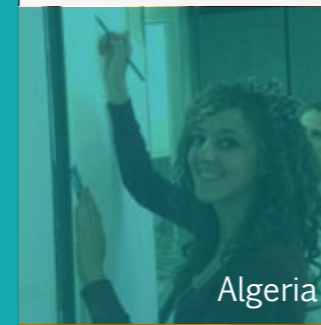


# 2012



ألواني alwane

## ALWANE REGIONAL POLICY REPORT



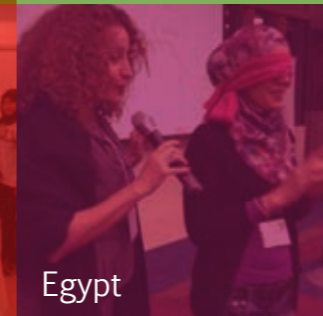
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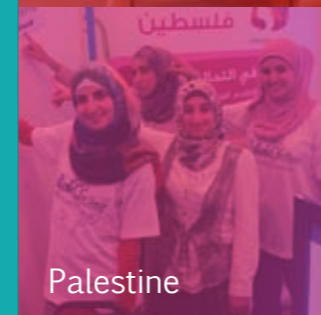
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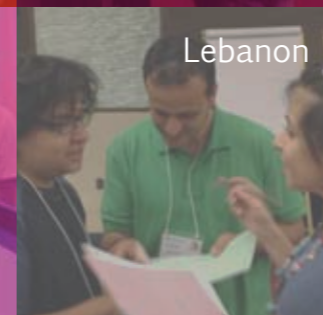
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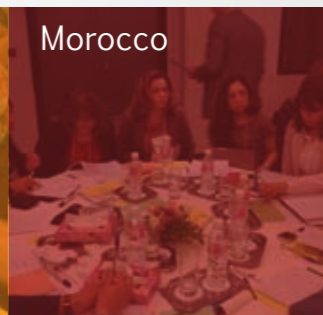
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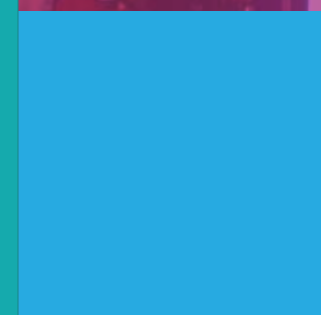
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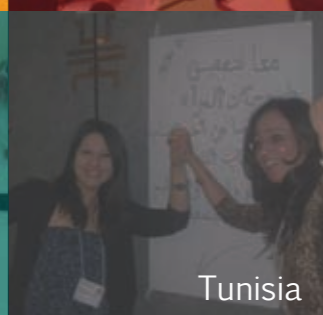
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 **Women's Campaign  
International**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Middle East and North Africa region represents a rich cultural, ethnic, religious, and political diversity. While some countries are in the midst of tremendous economic growth and development, others face crippling financial downturns; while some witness violent conflicts and sectarianism, others celebrate long awaited movements towards peace, reconciliation, and rebuilding. Despite this diversity of social, political, cultural, and economic contexts, the region is currently tied together by a common thread of rapid development, socio-political change, and a reenergized civil society demanding human rights and equality for all citizens. It is in this context that an important window of opportunity has emerged for women of the region to gain their rightful place in positions of leadership alongside men. Yet because times of transition are often accompanied by a deterioration of security and stability, this window of opportunity is a narrow one. While the potential for progress is great, women also face the risk of a serious backsliding of their rights, erasing decades of progress towards a more equal and pluralistic society.

Women's full inclusion and participation in society is vital for countries to develop into democratic, transparent, and economically prosperous nations. At a time when the level and nature of efforts towards women's empowerment vary tremendously across the region, collective, regional mobilization is essential to protect, consolidate and advance the region's movement towards greater gender equality.

To foster such collective regional efforts towards the advancement of women's full leadership and participation in society, ALWANE was formed. One year ago, over 320 men and women academics, activists, experts, entrepreneurs and youth from across 16 MENA countries committed to social change and gender equality. Working at both a national and regional level, ALWANE aims to generate discourse around pressing challenges to women's full participation in society, share intraregional success stories, and create fundamental change through targeted and wide reaching advocacy and policy work surrounding women's rights and participation in society.

*ALWANE stands for Active Leaders for Women's Advancement in the Near East. In Arabic, "alwane" (pronounced Al-WA-nee) means "my colors," a phrase which evokes both the ability to paint our own future and the power of diversity in leading change.*

In just one year, the coalition's use of innovative technologies, engagement of young, new voices, and unprecedented intra-regional collaboration has resulted in inspiring stories of nation-wide advocacy and awareness efforts, and policy work that can motivate lasting change across the MENA region.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report highlights the wide variety of gender issues addressed by the Country Committees across the region, and is representative of the diversity of ALWANE’s membership and the many approaches to tackling gender equality. ALWANE teams from each of the network’s 16 participating countries provide a glimpse into their year-long efforts to motivate change and raise awareness on some of the most pressing issues facing women in their communities. Committees focused on issues ranging from increasing opportunities for entrepreneurship, a lack of job opportunities, and gender based violence, to weak political representation, harmful gender stereotypes, and limited access to education. This report marks the beginning of a long term movement towards advancing women’s participation and leadership in society through a truly collective effort that involves all stakeholders regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, nationality and religious affiliation. Working together in equal partnership, the men and women of ALWANE have a vision to expand the network, engage new voices, and work with decision makers to create a future that is inclusive and representative of the diversity of the region.

*Women’s Campaign International (WCI) empowers women to actively participate in civil society, political leadership and economic development. Specializing in transitional states and post-conflict regions around the world, WCI equips men, women, and youth leaders with the skills and support needed to transform their lives and communities. Since its founding in 1998, WCI has worked in more than 44 countries to promote women’s leadership in politics, civil society, economic activities and peace building. Through ALWANE WCI aims to build on past efforts and create a sustainable and active coalition of men, and women political, economic, civil society, and academic leaders, as well as youth, committed to the advancement of women’s leadership in the MENA region.*



Women’s Campaign International would like to express its utmost gratitude to all members of the ALWANE team for their tireless efforts and true commitment to creating the change they would like to see in the world. It is a great honor to have worked with such a dynamic team and we have great hopes and expectations for the years to come.

# CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
COUNTRY COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS	5
Algeria - Bahrain - Egypt	6
Iraq - Jordan - Kuwait	7
Lebanon - Libya - Morocco	8
Oman - Palestine - Qatar	9
Saudi Arabia - Tunisia - Yemen	10
COUNTRY-SPECIFIC POLICY REPORTS	11
- Algeria	12
- Bahrain	24
- Egypt	27
- Iraq	30
- Jordan	35
- Kuwait	39
- Lebanon	43
- Libya	47
- Morocco	51
- Oman	58
- Palestine	65
- Qatar	83
- Saudi Arabia	94
- Tunisia	98
- Yemen	102

# COUNTRY COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

## Algeria

ALWANE Algeria will engage the public in a national dialogue focused on internal obstacles for women's full participation in Algerian society. The committee will focus on interviewing top men and women leaders in all sectors and networking with other Algerian women's and human rights organizations to generate this public discourse.



## Bahrain

ALWANE Bahrain will increase the percentage of women in the workforce across all sectors. The committee will increase awareness of women's rights and economic potential through structured empowerment programs that promote existing laws, which protect women's economic rights and freedoms, and the drafting of new legislation focused on women's economic independence.



## Egypt

ALWANE Egypt has created the "360 Degrees of Egyptian Women" campaign, which consists of three sub-committees: Women's Health, Women in The Media, and Women's Economic Empowerment; that include advisers, practitioners, and youth. The groups will work together to create tool kits and implement a comprehensive advocacy strategy, which will address the state of these three categories during Egypt's historic transition period. They will also act as incubators for innovative ideas suggested by individuals, providing them with information, resources and a wide network of women's groups.



## Iraq

ALWANE Iraq will engage men and women civil society and political leaders and the Youth Development Initiative's (YDI) youth volunteer network to support and strengthen current women leaders, and create a positive example and environment for Iraq's girls and young women. The Committee will increase the effectiveness of current women in office by building coalitions of governmental and non-governmental organizations to strengthen women leaders and increase the number of women in leadership positions through advocacy efforts, in order to push for legislation that protects women and girls, and promotes women's ability to enjoy all of their rights.



## Jordan

ALWANE Jordan will work with the private and public sector to increase women's representation at all levels, and ensure that women's ideas, opinions, and concerns are addressed within organizational and governmental policies.



## Kuwait

ALWANE Kuwait will focus on women's participation and engagement in the private sector, particularly building women's capacity to run and operate their own small and medium-sized enterprises. Through organized advocacy efforts and capacity building workshops, their slogan "My life...passion and ambition" embodies the hope and motivation necessary to take the first step in bringing about change.



## Lebanon

ALWANE Lebanon will use digital storytelling and social media to highlight and share women entrepreneur success stories across Lebanon. The Committee will publish a book to showcase in-depth biographical interviews gathered from Lebanon's rural and marginalized communities, thus encouraging other women to follow their own entrepreneurial pursuits.



## Libya

ALWANE Libya aims to ensure that women are included in all levels of political leadership, post-revolution. Prior to the elections, committee members pushed for the modification of the Electoral Law in order to replace a 10% women's quota with a "zipper system" on all party lists. The Committee is now focusing on ensuring that women are represented in the country's 60-member Constituent Assembly, which based on Article 30, of the Libyan Constitutional Declaration will be responsible for drafting a permanent constitution for Libya. The Group is also striving to overturn and/or prevent laws and regulations that prevent women from reaching positions of leadership.



## Morocco

ALWANE Morocco will address women's and girls' access to education and women's image and representation in textbooks used across Morocco's current public education system. By promoting increased educational opportunities for women, and providing more positive images and examples of women's leadership potential through curriculum materials, the Committee aims to increase women's representation across economic sectors.



## Oman

ALWANE Oman will work to transform the Sultanate's national vision for women into an integrated national gender strategy. To achieve this, the Committee will focus on raising the visibility and discussion of women's rights in Oman's new and traditional media, conduct Training of Trainers (ToT) for selected youth, and draw on the expertise of local leaders. Its efforts are raising awareness of women's rights amongst a diversity of stakeholders, and committee members are hopeful that their advocacy and policy work will contribute to Oman's current efforts to develop a more positive, comprehensive national strategy on gender.



## Palestine



ALWANE Palestine will focus on women's economic empowerment and build their advocacy strategy with four overarching objectives: 1) Raise awareness about the importance of women's participation in the economy through documentaries, surveys, workshops, and media campaigns; 2) Increase women's participation in the labor market through the newly launched "5aleek Online" initiative, which creates job opportunities for women working from home; 3) Provide capacity-building opportunities for the ALWANE Palestine Committee in Palestine and regionally through a ToT model; and 4) Increase women's representation in leadership positions and the public sector. The Palestine Committee is working towards acquiring status as an independent social enterprise.

## Qatar

ALWANE Qatar, in partnership with Roudha Center (a Qatari NGO providing support to women entrepreneurs) will increase women's economic participation by offering comprehensive support services for SMEs, including the creation of a women's business directory. The Committee will work with the government to advocate for policy changes that will support SMEs, and legalize women's home businesses. The Committee will also partner with large corporations to cultivate an environment that supports women start-ups.



## Saudi Arabia

ALWANE Saudi Arabia, led by Saudi-based company - Glowork, is working to increase the number of women in the workforce through the dual strategy of overcoming negative cultural obstacles, while simultaneously increasing employment opportunities for women. They have launched a national awareness campaign that seeks to shift attitudes towards women working in the retail sector, and the Committee's proposal to open new sectors for women is currently under review by the Ministry of Labor. Through their efforts, they aim to create at least 500 jobs for Saudi women.



