not be working or how more women can be hired. Where there is a will there is a way – and each organisation has to find its own solutions and hence a one-size-fits-all won't work.

How can companies ensure against discrimination against women's promotions to leadership positions as well as in salary prejudices?

There are a host of HR consulting companies that have done considerable and detailed work on what is best. Discrimination can happen in many different and subtle ways. There is also a host of well-documented literature. A company that is truly concerned about eliminating potential discrimination can hire these professional firms. For companies that cannot afford such firms, it may be interesting to approach a local university. Business Management schools may be able to use this opportunity for professors and students to get exposed to real life issues and develop solutions that may be applicable and relevant for the specific company, country and/or industry.

What kind of initiatives can companies adopt to support and empower women with high potential within their corporations?

A key issue is to give high potential women interesting and challenging ways in which they can prove themselves so they can move to higher levels of responsibility. This is the most important factor. Women who are given such opportunities are more likely to stay in the workforce and the company rather than opt out.

What can striving women do to improve their abilities and chances in reaching leadership positions within their corporations or organisations?

Women should stay on top of the latest developments in their professions. Gone are the days where one went to the university and thought that one got the knowledge one needs for life. The world is changing and knowledge



is quickly becoming outdated. Knowledge about the world we live in and in particular the industry one works in is very critical. Investing in trade magazines, attending conferences, and networking are key to keeping up to date.

What are examples of successful labour policies across the region that have empowered women striving to reach leadership positions?

A number of labour laws require the woman to obtain the permission of the husband; work during certain hours, or not work in certain sectors. These restrictions need to be removed.

Most importantly, pension laws in the region require or provide the option for women to retire five years earlier than men. This may be seen as a nice benefit for women. But it limits women to rise to position of leadership – which is mostly in times when they are older. One example is if men retire at 60 and women retire at 55. If a position of Vice President in a company is being filled, a 54 year old woman will lose out to a 54 year old man, since the man will be able to stay in the company for seven more years.

Lastly, any kind of employee benefit (except maternity leave) should be given in the name of the family and not just women. For instance, if a company needs to have child care on the premises, it should not be on the basis of xx number of women; but xx number of employees, regardless of whether they are men or women. By defining the eligibility for a costly benefit solely on the basis of a number, the number of women who can be hired will be limited.

What can companies in the region do to support women employees in balancing their home duties and work obligations?

This is a difficult question. Here again – a number of mechanisms have been tried. Some have worked and some have not. Companies should not be responsible for the balancing act women play between home and work. This is not the job of the employer. What employers can offer, however, is to examine if there are areas in which it is capable of offering greater flexibility. For instance, an employer can take a look if it can offer flexi-time, telecommuting, or other mechanisms, without losses. In certain industries, this may simply not be possible. In short, what companies can do is to study what kind of flexibility they can offer, but there can be no prescribed laws or policies that will suit all companies and industries.

There is a temptation by many women's advocacy groups to push and bargain for more benefits vis-à-vis the work/family balance. In the end, these benefits only hurt women more because they raise the cost of the

woman employee compared to the male employee. This means that the company is going to make less profits by hiring a woman rather than a man. The strategy in the future has to be the reverse. That the woman employee will help the firm have higher profitability because of a host of issues, such as bringing new talent to the work place, a better education (since in 11 out of 18 countries of the region, women outnumber men in universities), and a better understanding of the market place, since they are more in touch with what families need and how the needs of the family changes. It would be a mistake to push for more benefits solely for women to manage the balance between work and family.

**Education,
By: Dr. Fatima Al Shamsi**

Dr. Fatima Al-Shamsi is the Secretary General of the UAE University and a Faculty member in the Department of Economics and Finance of the UAE University's College of Business and Economics. She also worked as an advisor to the National Human Resource Employment and Development Authority in the UAE and headed the unit of job qualification. Dr. Al-Shamsi has held membership of scientific and social committees at the state level, including the World Trade Organization, representing the UAE at the Doha Conference.

What kind of programs/activities/ policies should educational institutes in the region adapt in order to develop leadership skills in female students?

In this regard, at the educational level, we need to adopt programs that enhance and develop women's leadership skills. Although I believe that both genders need skills development, women in the region definitely need more training and exposure to overcome the cultural and social barriers that prevent them from being exposed to the outside world. It is therefore important to tailor special programs to be taught in institutions for young women, which they can further utilize in their career.

In the UAE, programs such as the Mohamed Bin Rashid Institute for Leadership Development identify women with high leadership potential, and build their leadership capacity by developing their leadership skills and abilities.

What measures can be taken to increase women's participation in the economic sphere?

First of all, we need to advocate the idea that economically active and well-educated women are essential for the progress of the economy, particularly in the Gulf countries. In this regard women should be given a fair chance to contribute to this developmental process. We should also be aware of the fact that

increasing female participation will not only depend on their motivation to work and their capability, but also the ability of the society to accept this new role for women, whether as a leader or as a contributor to the economy. To achieve this, we must remove the existing barriers that prevent women from entering into the economy.

At the institutional level there should be clear job descriptions for all, particularly for women. These job descriptions should specify the company's expectations from its employees and also highlight the prospects of promotion and career development for its female employees. Employment policies and hiring practices should however be tailored to take into consideration the family situation of women and their need to take care of their house and family. Greater access to childcare facilities to promote a woman-friendly working environment is an important example in this regard.

What roles do laws and policies play in advancing women leadership in the region?

At the policy level, policy should be gender aware. For example, in the GCC countries, there is general acceptance that there should be gender equality vis-à-vis labor, implying that women should be entitled to equal payment and equal treatment. However, unfortunately this is not explicitly mentioned in the labor laws. Laws should explicitly mention equality regarding employment, paying the same wages and for the similar kind of work regardless of gender. Existing laws should therefore be amended to endorse and further enhance gender equality. Men usually agree with gender equality in principle, implementation still remains weak. Students feel this inequality in the labor market. Even though they appreciate that the laws do not generally discriminate against them, they feel that when it comes to implementation, these laws do not seem to be functioning. The government should consider having a body that monitors implementation of policies and laws. Women should know that they have the option of complaining in case they face any discrimination. However, this does not mean that policy or legal changes will solve all the problems women face, and collective efforts of the society will of course, be needed to achieve greater gender equality.

How can the current curricula in the regional education system be tailored to promote a more positive image of women leaders?

The educational program should challenge the negative image of women that is conveyed by the curricula. For example, books being taught in schools and colleges contain pictures of women cooking in the kitchen, while men are shown to be in an office setting or watching television at home. Students retain these images all their

lives, and assume these gender roles accordingly. As a teacher, when I would discuss leisure activities with my students and mention for example, that they could take their wife for dinner in a restaurant rather than going by themselves, a vast majority of them responded saying that they would prefer to go alone. This mindset needs to be changed, and the best way to do this is to shape children's perceptions from a very early stage. Education has a critical role in this regard.

In terms of the curricula, at least in the UAE, the curriculum content is the same for girls and boys. Nevertheless, the delivery of curricula must be paid attention to. Curriculum delivery should not reinforce the traditional gender roles and should educate children to look beyond these roles. Furthermore, women should be taught how their roles and attitudes need to change. They need to become more active and aggressive in fighting for their rights and demand better treatment in all spheres.

Many female students choose fields like humanities/arts/social sciences while the market demand for these disciplines is very low. How do you explain this and what can be done to direct female students towards other disciplines?

I think this is primarily due to the social effect, which comprises the intervention of parents and societal values in career choices. Societal stereotypes govern women's career choices. It is often assumed that women will end up working in the field of education or in an environment where the segregation of the sexes is followed. This is the stereotype that needs to be changed. The role of educational institutions in this regard should be to push women and train them to confidently move beyond conventional fields (such as arts, humanities, education) into highly sophisticated fields that are seen to be reserved for men. Their entrepreneurial abilities should also be developed, so that they are in a position to start up their own ventures.

When young girls join the UAE University, we conduct seminars and programs that introduce the educational programs to the students, simultaneously educating them about the job market (type and demand/supply of jobs available, future prospects, necessary education, etc). We have also opened an entrepreneurship center that encourages women to create their own businesses and to be fully aware of where they are heading in the future.

How can universities engage with the private sector to develop programs that empower and develop leadership skills among female university students?

The dialogue between universities and the private sector is very important in shaping the future of potential



women leaders. Programs developed by universities have to be linked to the requirements of the labor market. Consequently, these programs must be updated regularly to cater to the fast-changing situation in the labor market. Universities must attempt to enhance their students' communication skills and their ability to work in teams. Students must also be trained to identify their goals and hone their decision making abilities. Group projects and team assignments generally tend to develop these leadership skills, and should be encouraged in universities.

When we, at the UAE University, decided to change the structure of most of our colleges, we shared our thoughts and ideas with all our stakeholders, paying special attention to the private sector. With regard to the business college, we paid particular attention to the feedback that we received from the private sector about the types of graduates and skills they were looking for. To meet and accommodate this demand, we tailored our programs, and even changed the language of instruction from Arabic to English. In return, we expect the private sector to offer the same rights and pay schemes for women and men. We also expect them to allow flexible hours for women while still offering career growth opportunities. Originally, the public sector was the major employer of graduates in the region, but at present, the private sector plays a major role. While improvements are visible, there is still room for greater coordination and cooperation between educational institutions and the private sector.

Internships are another form of engagement with the private sector. They promote on-the-job training and familiarize students with the labor market. Most colleges within the UAE University encourage and send their students for internships, both within the country and abroad.

How can women in leadership positions be involved with universities in inspiring and assisting female students in accessing leadership positions?

Colleges and universities play a catalyst's role in providing a platform to convene existing and potential women leaders. At the UAE University, we have been involved in development of alumni programs, whereby former students are invited to talk, deliver seminars and conduct workshops for our new joiners. We have received a positive response from most of our alumni, as most of them take time out to attend these seminars despite their busy schedules.

What kind of courses should be introduced in universities to bring out leadership skills and traits of women in the region?

Courses that build women's leadership skills and widen

the knowledge of especially those women who are engaged in management roles must be introduced. Such courses can train potential women leaders to identify problems, take responsibility and devise solutions to address the challenges they face. These courses can be incorporated in the mainstream curriculum and/or in extra curricular activities.

**Legal Reform,
By: Judge Ihssan Barakat**

Judge Ihssan Barakat is currently the Head of the First Instance Court of West Amman since 2007. Prior to that, she was a Judge of the Court of Appeal (2004-2007), and a judge of Court of First Instance at the Palace of Justice- Amman (2002-2004).

Prior to 2002, Judge Barakat practiced law with Barakat Shouquair, a Jordan-based law firm, which served as legal counsel to Petra Bank. During the last years, Judge Barakat was the Head of the International Affairs Division of the Ministry of Justice and currently serves on a committee assigned to develop a ten-year national agenda for Jordan. Judge Barakat is a founding member of the Arab Women's Legal Network and has made a series of legal recommendations pertaining to women.

- Develop specialised training programmes that aim to increase women leaders' capabilities in order to be able to compete with men in decision-making positions based on solid scientific grounds.
- Develop legal/legislative courses and training programmes with the purpose of increasing female participation in both the legislative and judicial branches.
- Emphasise the importance of female participation in drafting legislation.
- Attract additional members of female legal professionals to take up judicial office.
- Activate the various media channels to promote human rights in general and women's rights specifically.
- Implement a female quota system in the short term with the purpose of bridging the gap between men and women in decision-making positions.
- Implement periodic workshops and programmes for women leaders from different sectors to support issues of importance to Arab women, and more specifically, equality with men as relates to rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Establish specialised institutions managed and run by experts/specialists in legislation to amend discriminatory laws against women.
- Undertake a detailed study to identify and highlight

existing laws and legislation that are supportive of women but have been marginalised / overlooked by the executive, and to work on making it enforceable.

- Develop a comprehensive database of statistics on Arab women's challenges and achievements.
- Showcase female achievements in all fields with the purpose of altering society's perceptions of women and further empowering Arab female leaders.
- Incorporate "human rights" as an important subject matter in the curricula of schools and universities in the Arab world.
- Establish women's legal centres that provide free legal consultation and undertake field visits to increase awareness of women on their legal and judicial rights.

**Society, Religion and Women Rights,
By: Dr. Amira Sonbol**

Dr Sonbol is Professor of Islamic History, Law, and Society at Georgetown University School of Foreign Services in Qatar. She has studied extensively the status of women in Arab history and makes a series of recommendations regarding women's rights in this complex crossroads between religion, culture, and the legal framework.

Although legal structures differ by country in the region, in your opinion which laws and what countries are most inhibitive for Arab women who are striving to be active or reach leadership positions in the socio-economic or political spheres in their countries?

The usual choice to include here is Saudi Arabia because of the strict Wahhabi⁴⁷ laws regarding driving, travel and education which control women's ability to be active and mobile. However, Saudi Arabian women are very active in the public sphere and in the Saudi economy. Politically they, like their sisters in most Arab countries, play a small, if any, direct role. However indirectly they have significant influence. While more politically-advanced countries like Egypt, Tunisia and Lebanon allow women to vote and run for elections, the number of women who enter the political arena is limited. It is worth noting, that women in the Arab world constitute a very important element in their countries' economies, playing leadership roles at every level from peasant women in the fields to business women heading their companies or those heading foundations and banks. Family and guardianship laws may inhibit women from playing more aggressive

economic and political roles but, with few exceptions, laws do not directly discriminate against women's participation in business. One exception comes in the shape of labour laws that discriminate against working women in some Arab countries by requiring their guardian or husband's approval to enter the job market and limit their work at night or at "unsafe jobs". Jordan comes to mind as one such country.