## Tunisia



ALWANE Tunisia will work to address the significant backslide in women's rights since the revolution. Highlighting contemporary cases of sexual harassment, abuse and injustice, the Committee is raising awareness of women's challenges in the current environment. It has also developed targeted projects seeking to coach women in personal development, as well as to empower women economically through fair trade initiatives.

## Yemen

ALWANE Yemen will focus on the impact of conflict and crisis on women in Yemen. The Committee is working on this through multiple fronts, and has established a Women's Observatory Center, which monitors violations against women stemming from the conflict in Yemen. In collaboration with a Cultural House, the Committee raises awareness of women's rights through artistic ventures, including murals, painting, photography, and art workshops. It has also been very active in social and traditional media, and its members have appeared on numerous television and radio shows. Most recently, the Committee has utilized this media presence to promote the establishment of a law against child marriage.



## COUNTRY-SPECIFIC POLICY REPORTS

ALWANE Algeria: Leading Algerian Women Network

### "APPOINTMENT OF ALGERIAN ACTIVE WOMEN TO DECISION-MAKING POSTS BY STRENGTHENING FEMALE LEADERSHIP"

#### SUMMARY

In Algeria, women represent 51.3% of the population. They play a vital role in the national development process through their invaluable participation in the country's socio-economic development. However, despite the increasingly significant role of women in different fields, national statistics show that their participation in local and national decision-making as well as in public and political life is far below expectations.

Therefore, in order to fulfill the commitments arising from international treaties and meetings, the issue of improving and protecting women rights has become one of the government's top priorities. In this context, the government has launched initiatives to strengthen institutional and legal capacities.

Persistent relations of inequality, inequity between men and women, and the limited involvement of men in programs advocating for women and women rights in different fields, still hamper sustainable development of the country.

This problematic is directly linked to the weak performance of institutional and legal frameworks, as well as to low-impact strategies, programs and projects that promote women. It highlights the major challenges through advocacy to address the identified weaknesses and constraints. On the political level, women's representation in political structures varied between 3 and 7% before the enactment of the equity law in 2012.

Ministerial offices, diplomatic missions and international organizations are characterized by the low representation of women. The same applies for governing bodies of political parties and Non-Governmental Organizations and Associations (NGOs).

In order to increase the participation of active Algerian women in the decision-making process and positions, ALWANE Algeria launched the "Reinforcement Project of Women's Leadership in Algeria".

The general objective of the project is to develop the skills of active women on the managerial and leadership fronts to have access to decision-making positions in all fields, and eventually to reinforce the principle of gender equality.



This general objective will be achieved through three areas of intervention, namely:

**Priority 1:** Develop a mechanism or a mentoring system that promotes the appointment of women to decision making posts.

**Priority 2:** Strengthen the capacity of Institutions and/or organizations for the development of Algerian women.

**Priority 3:** Create an online mentoring network

Finally, ALWANE Algeria aims at improving the situation of women in Algeria and to persuade policy makers, leaders of political parties and other development actors to act effectively and efficiently to support women and increase their participation in decision-making.



## I. INTRODUCTION:

As soon as the international community endeavors to fight against poverty and promote human rights, it is absurd that women, who constitute more than 50% of the world's population, do not sufficiently participate in major decisions that govern the destiny of the country, including decisions that affect them directly. Only after a lengthy battle of social feminist movements, did the level of women representation, regardless of the field, become quite high at first glance.

Several conferences and conventions were organized to address the challenges related to the decision-making involvement of women at local, regional, national, and international levels: the United Nations Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in September 1994, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995, the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) in 2003, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted by the United Nations on 18 December 1979 and the Millennium Summit in September 2000. In order to cope with these new constraints and pressures, many countries, including Algeria, have enacted laws for the protection, promotion and respect of women's rights.

Algeria has signed and ratified several agreements on defense, safeguarding, dissemination, promotion and protection of women's rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It also undertook, at the Millennium Summit, to achieve the eight (8) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including Goal 3, which aims to promote gender equality and empower women.

*Alwane-Algeria* is a committee of volunteers, men and women of different backgrounds; academics, experts, entrepreneurs, and youth activists for social development and gender equality. This organization sets itself as an opportunity for Algerian women to join the women in the Arab world.

This committee strives to contribute to this rights' construct which is currently under development in our country. ALWANE Algeria aims at creating opportunities for positive change and seeks to increase the chances of Algerian women to break into a world that, until recently, was the exclusive preserve of men. Through awareness, we tend not only to change mindsets but also to support Algerian women in the various challenges they will face.

The committee initiative expects to emphasize the goals associated with the practice, the representation of women in politics and the social equality in Algeria to help develop women's leadership in several areas, including civil society and companies.

Despite all the efforts made by the Algerian government - which has done everything to rightly promote the leadership faculties and capacities of women - they continue to face various problems and discrimination in their attempts to integrate and evolve into the world of work.

In this context, the main objective of this program is to increase the representation of women in decision-making bodies through the development of women's leadership.

In March 2012, ALWANE Algeria organized a workshop to strengthen women's leadership in collaboration with two associations of women entrepreneurs and young women. During this event, participants recommended the creation of a network or a virtual forum. Subsequently, the Committee announced the launching of

the "Leading Algerian Women Network" (LAWN), a virtual online platform which aims at strengthening women's leadership in Algeria.

This paper focuses on the three following elements:

1. Participation of Algerian women in public life;
2. Advocacy to increase the leadership of Algerian women;
3. An action plan that includes priority actions for improving women's leadership.

Together, these elements inform the Committee's efforts in these initiatives, among which is the "Leading Algerian Women Network" (LAWN).

## II. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STATUS OF ALGERIAN WOMEN:

### Focus on the participation of Algerian women in public life:

According to the 2006 UN report, the enrollment rate in primary education was 96.3% for girls and 96.9% for boys. Moreover, while 57% of girls (16-19 years) move on to high school, only 43% of boys do so. They are also more likely than boys to pursue higher education (25.4% against 18.4%) while only 18.7% of them work.