What should be done and by whom to change such laws, in order to empower active Arab women and give them their equal share of human rights?

Arab governments should take a direct role in changing these laws. At the same time women's groups and civil rights groups should research and push for these changes as well as undertake public awareness campaigns to enlighten the public and introduce the societal benefits associated with changing these laws. In addition, since many of the laws hindering women from entering the public sphere accompanied the process of nation-building and establishment of modern patriarchal laws, it is imperative that scholars focus on deconstructing the genesis of modern gender laws. These scholars must also study how women lived before such laws were introduced. Historians have demonstrated that women were in fact active in the public sphere and worked in almost every area of the economy. More such studies are needed particularly as they pertain to the legal system and legal practice in Sharia courts which would illustrate women's historical participation as property owners, awqaf⁴⁸ administrators, investors, sellers, manufacturers, teachers and even faqihat.⁴⁹ Hence the fact that Sharia is not against, but in favour of women's participation.

How would you define the integration between religion (whether Christianity or Islam) and the legal system?

The modernisation of law and the establishment of uniform codes by modern states also involved the extension of a "religious" umbrella over the laws under which Arab women live. Whereas before the modernisation of law—beginning in the late 19th century depending on the particular country—courts dealt with all types of legal problems from crimes to exchange and included marriage, divorce and other matters, the modern legal system in all Arab countries was divided into several types of legal systems and courts. Criminal laws received their laws mostly from France as did national courts dealing with issues of property and nationality. As for marriage and other issues related to it, they were relegated to newly formed Sharia courts for

47. Wahabi: A conservative form of Sunni Islam attributed to Muhammad ibn Abd-al- Wahhab, an 18th century scholar from what is today known as Saudi Arabia, who advocated a return to the practices of the first three generations of Islamic history.
48. Awqaf: Inalienable religious endowment in Islam, typically denoting a building or plot of land for Muslim religious or charitable purposes. It is conceptually similar to the common law trust.
49. Faqihat: Female Islamic jurist.



Muslims and Milla courts for Christians. The laws were identified as religious laws and have been accepted as such. The new laws being applied, now called “personal status” laws became standard, and often even Islamic laws were extended to non-Muslims (e.g. Obedience laws applied to Egyptian Christians until 1985 when these laws were changed for all. Muslim inheritance laws are applied to Christians in the Arab world so that Christian women inherit half of everything men receive). In pre-modern courts, the judges were aware that laws were very much based on local tradition and hence the differences in application from place to place even within the same country. Modern laws therefore extended the umbrella and “sanctity” of religion on family laws, which has made it difficult to change them.

What can be done to have more positive interpretations when it comes to women’s rights in the region, whether they are based on Islamic Sharia law or Christianity?

A new genealogy of law in Arab countries must be researched, written and then publicised to dispel any opposition to changes in the laws applied today. The same applies to Muslims and Christians. For example a Christian could always go to the Sharia courts for divorce, if they converted out of their religion. Deconstructing the legal system to demonstrate the more liberal system that existed before would be the most important step in the direction of changing the laws. Another is to become closely involved in rereading fiqh⁵⁰ and deconstructing fiqh so as to differentiate between fiqh and Sharia which are always confused with one another. The contradictions in books of interpretation and Hadith⁵¹ collections, like Bukhari, need the close scrutiny of scholars to show the fallibility of such “sanctified” sources upon which much of the laws discriminating against women are based. Overall there is a need to bring forth more of the manuscript collections produced in Islamic history to the attention of scholars. So far we are dependent on a few hundred books with information of the past and we keep on referring to them when there are literally thousands of manuscripts still waiting to be read. In other words, a massive effort to read the history and intellectual production of the past must be undertaken. Historians like myself, who have spent years reading records know that the answer lies in the past. We need to train more young historians to undertake the same efforts.

How would you describe the effect of culture/society on the legal system in the region when it comes to women’s rights?

Culture/society and the legal system reinforce each other.

After all the legal system is a product of society. As women leave the home to be educated, take jobs and see the world, the legal system must be re-evaluated. This is the experience worldwide and it is no different in the Arab region. A good example here are the new Mowadana laws in Morocco and khul⁵² laws in Egypt which give women equal rights within the family and the ability to get out of a marriage without the husband’s acceptance. It would not have been conceivable that these laws would have been enacted let alone conceived had it not been for the educated activist professional women groups that found a need for them and pushed for the legislation. Society may have resisted but accepted because of the greater presence of women in all aspects of life. Such presence of women has become the norm, the changes in the law made sense and were needed.

According to the Arab Women Leaders we have interviewed, the key challenges in the legal system stem from male dominance in interpretation and implementation of laws, leading toward a bias against women. What are your thoughts on this issue and what are your recommendations to empower more women or moderates in the legal structure as (legislators, lawyers or judges, etc.)?

I agree that this is certainly a major issue and that male dominance in the interpretation of laws must be challenged. This can be achieved by challenging labour laws that block women from entering official legal professions. A good example here is the police, public attorney, and judiciary jobs. They are all related. While women can become attorneys, they cannot become public prosecutors and only public prosecutors can be promoted to become judges according to procedures in most Arab countries that took their judicial systems from France. Police colleges are also closed to women and therefore enforcement of the law is not an area open to women. Changes in the law and legal challenges in court would be a good avenue here. Because most countries with these structures are also countries with constitutions that claim full equality to all citizens, it is important that women’s groups be enabled to take court action to show the contradictions between the constitution and the legal system that puts limits on what women can do or jobs they can enter. This method would be particularly useful in countries with constitutional courts and it would be a good beginning to challenge these laws.

What other best practices in the region regarding the legal system do you recommend being mainstreamed across the Arab countries?

Tunisian laws giving equal rights with men should become a norm throughout the Arab region. The Mowadana laws of Morocco giving women equal rights within the family should be applied. Egyptian khul` laws and labour laws should be applied, particularly the first anti-sexual harassment court decision of 2008—being challenged by male lawyers but bound to hold and to set a very important precedent. Guardianship laws that are applied in Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Gulf States should be reconsidered and laws applicable in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Tunisia allowing adult women to marry without a guardian’s legal approval must be extended.

What can women do to enhance their rights in the region?

This is not an easy question because it involves hard work, perseverance and a relentless belief in self. Working together to improve the condition of communities throughout the Arab world and educating the public about human rights is very important. Extending education to all and making it central to public policy must take priority over all other methods. Here the example of Gulf countries like the Emirates and Qatar come to mind. Without a doubt the Gulf is building the most important educational infrastructure in the Arab world today. At the legal level, it would be excellent if women’s groups bring together lawyers, scholars, and activists to sponsor grievous cases in court. It would take organisation and effort, but would be a good way to change the law quietly and systematically.

**Media,
By: Nima Abu Wardeh**

Nima Abu Wardeh is both a business correspondent on BBC world and founder of MZone, a content provider and consultancy service specialising in media and business issues relating to the Arab world. She provides media training for both organisations and individuals, and gives courses to university students throughout the region. Nima Abu Wardeh has made a series of recommendations with regard to women in the media.

What role can the media play in changing perceptions of women so that it becomes acceptable for a society as a whole to have women empowered?

Media as an industry must lead by example. It should aspire to be a meritocracy where gender, race or creed have no bearing on what post a person occupies, or how much they are paid. It must be the change it speaks of. But media provides jobs for a relatively small number of people. Its true strength lies in its ability to reach the masses and put issues in the public arena.

Media must champion, and be instrumental in pushing

through, legislation and laws that empower women and benefit society as a whole. Media must raise issues such as a minimum age of marriage for females, violence against women, as well as demanding equal rights for education and showcasing women in all walks of life.

Currently in Arab media, a significant number of women are on-screen superstars – disproportionately, it could be said, to the number of men. But the management positions, behind the scenes personnel and key decision-making roles are invariably occupied by men. This is a critical issue. When budgets are being set, concepts thought up, programmes approved and teams selected, the female’s perspective and value system is not necessarily part of the mix. Only when media – as an industry – provides the same opportunities and support for women as they do for men, will we arrive at an industry that truly reflects society, and portrays women as they really are; high achievers, home-makers, students, and mothers. Opportunity and support must include the implementation of a meritocratic system, with equal pay, mentoring and child-care facilities. This will be some time coming – alongside this there needs to be more content that focuses on female business leaders, diplomats, accomplished physicians, lawyers and other professionals, as well as ordinary citizens. (Most important of all, we need a concerted drive to raise fundamental issues that affect the very fabric of female existence – and push for change.)

What concrete measures need to be implemented in the various media systems to better brand women leaders?

I believe that drilling home the principles of meritocracy, governance, and inclusiveness, promoting the idea that women must be decision-makers in the industry is the measure that ensures that women are given equal opportunities, as well as the media taking contentious, controversial issues by the horns and debating them at every level.

How can women leaders make better use of the media to help the broader base of women still fighting for conditions or striving for leadership positions?

The lot of women varies. I believe women leaders should simply get on with the business at hand and lead in their respective areas of expertise. In doing so they will be championing women’s causes by example. Having said that, they do not represent the average women by any stretch of the imagination, so putting them forward as the role-model and mentor will not work in many societies. The majority of the Arab world is very poor and illiteracy is a significant problem – specifically amongst the female gender.

These women – in their capacity as decision-makers and

50. Fiqh: Islamic jurisprudence (Interpretation of Sharia).
51. Hadith: Oral traditions relating to the words and deeds of the Islamic prophet Muhammad.
52. Khul: The situation in which the wife initiates divorce proceedings.



leaders – must demand and lobby for legislation that protects women and grants them basic rights (such as equal pay), provides enabling environments, including child-care, equal education, equal job opportunities and for good governance to be the standard practice in every industry – including media.

How do you explain the low level of Arab women leaders in the media field?

There are women leaders in Arab media, but they’re mostly on-screen. The low-level of Arab women leaders in the rest of the industry is mainly the result of men being the decision-makers and powerhouses of the sector. It is to be expected that the status quo will remain without the establishment of a meritocracy and good governance, providing and enabling opportunities to be realised, in tandem with legislation that addresses societal issues, all comprising the building blocks to change.

Media can serve a dual purpose in that it is an industry that provides jobs, careers, but it also is a powerful tool for social change and affecting public opinion.

Message from Arab women leaders to Arab women aspiring to become leaders:

To provide inspiration to the upcoming generation of young aspiring women leaders across the region, we present some additional key messages from Arab women leaders, who have participated in this survey:

“Women are their own worst enemies. Women should have confidence in themselves to strive for leadership positions.”

**HE Sheikha Lubna Bint Khalid Al Qasimi
Minister of Foreign Trade, UAE**

“We need to work hard to reach out to the international community, demonstrate our capabilities and proclaim what we represent, rather than just sit on our laurels and wait for people to come to us.”

**Mona Ghanem Al Marri
Chairperson of the Board, Dubai Women's Establishment, UAE**

“Continue, do not give up and be determined. You have to work hard even if you do not see immediate results. Remember, you are working for the future generations; your effort is part of a cumulative effort. You have to pave the way as it has not been paved to you.”

**Afnan Al Zayani
President & Proprietor
Al Zayani Commercial Services WLL, Bahrain**

“A woman leader never compromises nor renounces, she holds on to everything.”

**Huda Janahi
Chief Executive Officer
Global Cargo & Traveller's Services Co. WLL, Bahrain**

“The opportunities are out there, but you have to take a strategic look at what is right for you.”

**Amina Taher
Executive Director
Corporate Communications, Zabeel Investments, UAE**

“Ambition starts small and grows as you progress – as you achieve your goals, you feel happy and satisfied.”

**Ghada Eid
Editor & Presenter of ‘Al Fasad’ program, Al Jadeed TV, Lebanon**

“You need to be educated. Education is multifaceted. Students must be taught technical skills, problem solving, cooperation and critical thinking, all essential to success in tomorrow’s world.”

**Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani
Founder, Chairman Arab International Women's Forum, UK**

“Embrace the fact that your differences from your male counterparts need not to be a burden, but can be a strength.”

**Manal Shaheen
Director of Sales, Marketing and Customer Service, Nakheel, UAE**

“Those who take the initiative are the ones who make it.”

**Nashwa Al Ruwaini
Chief Executive Officer, Pyramedia, UAE**

“Do not give up. Fight hard. We are here as a newspaper to help you.”

**Nayla Tuéni
Deputy General Manager, An-Nahar Newspaper, Lebanon**

“Believe in what you are doing and be persistent about it.”

**Rima Al Kilani
Global Marketing Director, Economic Development Board, Bahrain**

“The challenge is to build a real partnership and a complementary team between Arab institutions.”

**Dr. Soukeina Bouraoui
Executive Director
Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR), Tunisia**

“You have to have the confidence and never say it will not happen.”

**Dr. Zara Khatib
Technology Manager, Shell Exploration & Production, UAE**

“These are remarkable times for women in the Arab world. They are given opportunities that were unfathomable a decade ago. The path to leadership although challenging is nonetheless paved and awaiting for their participation without compromising their values”.