Gender stereotypes that confine women to domestic and reproductive roles affect their socio-economic and political emancipation. Married women, in particular, are generally expected to exercise only the occupations that do not prevent them from fulfilling "their" chores. Many women give up their careers when they marry. The 2006 UN survey showed that nearly half of married women employed in the private sector had stopped working after marriage. In the



public sector, this proportion was 16.3% with only 4% of women entrepreneurs, which represents only 17.5% of the beneficiaries of the national program to support micro-enterprises, which equates to 14% of entrepreneurs.

As shown in the table below, the participation of women in the liberalization of Algeria had no major effect on their political weight. It is true that in 1963, many women were elected to the Constituent Assembly, but since then, their number is constantly decreasing, and has witnessed a slight increase in 2002.

Table 1: Participation of Algerian women in public life from 1977 to 1991

Year	Number of women in public office	Growth Rate	Quality of posts	Observation
1977	10	/	First Assembly	Only 10 women were elected at the first Assembly
1982	6	-40%	5 Female Parliamentarians and one Secretary of State for Social Affairs	Given the law establishing the legal incapacity of women in the family
1986	7 out of 295	17%	Female Parliamentarians	Among which one female Minister and Deputy Minister
1991	12	71%	National Council of transition with 3 female ministers	Although Algeria has experienced the cancelling of the Parliament electoral process
1980 -1991	110 cont 50 60	/	- Assembly of wilayas. - Communal People's Assembly	Algeria has shifted to the choice of a liberal economy in the conception of human rights.

During 1977, ten women were elected at the first assembly, but in 1982, only five were among the members of the 2nd assembly, one of which was appointed Secretary of State for Social Affairs. However, in 1984 the same assembly passed the law establishing the legal incapacity of women in the family.

In 1986, seven women are among the 295 MPs, including one minister and one deputy minister. In the 80s-90s, fifty women were elected to the Wilaya assemblies and sixty to Communal People's Assemblies.

In 1989, Algeria shifts to the choice of a liberal market economy and to its conception of human rights. Due to hectic and violent political activities, however, it enshrines in the Constitution among other things, the freedom of the press, the freedom of association and the multiparty system.

In 1991, Algeria had stopped the electoral process. The parliament was dissolved and replaced by the National Transitional Council in which 12 women were nominated.

Table 2: Participation of Algerian women in public life from 1997 to 2012

Year	Number of women in public office	Growth Rate	Quality of posts	Observation
1997	4,04% 3,2% 6,02% 7,78%	47%	Parliament MPs NPC Wilaya Assembly	In June 1997 legislative and local elections, 15,817,306 voters, 7,368,605 are women and 101 women were elected.
2002	4,21% 3,89% 2,78%	69%	Wilaya Assembly Legislative Senate	Number of women candidates: (31) women: 3 women in the Government one of which is Delegate Minister for the Family and the Status of Women, 24 women in Parliament and four women in the Senate one of whom is Vice-President of the Council. NB: It should be noted that in 2007 the number of women in elections has increased from 6.94% to 7.75% in 2002 (one female minister and three female delegate ministers)
2012	30%	79%	Parliament	Quota of (30%) female candidates in electoral lists. (145 seats or 31.38% of 462 seats)

In 1995, presidential elections were held. In 1996, the Constitution was submitted to referendum and legislative elections of June 1997. During the Local elections in October, 7,368,605 out of 15,817,306 voters are women (46.59%). Despite this high rate, only 13 women from different political parties were elected to Parliament from the 322 candidates who presented themselves, or 3.2% (10 women) of all the elected members. In 1997, 78 women were elected to the Communal People's Assemblies from 1281 candidates.

In the Elections of May 2002, 27 women of 694 candidates were elected, among whom three were nominated within the government, including one Delegate Minister for the Family and the Status of Women. Only 24 remained

in parliament or 6.2%. In the Senate, four women were nominated out of a total of 144 members, or 2.78%, one of them in the Vice-Chair position.

Despite the principles of equality and non-discrimination (art. 29 of the Constitution of 1996), the right to be eligible voter as enshrined in the constitution, and the deliberate policy of some parties to promote female candidates, the number of women has increased slightly in the legislative elections of 2007; it rose from 6.94% in 2002 to 7.75% in 2007. There is only one female minister and three Delegate ministers, one in charge of the Family, the other of scientific research and the third of finance. It should be noted that the appointment of women in ministerial positions is not constant.

On January 12, 2012, a law was adopted in accordance with Article 31bis of the Algerian Constitution which provides that "The State will work to reinforce women's political rights by increasing their chances to be elected to Assembly". This law aims to increase the chances of women representation in elected assemblies through a quota of (30%) female candidates in electoral lists. The future Parliament will reserve, after official confirmation of the election results by the Constitutional Council, 145 seats for women, or 31.38% of the 462 seats. Candidates of political parties made thereby a remarkable

step forward. (FLN) candidates gleaned 68 seats out of the 220 won by the party, which was close to an absolute majority in these elections. (RND) candidates came second with 23 seats, followed by the elected Algeria Green Alliance (AAV, MSP, El-Islah and Ennahda) with 18 seats. The elected Workers' Party came fourth with 10 seats of the 20 won by the PT.

Unfortunately, this representation is not applied at the level of senior positions, with only three female ministers.

Table 3: Participation rate of women and men in political and public life

Year	Number of women in senior positions in the State	Number of men in senior positions in the State
1995	131	3823
2002	367	40487

The number of women in senior positions of the state is negligible compared to that of men. In 1995, 3823 men occupy a senior position against only 131 women. In 2002, the difference is important, against 40,489 men in senior positions, only 367 women emerge.

### CHALLENGE OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN ALGERIA

In 2015, Algeria will be accountable in front of the international community for its achievements in the implementation of the eight (8) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to which it committed at the Millennium Summit held in September 2000. While Objective 3 is devoted to gender equality and the empowerment of women, it is clear that the seven (7) other objectives cannot be achieved without the full participation of women.

It is therefore urgent - given the mixed results that the country has achieved twelve years after the Millennium Summit - that the government, civil society organizations and development partners take drastic measures to accelerate the

national process of equitable participation of women in public life and power management.

Algerian women's participation in decision-making bodies is not only an undue problem for them or a matter of demands; it is rather a matter of socio-economic and political development of our society.

This is an issue that concerns the entire society; hence, all partners should commit to find a solution. Thus, the involvement of women in decision-making should not be justified solely by their number but also by the fact that men and women of this country should participate in the decision-making bodies in order to move forward.

The challenge is to:

1. Strengthen the ongoing process initiated by the government to build a democratic system and good governance. Such a system creates the space for participation for everyone, men and women, which eventually helps improve managerial skills.
2. Achieve the objective enshrined in the constitution: equality between the genders. Every citizen has the right to participate in all aspects of life - it is a matter of basic human right.
3. Improve the living conditions of women, as they know their own needs and are the most involved in defending their interests in decision-making structures.
4. Achieve political, social and economic autonomy of women. The integration of women in decision-making structures would banish stereotypes that distort the image of the woman (the woman is able to speak in public, negotiate, analyze, etc.).
5. Optimize the use of human resources, different skills and experiences of each individual is an essential element of good governance.
6. Provide a new perspective/approach vis-à-vis the policy and decision making. This argument is supported by the idea that women in the structures will put on the agenda issues that were previously considered taboo (family planning, violence against women and girls, family budget, vision of any program, etc.).

Therefore, these issues become matters of public debate. It is also possible that the leadership style evolves towards an alternative which is more democratic and less hierarchical than the masculine style. Women

seek collaboration rather than confrontation or competition, and are difficult to be corruptible.

An intervention that is based only on the third argument (improve the living conditions of women) would be categorized under the "Women and Development" approach. That is to say that, women are mostly seen as tools to facilitate the development of a community. However, arguments 4 and 6 (achieve autonomy and provide new perspectives) seek to change existing power relations in favor of women and correspond to a Gender and Development approach.

This means that there are several ways in which women can exercise an important influence on the development process in their community and take control of their future. Their integration into the formal and informal power structures is one of the strategic ways that increase their control over resources and benefits. These power or decision structures may be political and state structures at several levels (assembly, council, technical services) or apolitical organizations such as nongovernmental organizations, development committees, health centers, women's groups.



Leadership should be based on the broad-based participation. The concept of women's participation in decision-making should not be understood only in the political spheres but integrated at all levels (family, community and national) and in all areas of life. When interpreted in this sense, women who are still reluctant to become political leaders could enhance their participation in other strata of society, including the economy to move progressively towards politics.

Today's social reality proves that women are the main actors in reproduction tasks in the society. It would therefore be logical to find a significant number of women in local (state and non state) development structures since the services provided by these structures largely cover the areas of education, health and support for orphans. These services directly affect the tasks and roles of women in the household and community. However, women are ineffectively represented in the local formal decision structures.

Table 4: the challenge of women

	Presence of women and advantages	Absence of women and disadvantages
At the individual level	Break the isolation and cultural barriers (attitudes and obsolete behaviors?), Openness, be more informed about the legislation, have confidence in herself and have the ambition to gain access to top jobs, have command over resources and be entitled to benefits.	Women will suffer from decisions made by anyone without any possibility of change. She may also be under informed about everything, have fulfillment difficulties and support problems.
At the family level	Complementarity in the performance of duties of spouses, involvement of the family in making the decisions that affect her, impact on the education of children based on the complementarity and respect for the duties of each, recognition of the true value of women in society.	The family does not take advantage of the benefits of complementarity. The absence of women in the decision-making process is a loss to society.
At the national level	The increase of development potentials based on all driving forces, the effectiveness in the implementation of some development projects, improvement of the well-being by meeting the needs of the population, changing attitudes and behaviors in line with the complementarity of the sexes.  Therefore, the current role of women is not only limited to family functions, but also reaches the national, continental and global dimensions.	The driving forces being made by both men and women, women's participation will be reduced and performance will be affected as well as the society as a whole, would not it be a factor of perpetual underdevelopment? The absence of women in the decision-making process is a loss to society.

In the current situation of Algeria, although the role of decision-making of the housewife is not sufficiently recognized, the society believes that the success of the household is related to the qualities of the woman as a housewife. Formally, this low participation is a real handicap to development; firstly because women now outnumber men, and secondly they are expected to assume more responsibility than before. Paradoxically, despite their significant contribution to national production, women do not receive fair benefits of her work.

Therefore, she continues living in absolute poverty due to the absence of personal property and the difficulty of accessing funds and other resources. This poverty forces women to be more handling daily survival works than promoting herself. It is reflected in particular by the very low income, lack of access to production means, to goods and to basic services. This state of poverty tarnishes the image of women who become much devalued.

### III. Proposed recommendations and alternatives:

Gender mainstreaming in the national development process must be guided by certain principles: the active and constructive participation of all in the management of public affairs; this would motivate all actors, men and women, to participate to express their concerns and wishes and make their voluntary contributions to the resolution of common and/or specific priority issues of each social group.

The sharing of powers and responsibilities between men and women in the household, in the workplace and, more broadly, within the national and international communities is a prerequisite for successful sustainable development initiatives.

The Algerian Constitution of 28 November 1996 recognizes the equality of women and men. Article 29 explicitly refers to gender as it states: "Citizens are equal before the law without any

discrimination as to birth, race, gender, opinion or all other conditions or personal or social circumstances".

However, the Algerian Constitution goes further. Article 31 of the Algerian Basic Law stipulates that "institutions exist for the purpose of ensuring the equality of rights and duties of all citizens, male and female alike, by eliminating the obstacles which hamper the development of the human person and prevent the effective participation of every individual in political, economic, social and cultural life". This latter provision makes it clear that the State is not merely a guarantor of equal rights of men and women in the political sphere. It is also the one who must ensure these rights and find the best ways to implement them.

The Algerian Constitution seems to recognize that stipulating a law, which is abstract and general, is not sufficient. It imposes, explicitly, on the state institutions the responsibility of ensuring the right to equality.