**Maroua Naim
Chief Operating Officer, Dubai Investment Group, UAE**

Conclusion

The Arab world has made significant advances in furthering women's leadership. Nevertheless, compared to the rest of the world, the region has a long way to go and there is considerable scope for improvement. Focusing on the various facets of an enabling environment is important to advance the agenda of Arab women leaders and to allow for the development of future generations of aspiring women in the region.

The report takes a top-down approach in looking at leadership from the perspective of Arab women leaders. In this regard, it has generated important insights regarding the individuality and defining features of Arab women leaders. During the course of the research, women leaders from the region identified several traits and characteristics which distinguish them from women leaders in the rest of world. They also identified the challenges they faced in their journeys toward leadership positions. These challenges were contextualized through the lens of seven key enablers, namely political, socio-economic, educational and legal environments, and religion, culture and media. In general, the Arab women leaders interviewed highlighted two categories of challenges in their path toward leadership: those directly linked to a woman's environment; and those linked to her individual development. Details about these challenges have been provided by means of external research which is presented during the course of the report.

Most Arab women leaders interviewed agreed that positive change in favour of women leadership was evident in the region. Most viewed this trajectory of positive change to be continuous, resulting in a more favourable regional environment for women leaders in the future. These leaders also reflected on the role of governments, private sector, civil society and international actors in relation to women's participation and leadership in the political and socio-economic sphere and identified the main change actors in their respective countries. A majority of them concluded that civil society, international actors, and governments were the most active agents of change for improving Arab women's conditions, and that each of these actors must play a significant part in enhancing the enabling environment for women leaders across the region.

The Arab Women Leadership Outlook is a pioneering initiative in the Arab world, as focused research on Arab women leaders is almost absent. The Dubai Women Establishment hopes to use the insights generated by AWLO to further develop research on Arab women's leadership next year.

Scorecard – Bahrain

Human development data

Mean age of marriage for women (years) (2008)	26
% Female Population (2005)	43
Gender development index value (0-1) (2005)	0.857
Gender Gap Index 2008 (121 out of 130)	0.593

Educational data

% Enrollment in tertiary education (2008)	Female 47	Male 19
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Science" field (2005)	81	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction" field (2005)	28	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Not known or Unspecific" field (2005)	77	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Education" field (2005)	67	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Humanities and Arts" field (2005)	85	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Social Science, Business and Law" field (2005)	64	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Agriculture" field (2005)	0	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Health and Welfare" field (2005)	85	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Services" field (2005)	76	

Political participation data

Year received right to vote and stand for elections	1973
% Female in government at ministerial level (2005)	8.7
% Seats in parliament held by women – lower house (2006)	0
% Seats in parliament held by women – upper house (2006)	15
Gender Gap Political Empowerment Index (2008)	0.019
Number of female ministers	1
Number of female parliament members	1

Economic participation data

Ratio of estimated female to male income (2007)	0.35
% Economically active female population estimate (2007)	28.9
% Female Inactive Rate (of total female population) (15-64 years) (2006)	69
Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership (2008)	4.79
% Female unemployment of total unemployment rate (2006)	78
Wage equality for similar work, female to male ratio (2008)	0.67
% Female legislators, senior officials & managers – of total (2008)	10
Female labor force participation rate (2005) (% of female population, 15-64 years)	30.7
Gender Gap Economic Participation Index (2008)	0.399
% Women in corporate boards (2007)	1
Director positions held by women as a % of total board seats (2007)	4
Female-owned companies (2003-2006) (% of total)	N/A

For exact sources and data scaling, please refer to the methodology at the end of the scorecards.

Scorecard – Eygpt

Human development data

Mean age of marriage for women (years) (2008)	22
% Female Population (2005)	49.9
Gender development index value (0-1) (2005)	N/A
Gender Gap Index 2008 (124 out of 130)	0.583

Educational data

% Enrollment in tertiary education (2008)	Female N/A	Male N/A
For example, American University of Cairo: Female to male ratio (latest)	53:47	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Science" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Not known or Unspecific" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Education" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Humanities and Arts" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Social Science, Business and Law" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Agriculture" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Health and Welfare" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Services" field (2005)	N/A	

Political participation data

Year received right to vote and stand for elections	1956
% Female in government at ministerial level (2005)	5.9
% Seats in parliament held by women – lower house (2006)	2
% Seats in parliament held by women – upper house (2006)	6.8
Gender Gap Political Empowerment Index (2008)	0.023
Number of female ministers	2
Number of female parliament members	8

Economic participation data

Ratio of estimated female to male income (2007)	0.23
% Economically active female population estimate (2007)	20.4
% Female Inactive Rate (of total female population) (15-64 years) (2006)	78.4
Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership (2008)	5.93
% Female unemployment of total unemployment rate (2005)	51.24
Wage equality for similar work, female to male ratio (2008)	0.83
% Female legislators, senior officials & managers – of total (2008)	10
Female labor force participation rate (2005) (% of female population, 15-64 years)	21.63
Gender Gap Economic Participation Index (2008)	0.437
% Women in corporate boards (2007)	N/A
Director positions held by women as a % of total board seats (2007)	N/A
Female-owned companies (2003-2006) (% of total)	app. 20

For exact sources and data scaling, please refer to the methodology at the end of the scorecards.

Scorecard – Jordan

Human development data

Mean age of marriage for women (years) (2008)	25
% Female Population (2005)	48
Gender development index value (0-1) (2005)	0.76
Gender Gap Index 2008 (104 out of 130)	0.628

Educational data

% Enrollment in tertiary education (2008)	Female 41	Male 37
For example at the University of Jordan the female to male ratio (2008) is	82:18	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Science" field (2005)	49	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction" field (2005)	3	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Not known or Unspecific" field (2005)	57	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Education" field (2005)	100	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Humanities and Arts" field (2005)	90	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Social Science, Business and Law" field (2005)	44	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Agriculture" field (2005)	60	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Health and Welfare" field (2005)	48	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Services" field (2005)	63	

Political participation data

Year received right to vote and stand for elections	1974
% Female in government at ministerial level (2005)	10.7
% Seats in parliament held by women – lower house (2006)	5.5
% Seats in parliament held by women – upper house (2006)	12.7
Gender Gap Political Empowerment Index (2008)	0.064
Number of female ministers	4
Number of female parliament members	7

Economic participation data

Ratio of estimated female to male income (2007)	0.31
% Economically active female population estimate (2007)	28.7
% Female Inactive Rate (of total female population) (15-64 years) (2006)	70.5
Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership (2008)	5.22
% Female unemployment of total unemployment rate (2006)	16.5
Wage equality for similar work, female to male ratio (2008)	0.72
% Female legislators, senior officials & managers – of total (2008)	N/A
Female labor force participation rate (2005) (% of female population, 15-64 years)	28.87
Gender Gap Economic Participation Index (2008)	0.489
% Women in corporate boards (2007)	N/A
Director positions held by women as a % of total board seats (2007)	N/A
Female-owned companies (2003-2006) (% of total)	app. 17

For exact sources and data scaling, please refer to the methodology at the end of the scorecards.

Scorecard – Kuwait

Human development data

Mean age of marriage for women (years) (2008)	25
% Female Population (2005)	42.4
Gender development index value (0-1) (2005)	0.884
Gender Gap Index 2008 (101 out of 130)	0.636

Educational data

% Enrollment in tertiary education (2008)	Female 26	Male 11
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Science" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Not known or Unspecific" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Education" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Humanities and Arts" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Social Science, Business and Law" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Agriculture" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Health and Welfare" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Services" field (2005)	N/A	

Political participation data

Year received right to vote and stand for elections	2005
% Female in government at ministerial level (2005)	0
% Seats in parliament held by women – lower house (2006)	1.5
% Seats in parliament held by women – upper house (2006)	N/A
Gender Gap Political Empowerment Index (2008)	0.022
Number of female ministers	2
Number of female parliament members	4

Economic participation data

Ratio of estimated female to male income (2007)	0.35
% Economically active female population estimate (2007)	50.9
% Female Inactive Rate (of total female population) (15-64 years) (2006)	48.6
Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership (2008)	4.63
% Female unemployment of total unemployment rate (2006)	52.35
Wage equality for similar work, female to male ratio (2008)	0.71
% Female legislators, senior officials & managers – of total (2008)	N/A
Female labor force participation rate (2005) (% of female population, 15-64 years)	50.37
Gender Gap Economic Participation Index (2008)	0.570
% Women in corporate boards (2007)	2.7
Director positions held by women as a % of total board seats (2007)	30
Female-owned companies (2003-2006) (% of total)	N/A

For exact sources and data scaling, please refer to the methodology at the end of the scorecards.

Scorecard – Lebanon

Human development data

Mean age of marriage for women (years) (2008)	N/A
% Female Population (2005)	51
Gender development index value (0-1) (2005)	0.759
Gender Gap Index 2008	N/A

Educational data

% Enrollment in tertiary education (2008)	Female N/A	Male N/A
For example at the American University of Beirut the female to male ratio (2007) is	51.5:48.5	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Science" field (2005)	45	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction" field (2005)	19	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Not known or Unspecific" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Education" field (2005)	92	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Humanities and Arts" field (2005)	72	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Social Science, Business and Law" field (2005)	53	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Agriculture" field (2005)	43	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Health and Welfare" field (2005)	67	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Services" field (2005)	35	

Political participation data

Year received right to vote and stand for elections	1952
% Female in government at ministerial level (2005)	6.9
% Seats in parliament held by women – lower house (2006)	4.7
% Seats in parliament held by women – upper house (2006)	N/A
Gender Gap Political Empowerment Index (2008)	N/A
Number of female ministers	1
Number of female parliament members	6

Economic participation data

Ratio of estimated female to male income (2008)	0.31
% Economically active female population estimate (2007)	33.8
% Female Inactive Rate (of total female population) (15-64 years) (2006)	63.2
Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership (2008)	N/A
% Female unemployment of total unemployment rate (2004)	20.53
Wage equality for similar work, female to male ratio (2008)	N/A
% Female legislators, senior officials & managers – of total (2008)	N/A
Female labor force participation rate (2005) (% of female population, 15-64 years)	35.72
Gender Gap Economic Participation Index (2008)	N/A
% Women in corporate boards (2007)	N/A
Director positions held by women as a % of total board seats (2007)	N/A
Female-owned companies (2003-2006) (% of total)	app.24

For exact sources and data scaling, please refer to the methodology at the end of the scorecards.

Scorecard – Morocco

Human development data

Mean age of marriage for women (years) (2008)	25
% Female Population (2005)	50.3
Gender development index value (0-1) (2005)	0.621
Gender Gap Index 2008 (125 out of 130)	0.576

Educational data

% Enrollment in tertiary education (2008)	Female 11	Male 13
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Science" field (2005)	31	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction" field (2005)	23	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Not known or Unspecific" field (2005)	41	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Education" field (2005)	50	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Humanities and Arts" field (2005)	53	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Social Science, Business and Law" field (2005)	39	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Agriculture" field (2005)	19	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Health and Welfare" field (2005)	59	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Services" field (2005)	56	

Political participation data

Year received right to vote and stand for elections	1963
% Female in government at ministerial level (2005)	5.9
% Seats in parliament held by women – lower house (2006)	10.8
% Seats in parliament held by women – upper house (2006)	1.1
Gender Gap Political Empowerment Index (2008)	0.0095
Number of female minister	5
Number of female parliament members	33

Economic participation data

Ratio of estimated female to male income (2007)	0.25
% Economically active female population estimate (2007)	27
% Female Inactive Rate (of total female population) (15-64 years) (2006)	71.3
Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership (2008)	4.46
% Female unemployment of total unemployment rate (2006)	27.14
Wage equality for similar work, female to male ratio (2008)	0.59
% Female legislators, senior officials & managers – of total (2008)	12
Female labor force participation rate (2005) (% of female population, 15-64 years)	28.67
Gender Gap Economic Participation Index (2008)	0.393
% Women in corporate boards (2007)	N/A
Director positions held by women as a % of total board seats (2007)	N/A
Female-owned companies (2003-2006) (% of total)	app. 8-9

For exact sources and data scaling, please refer to the methodology at the end of the scorecards.

Scorecard – Oman

Human development data

Mean age of marriage for women (years) (2008)	22
% Female Population (2005)	43.8
Gender development index value (0-1) (2005)	0.875
Gender Gap Index 2008 (118 out of 130)	0.596

Educational data

% Enrollment in tertiary education (2008)	Female 26	Male 25
For example the female to male ratio at Sultan Qaboos University is	53:47	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Science" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Not known or Unspecific" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Education" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Humanities and Arts" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Social Science, Business and Law" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Agriculture" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Health and Welfare" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Services" field (2005)	N/A	

Political participation data

Year received right to vote and stand for elections	1994
% Female in government at ministerial level (2005)	10
% Seats in parliament held by women – lower house (2006)	2.4
% Seats in parliament held by women – upper house (2006)	15.5
Gender Gap Political Empowerment Index (2008)	0.025
Number of female ministers	2
Number of female parliament members	2

Economic participation data

Ratio of estimated female to male income (2007)	0.19
% Economically active female population estimate (2007)	37.2
% Female Inactive Rate (of total female population) (15-64 years) (2006)	73.7
Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership (2008)	5.07
% Female unemployment of total unemployment rate (2006)	N/A
Wage equality for similar work, female to male ratio (2008)	0.77
% Female legislators, senior officials & managers – of total (2008)	9
Female labor force participation rate (2005) (% of female population, 15-64 years)	23.61
Gender Gap Economic Participation Index (2008)	0.415
% Women in corporate boards (2007)	2.3
Director positions held by women as a % of total board seats (2007)	21
Female-owned companies (2003-2006) (% of total)	N/A

For exact sources and data scaling, please refer to the methodology at the end of the scorecards.