The Algerian State obviously endeavors to ensure equality. For example, the free and compulsory education of both sexes up to the age of 16. Article 55 of the Constitution guarantees to all citizens the right for work, for protection, security, hygiene and rest. Article 51 guarantees equal access to functions and positions to all citizens. Currently, girls are also more likely than boys to pursue higher education (25.4% against 18.4%). Yet, the above statistics show a lack of participation of women in political and economic frameworks of society. To overcome this inconvenient situation for all actors in society, we propose an action plan which revolves around three main points:

- Institutionalization of mentoring system at all economic and political organizations in the country
- Strengthening the Algerian legal framework, in accordance with international instruments for the protection and promotion of women's rights
- Capacity building of women's leadership and rights.

To do this, ALWANE Algeria suggests 3 areas of action that adopts mentoring as a general principle.

### Axis 1: Develop a mechanism or a mentoring system that promotes the appointment of women to decision-making posts:

Mentoring is a strategy to promote the generation of women in the scientific, economic and political life. Traditionally, the term mentoring refers to the relationship between two people; a mentor who is an experienced person with a respected position, and a young mented person who wants to expand his experience and personal network. It is a relationship of counseling and support, as well as an exchange process.

In its widespread and informal form, mentoring has been primarily used by men as promotion means (student corporations, sports clubs, etc.). Institutionalizing mentoring is a way to restore the balance by promoting women's access to decision-making positions. Formalized mentoring can support women in their careers, to be more efficient, competent and to have the opportunity to build a network of contacts.

In order to do so, we propose a draft law that includes an access-to-equality program. The adoption of laws and implementing regulations sets mentoring at all state institutions. Mentoring would become a systematic policy and a standard part of management practices. Thus, it becomes a mandatory component in all organizations. This would be rewarding for mentors through financial incentives (mentoring bonus). A mentor is anyone who has many years of experience. This program will be applicable to all female business executives and female politicians.

### Expected outcomes:

Increase the equal representation of women and their full participation in all spheres of social life, including decision-making and access to power.

- Provide a better representation of women in decision-making positions
- Promote the development of female entrepreneurship;
- Increased social inclusion of women in the economy.
- Enter the virtuous circle of economic growth of women;
- Meeting the Millennium Development Goals (gender aspect);
- Improve the image of working women, too often associated with domestic activities;
- Improve the Status of Women (social development as social reference)
- Improved social cohesion: reducing the gap men/women
- Economic performance factor, through mixed Management;
- Improved support of women's rights;
- Valorization of female competence.
- Changing cultural norms for women (changing attitudes);
- Favor of a change of the Family Code;
- Positive impact on family and social network (contribution in education).
- Integrate women in the public sector;
- Reduce unemployment of active women;
- Improve relations between government and women;
- Capitalize on the majority of women's skills in universities;
- Reduce corruption.

### Axis 2: Strengthen the capacity of institutions and/or organizations for the development of Algerian women:

To achieve these objectives, several activities are planned:

- ✓ Build the capacity of elected women and female politicians in leadership and women's rights
- ✓ Provide training on leadership and train trainers
- ✓ Convince and educate policymakers and leaders of political parties to adopt the system of mentoring as an economic and political support for female executives to become leader;
- ✓ Organize meetings, workshops, seminars and round tables that target directly or primarily:
  - The President of the Republic;
  - The Prime Minister;
  - The President of the National Assembly;
  - Members of the Government;
  - Parliamentarians;
  - Leaders of political parties;
  - Development partners;
  - The heads of public and private companies,
- ✓ Disseminate international texts and results of studies/surveys on women,
- ✓ Develop draft laws, implementing regulations and programs for a better integration and participation of women in decision-making positions

### Axis 3: Create an online mentoring network:

- ✓ Create an online virtual gateway with a database of expert mentors and mented persons
- ✓ Select mentors according to pre-established criteria
- ✓ Create different cells according to specialization to identify mentors
- ✓ Organize joint workshops to exchange experiences among mentors and mented persons and to evaluate the network
- ✓ Promote the network through campaigns or conferences organized by ALWANE Algeria

The order of priority actions is dependent on progress achieved by the country's respect for human rights and socio-economic development. These priorities can be set and also updated based on the results of meetings, workshops and seminars with different targets and allies.



#### IV. CONCLUSION:

Algeria today places great importance on the issue of women's access to decision-making positions. However, despite the trend that took place, the different deployments of the State in favor of Algerian women remain insufficient. This is a debate that is far from being resolved.

Through this work, ALWANE-Algeria wishes to help provide new insights that prove that it is a necessity and an opportunity to be taken into consideration because it opens new perspectives toward long term positive change through a win-win logic that is a societal responsibility. However, the ALWANE-Algeria approach is to increase the appointment of Algerian active women to decision making posts by strengthening women's leadership.

Therefore, one of the solutions that ALWANE-Algeria suggests is to develop a mechanism of mentoring program that promotes the appointment of women to decision-making posts. To achieve a tangible result, it must develop tools to measure the results and should be encouraged by supporting training and mentoring in order to build the capacities of structures and organizations.

In conclusion, we emphasize the establishment of an online mentoring platform that helps bring together all the stakeholders, to achieve the overall objective that is to increase the involvement of women in decision making in order to maintain development and sustainable positive change in their countries, which will generate added value to the society.



# BAHRAIN

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current level of participation and representation of Bahraini women in the economy, executive, judicial and legislative branches, and civil society are not reflective of the capabilities or ambitions of Bahraini women. This disproportionate representation is also not commensurate with the level of education that women have achieved in the Kingdom since early last century, or with the high proportion of college educated women and their academic success. The following report presents contemporary statistics on the low rate of women's participation in various sectors of Bahraini society.



#### INTRODUCTION

Adopting the principle of equal opportunity and the creation of the right climate for women can only occur through their development and capacity building, and through providing suitable grounds for eliminating conflicts between their family and work responsibilities. There is a need to support women's role as partners alongside men in many sectors of the national economy. Proceeding from the fact that women constitute half of the economically active members of society, the economic empowerment of women becomes an urgent need for achieving growth in the national economy. This occurs through the fostering of an environment that enables women to assume their natural roles as leaders, alongside men.

#### ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Economic empowerment of women is the process of strengthening their capacity, and upgrading their level of familiarity with their rights and obligations, while providing a cultural, physical, moral and educational environment that enables them to participate in decision-making. Women must have the ability to identify the proper circumstances for acquiring skills and experiences, and to develop the appropriate capacity to perform all roles, whether in the political, legislative, legal, educational, economic or health spheres.

## WHY ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN?

Economic empowerment of women means their financial independence, which ultimately leads to their independence on all levels: political, economic, and social.

## WHAT IS WOMEN'S POSITION IN THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN'S ECONOMIC ACTIVITY?

The following information is obtained from the Kingdom's five-year strategic plan that was issued by the Supreme Council for Women in 2007. The updated version will be issued in 2012.

### FIRST: WORKING BAHRAINI WOMEN

According to statistics issued by the General Authority for Social Security and the Civil Service Bureau, the rate of women's participation in the Bahraini workforce was 29.1% in the year 2000 and has increased to 31.9% in 2007.

### IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH:

According to statistics of the Supreme Council for Women, in 2007 the proportion of women's participation was as follows:

- 1 Ministers 7%
- 2 Attorney Ministries 7%
- 3 Undersecretaries 11%
- 4 Department Heads 16.3%
- 5 Ambassadors 0% (in 2012 two female ambassadors were appointed to the United States of America and the United Kingdom).



### IN THE JUDICIARY:

In 2007 there was only one female judge in the Kingdom and in 2012 four female judges were appointed.

### IN THE LEGISLATURE:

According to the 2012 Statistics of the Bahraini Shura Council and House of Representatives, there were 10 female members among the 25% appointees to the Shura Council. The number of female members elected to the House of Representatives was only 4. They represent only 10% of the total members of the elected House of Representatives.

The contribution of women in the private sector (according to 2007 statistics of the Supreme Council for Women) was as follows:

- 1 Chairs of the Board: 0
- 2 Members of the Board of Directors: 1%

The report that was issued by the Supreme Council for Women, entitled, *2007 National Plan for Implementing the Strategy for the Advancement of Bahraini Women*, points to a number of important elements that caused, and continue to cause five years later, the low participation rate of women in the Bahraini workforce,:

- 1 The absence of incentive policies raising women's participation rate .
- 2 The weakness of applicable laws.
- 3 The absence of a system of part-time and temporary employment opportunities with incentive benefits.
- 4 Low community awareness of the need to stimulate the role of women in national economy building.
- 5 Low awareness by women of their economic rights as guaranteed by the sharia law and the Constitution.
- 6 Low awareness by women of their rights and responsibilities towards family and society.

### SECOND: BUSINESSWOMEN

According to statistics of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the percentage of women who registered individually owned corporations is 31.4%. This percentage rose in 2007 to 32.68%, and reached its highest rate in 2010, where the percentage was 39.0%. The latest statistics of 2011 showed a slight decrease at 38.5%.

Note: Women's registration of business does not necessarily mean that it is the women owners themselves who manage commercial work. Usually, male public servants engage in commercial activities under the registration certificates of a female relative. This is because public servants are often not allowed by law to own a registered business themselves.

During the 27th session of the year 2010, only one woman out of seventeen board members was elected to the Bahraini Chamber of Commerce and Industry, meaning that women accounted for 5.9%. This low rate is an accurate reflection of the low representation of women board members in both public and private companies, and their ownership of such companies.



### THIRD: WOMEN WORKING FROM HOME

No accurate statistics are available.

### CONCLUSION

ALWANE Bahrain chose to focus on women's economic empowerment because of its importance in the sustainability of the economic independence of Bahraini women. It will lead to enhancing women's ability to make decisions and become leaders in all social, political, educational, cultural and other spheres.

Women in Bahrain enjoy a lot of advantages that qualify them to be leaders in many fields. However, they undoubtedly need a lot of awareness, especially with regard to programs that support and nurture their capabilities and skills, in addition of being informed of new developments and opportunities that could help them advance personally and professionally, whether such information pertains to issues of owning a business or working from home.



Therefore, ALWANE Bahrain will be active in conducting awareness campaigns regarding programs supporting women made available by official agencies. ALWANE Bahrain would like to encourage Bahraini women to enter the world of trade, and continue to provide specialized consulting for the continued and growing success of businesswomen throughout the Kingdom.

*Special thanks to Ammar 'Awaji and Mohammad Al-Ahmadi for compiling this report.*



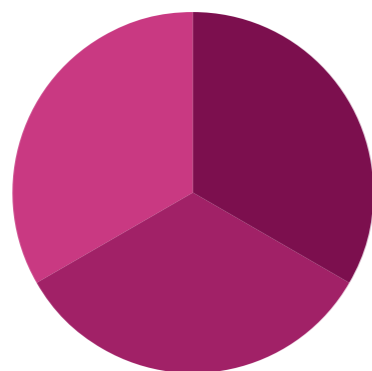
# EGYPT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALWANE Egypt's, "360 degrees of Egyptian Women," initiative focuses on the three primary dimensions of women's well being as conceptualized by the ALWANE Egypt Committee: I. Social image, II-Economic independence and III-Health & wellness. These three dimensions, examined below, act as integral indicators of Egyptian women's quality of life. ALWANE Egypt addressed these areas by creating a comprehensive tool kit, called "360 degrees of Egyptian Women," which encompasses the vital role of women and her representation in the media, economic and health sectors.



"360 degrees of Egyptian Women"



- Social Image
- Economic Independence
- Health wellness

## I- A 360-DEGREE APPROACH TO WOMEN'S SOCIAL IMAGE

The way in which women are perceived in Egypt is in part due to social and cultural norms, but also largely due to media representations of women and their expected role in society. Media plays a vital role both in creating the image upon which assumptions in the economic and social fields are built and on the policies, rules and regulations that are established and how they get to be implemented.

Media is a key tool in disbursing among women and society the economic and social rights that they should have, the image that they can live up to and what and how they can use it to benefit their causes.

Media's major problem is that it was always clouded by the political and economic directions of the official policies of the state and thus always portrayed the image of women as the society needed them to be. So for years women were portrayed as unable to cope with social and cultural obligations while working, as depending on men and as incapable of making decisions and leading their lives.