Scorecard – Qatar

Human development data

Mean age of marriage for women (years) (2008)	N/A
% Female Population (2005)	32.6
Gender development index value (0-1) (2005)	0.814
Gender Gap Index 2008 (119 out of 130)	0.595

Educational data

% Enrollment in tertiary education (2008)	Female 33	Male 10
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Science" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Not known or Unspecific" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Education" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Humanities and Arts" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Social Science, Business and Law" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Agriculture" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Health and Welfare" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Services" field (2005)	N/A	

Political participation data

Year received right to vote and stand for elections	2003
% Female in government at ministerial level (2005)	7.7
% Seats in parliament held by women – lower house (2006)	0
% Seats in parliament held by women – upper house (2006)	N/A
Gender Gap Political Empowerment Index (2008)	0.021
Number of female ministers	2
Number of female parliament members	0

Economic participation data

Ratio of estimated female to male income (2007)	0.24
% Economically active female population estimate (2007)	24.7
% Female Inactive Rate (of total female population) (15-64 years) (2006)	59.3
Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership (2008)	4.92
% Female unemployment of total unemployment rate (2006)	40.62
Wage equality for similar work, female to male ratio (2008)	0.73
% Female legislators, senior officials & managers – of total (2008)	8
Female labor force participation rate (2005) (% of female population, 15-64 years)	36.92
Gender Gap Economic Participation Index (2008)	0.415
% Women in corporate boards (2007)	0.3
Director positions held by women as a % of total board seats (2007)	1
Female-owned companies (2003-2006) (% of total)	N/A

For exact sources and data scaling, please refer to the methodology at the end of the scorecards.

Scorecard – Saudi Arabia

Human development data

Mean age of marriage for women (years) (2008)	22
% Female Population (2005)	46
Gender development index value (0-1) (2005)	0.783
Gender Gap Index 2008 (128 out of 130)	0.554

Educational data

% Enrollment in tertiary education (2008)	Female 35	Male 23
For example 85% of the students in Saudi Universities are female		
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Science" field (2005)	46	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction" field (2005)	4	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Not known or Unspecific" field (2005)	57	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Education" field (2005)	74	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Humanities and Arts" field (2005)	46	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Social Science, Business and Law" field (2005)	40	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Agriculture" field (2005)	0	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Health and Welfare" field (2005)	45	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Services" field (2005)	100	

Political participation data

Year received right to vote and stand for elections	No Right
% Female in government at ministerial level (2005)	0
% Seats in parliament held by women – lower house (2006)	0
% Seats in parliament held by women – upper house (2006)	N/A
Gender Gap Political Empowerment Index (2008)	0.00
Number of female ministers	0
Number of female parliament members	0

Economic participation data

Ratio of estimated female to male income (2007)	0.16
% Economically active female population estimate (2007)	18.2
% Female Inactive Rate (of total female population) (15-64 years) (2006)	80.9
Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership (2008)	2.57
% Female unemployment of total unemployment rate (2006)	36.43
Wage equality for similar work, female to male ratio (2008)	0.50
% Female legislators, senior officials & managers – of total (2008)	9
Female labor force participation rate (2005) (% of female population, 15-64 years)	18.47
Gender Gap Economic Participation Index (2008)	0.259
% Women in corporate boards (2007)	0.1
Director positions held by women as a % of total board seats (2007)	1
Female-owned companies (2003-2006) (% of total)	app. 14

For exact sources and data scaling, please refer to the methodology at the end of the scorecards.

Scorecard – Tunisia

Human development data

Mean age of marriage for women (years) (2008)	27
% Female Population (2005)	49.6
Gender development index value (0-1) (2005)	0.75
Gender Gap Index 2008 (103 out of 130)	0.629

Educational data

% Enrollment in tertiary education (2008)	Female 37	Male 26
For example the female to male ratio at Sfax University is	57:43	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Science" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Not known or Unspecific" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Education" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Humanities and Arts" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Social Science, Business and Law" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Agriculture" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Health and Welfare" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Services" field (2005)	N/A	

Political participation data

Year received right to vote and stand for elections	1959
% Female in government at ministerial level (2005)	7.1
% Seats in parliament held by women – lower house (2006)	22.8
% Seats in parliament held by women – upper house (2006)	13.4
Gender Gap Political Empowerment Index (2008)	0.110
Number of female ministers	1
Number of females in Al Shura Council	40

Economic participation data

Ratio of estimated female to male income (2007)	0.29
% Economically active female population estimate (2007)	29.9
% Female Inactive Rate (of total female population) (15-64 years) (2006)	68.1
Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership (2008)	5.65
% Female unemployment of total unemployment rate (2005)	32.4
Wage equality for similar work, female to male ratio (2008)	0.83
% Female legislators, senior officials & managers – of total (2008)	9
Female labor force participation rate (2005) (% of female population, 15-64 years)	31.1
Gender Gap Economic Participation Index (2008)	0.476
% Women in corporate boards (2007)	N/A
Director positions held by women as a % of total board seats (2007)	N/A
Female-owned companies (2003-2006) (% of total)	N/A

For exact sources and data scaling, please refer to the methodology at the end of the scorecards.

Scorecard – United Arab Emirates

Human development data

Mean age of marriage for women (years) (2008)	23
% Female Population (2005)	32
Gender development index value (0-1) (2005)	0.855
Gender Gap Index 2008 (105 out of 130)	0.622

Educational data

% Enrollment in tertiary education (2008)	Female 37	Male 13
For example the female to male ratio at the American University of Sharjah (2006) was	42:58	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Science" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Not known or Unspecific" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Education" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Humanities and Arts" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Social Science, Business and Law" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Agriculture" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Health and Welfare" field (2005)	N/A	
% Female Tertiary graduates in "Services" field (2005)	N/A	

Political participation data

Year received right to vote and stand for elections	2006
% Female in government at ministerial level (2005)	8
% Seats in parliament held by women – lower house (2006)	0
% Seats in parliament held by women – upper house (2006)	23
Gender Gap Political Empowerment Index (2008)	0.111
Number of female ministers	4
Number of females in National Federal Council	9

Economic participation data

Ratio of estimated female to male income (2007)	0.25
% Economically active female population estimate (2007)	39.7
% Female Inactive Rate (of total female population) (15-64 years) (2006)	58.7
Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership (2008)	5.01
% Female unemployment of total unemployment rate (2006)	N/A
Wage equality for similar work, female to male ratio (2008)	0.72
% Female legislators, senior officials & managers – of total (2008)	8
Female labor force participation rate (2005) (% of female population, 15-64 years)	39.02
Gender Gap Economic Participation Index (2008)	0.420
% Women in corporate boards (2007)	0.8
Director positions held by women as a % of total board seats (2007)	3
Female-owned companies (2003-2006) (% of total)	N/A

For exact sources and data scaling, please refer to the methodology at the end of the scorecards.

Sources & Definitions for the Scorecards

1. Human development data

Mean age of marriage for women (years) (2007)

This represents the average age of women when they get married in their respective country. Global Gender Gap Report 2008 (www.weforum.org).

% Female Population (2005)

This represents the percentage of female population in the respective country.

Gender development index value (0-1) (2005)

This index measures achievement in the same basic capabilities as the HDI does, but takes note of inequality in achievement between women and men. The methodology used imposes a penalty for inequality, such that the Gender Development Index falls when the achievement levels of both women and men in a country go down or when the disparity between their achievements increases. The greater the gender disparity in basic capabilities, the lower a country's GDI compared with its HDI. The GDI is simply the HDI discounted, or adjusted downwards, for gender inequality.

Gender Gap Index 2008

The Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum scores can be interpreted as the percentage of the gap between women and men that has been closed. The Report covers a total of 130 countries, representing over 90% of the world's population. The Report measures the size of the gender gap in four critical areas of inequality between men and women:

1. Economic participation and opportunity – outcomes on salaries, participation levels and access to high-skilled employment.
2. Educational attainment – outcomes on access to basic and higher-level education.
3. Political empowerment – outcomes on representation in decision-making structures.
4. Health and survival – outcomes on life expectancy and sex ratio.

For scores data: 0.000 = inequality, 1.000 = equality.

2. Educational data

% Enrollment in tertiary education (2007), Female

This represents the percentage of female students enrolled in tertiary education in the respective country. Global Gender Gap Report 2008.

% Enrollment in tertiary education (2007), Male

This represents the percentage of male students enrolled in tertiary education in the respective country. Global Gender Gap Report 2008.

% Female Tertiary graduates in various fields (2005)

This represents the percentage of tertiary education students that graduate in various fields and are females. It can be interpreted as for example 30% means, 30% of the students of the students graduating in "Science" are females. EducationDigest_UNESCO_2007

Female to male ratio

<http://www.aucegypt.edu/aboutauc/QuickFacts/Pages/default.aspx>

http://sisinfo.squ.edu.om/stats/ADM_total.htm

<http://www.aus.edu/selfstudy/docs/self-study-final-dec-2003.pdf>

http://www.uss.rnu.tn/ussfr/stat_etud.php

American University of Beirut

<http://www.okaz.com.sa/okaz/osf/20080304/PrinCon20080304177491.htm>

3. Political participation data

Year received right to vote

This represents the year in which women got the right to vote in the respective country. UNDP Gender and Citizens Initiative

<http://gender.pogar.org/countries/stats.asp?cid=21&gid=10&ind=143>

Year received right to stand for elections

This is the year in which women got the right to stand for elections. UNDP Gender and Citizens Initiative

<http://gender.pogar.org/countries/stats.asp?cid=21&gid=10&ind=143>

% Seats in parliament held by women – lower house (2006)

It is the percentage of seats held by women in the lower house of the parliament in that year. UNDP Gender and Citizens Initiative

<http://gender.pogar.org/countries/stats.asp?cid=21&gid=10&ind=143>

% Seats in parliament held by women – upper house (2006)

It is the percentage of seats held by women in the upper house of the parliament in that year. UNDP Gender and Citizens Initiative

<http://gender.pogar.org/countries/stats.asp?cid=21&gid=10&ind=143>

% Female in government at ministerial level (2005)

It is the percentage of women in the government at ministerial levels in that year. UNDP Gender and Citizens Initiative

<http://gender.pogar.org/countries/stats.asp?cid=21&gid=10&ind=143>

Gender Gap Political Environment Index (0- Inequality, 1-Equality)

The Global Gender Gap Report 2008

% Women in Government (2007)

Women in government is average female representation in upper and lower houses of parliament (International Parliamentary Union) TNI Investment Research

Number of female ministers

<http://www.shura.bh/Council/MPs/Pages/default.aspx>

www.cabinet.gov.eg

<http://www.pm.gov.jo>

<http://www.cmgs.gov.kw>

<http://www.pcm.gov.lb>

<http://www.pm.gov.ma/fr/gouvernement.aspx>

www.omanet.om

www.moe.edu.qa

Al Tashreefat, Qatar

<http://www.saudia-online.com/Government%20Council%20of%20Ministers.htm>

<http://www.ministeres.tn/html/indexgouv.html>

<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=10674&article=459082&feature=>

Number of female parliament members

www.nuwab.gov.bh

<http://www.parliament.gov.eg>

<http://www.parliament.jo>

<http://www.majlesalommah.net>

www.lp.gov.lb

http://www.parlement.ma/_listdeputes.php?filename=200804211601250

http://www.shura.om/Index_Main.asp

Al Tashreefat, Qatar

<http://www.shura.gov.sa/>

<http://www.chambre-dep.tn/deputes1.jsp>

<http://www.almajles.gov.ae/>

Sources & Definitions for the Scorecards – Continued

4. Economic participation data:

Ratio of estimated female to male income (2007)

This is the ratio of estimated female to male income in that year. UNDP GEM

http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_20072008_gem.pdf

% Economically active female population estimate (2007)

This is the percentage of female population who are economically active in that year.

ILO – <http://laborsta.ilo.org/>

% Female Inactive Rate (of total female population) (15-64 years) (2006)

This is the percentage of female population in the 15-64 years bracket who are inactive:

KILM Database 5th Edition

Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership (2008)

The Global Gender Gap Report 2008 (survey data, responses on a 1-to-7 scale (1=worst score, 7=best score)).

% Female unemployment of total unemployment rate (2006)

This is the percentage of unemployed people, who are women.

ILO – <http://laborsta.ilo.org/>

Wage equality for similar work, female to male ratio (2008)

This is the wage equality ratio of female to male for similar work. The Global Gender Gap Report 2008

% Female legislators, senior officials & managers – of total (2008)

The Global Gender Gap Report 2008

Female labor force participation rate (2005)

Nation Master

http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/lab_for_par_rat_fem_of_fem_pop_age_1564-female-population-ages-15-64

Gender Gap Economic Participation Index (0-Inequality, 1-Equality)

The Global Gender Gap Report 2008

% Women in corporate boards and % Directors

TNI Investment Research 2008

Female owned companies (2003-2006) (% of total)

The Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa Region – The World Bank, Washington DC