This of course affected how women practiced their rights. In many cases the rights were written but they never claimed them. In others they preferred the victimized role rather than being seen as a force to be reckoned with.

In our journey with 360 degrees women we tried to tackle those issues as follows:

- Teach women in rural areas about their economic and social rights.
- Teach women in Media on how to utilize the tools they learn in University to serve women causes.
- Teach women in Media how to build advocacy campaigns.
- Teach women in Media how to spread the right literature about women capable of balancing their cultural, social and economic obligations.
- Create Role models to be followed.

## II- A 360-DEGREE APPROACH TO WOMEN'S ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

Egyptian women have always been bread winners whether in the rural or urban communities, whether they were educated or uneducated, and whether they were skilled or not. The majority of the informal sector of Egypt (around 40% ) is comprised of women. Those women most of the time are the sole bread winners in a family and yet have no legal, social or economic rights because of being in the informal sector.

Women are also found to have low self esteem because of the way the media portrays them and also through cultural pressures that keep them molded in certain roles. This directly reflects on their ability to make decisions and on how they communicate their needs and rights. In our journey with 360 degrees women we tried to tackle those issues as follows:

- Teach women time management skills so that they can face the life/work balance challenges imposed by culture and societal norms.
- Teach women basic economic empowerment and sustainability techniques.
- Teach women about their economic rights and allow them to identify missing areas.
- Work on increasing women's self-esteem and thus their capability for decision making and communicating.
- Teach women to build their own self-images and to like and live with them.
- Teach women the power of networking and simple market outreach techniques.



### III- A 360-DEGREE APPROACH TO WOMEN'S HEALTH

Women in Egypt spend the least amount of time or money on maintaining their health and the government does not do much to improve that. Women know nothing about preventive health measures nor do they act fast enough to save their health. They are the pillars of the family and yet they do not sustain their mental and physical health. Health insurance that is extended to the majority of women in society is severely lacking in all measures of prevention or sustaining health, and thus leave women health highly jeopardized.

In our journey with 360 degrees women we tried to tackle those issues as follows

- ✓ Raise women's health awareness and demystify myths.
- ✓ Provide women with assessment tools they can use in order to know what they are missing.
- ✓ Teach women to enhance their health.



#### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM 360DEGREES EGYPTIAN WOMEN

1. Create training sessions for women in media to re-direct their focus on building the right image for Egyptian women.
2. Create awareness campaigns for women in the informal sector to raise their awareness about their economic and social rights as per the current laws and regulations.
3. Create or link with advocacy campaigns to promote rights of women working in the informal sector.
4. Advocate extending by legislation of tax payment, health insurance and other rights given by the state to all those officially working to those in the informal sector by promoting a new system of payments and commitments.
5. Host debates among officials and beneficiaries - in this case women working in the informal sector - to ensure that opinions are shared.
6. Create toolkits to distribute among women groups and NGOs targeting them to spread the needed knowledge and awareness.
7. Create health awareness sessions in collaboration with government entities to ensure that information is transparent and is directly discussed and faced .
8. Host health awareness group sessions to support the distribution of women health prevention methods.



#### INTRODUCTION:

The story of ALWANE Iraq began when the committee traveled to Amman, Jordan and participated in the Iraqi Future Search for the Advancement of Women's Leadership. Youth, experts and a number of Iraqi officials participated in the conference. Our main concern was to improve the status of women in our country and to use this opportunity to discuss their current status in present day Iraq. ALWANE Iraq is comprised of 16 individuals and has been keen to collaborate with its hosting and partnering organization, Youth Development Institute (YDI), to establish a uniform team effort composed of officials, experts and young people from every region of Iraq. Diversity in Iraq continues to be a sensitive issue, and this was clear from the beginning of the Future Search.



We met numerous times to find a common vision, to develop an advocacy action plan, and to chart our commitment to the empowerment of women, finding concrete ways to advance Iraqi women forward. This was after we discussed contemporary realities in Iraq and the possibility of addressing women's advancement in a number of sectors by putting forth policy recommendations that were consistent with our vision.

Each time ALWANE Iraq or YDI participate in a conference, we make the meaningful participation and inclusion of women a priority. Yet, women's representation continues to be weak. At one youth conference, there were a total number of 365

participants, among whom only 9 were women. Our concern shifted away from the low turnout in women participants, to community pressures, the society's perception of women and the impact of parties, religious forces and the conditions that originated after 2003. We concluded that women in Iraq are suffering from many pressures and barriers that prevent them achieving their full potential, as they would be able to do elsewhere in the world.

This report aims to describe efforts made in Iraq for the advancement of women, and how we could offer policies that ensure a positive start towards achieving this goal.



## IMPACTS OF POLICIES AND RESULTS:

The ALWANE Iraq team started from a common vision and set of objectives created through the Future Search process, which helped build and illuminate a pathway forward. Some of the goals that were set by the team included:

1. Promoting effective political participation of women so that they can exercise their rights and political freedoms and duties. Special emphasis needs to be put on the involvement and participation of young women in political decision-making.
2. Guaranteeing all economic rights for women, and removing legal, cultural and institutional obstacles that may hinder promoting the participation of women in all spheres of economic activity in Iraq.
3. Creating a cultural environment that is accepting of the rights and freedoms of women as set forth in international treaties and conventions.
4. Establish a legal framework that ensures the protection, promotion and implementation of women's rights and freedoms.



5. Increasing the presence, representation, participation and leadership of women in all sectors of society, particularly in the areas of decision-making.

Based on these targets and the action mechanism developed by the Future Search process, the ALWANE Iraq team set to work within the difficult fabric of Iraqi society. When it comes to women's issues, the situation is particularly difficult. With all of this in mind, we developed a plan based on the following three axes:

1. Contacting all officials who attended the Future Search Conference to urge them to adopt the Future Search Conference Report and to promote it through official channels.
2. Connecting with youth and civil society to achieve partnerships among a number of institutions around the strategy, so the committee can benefit as it did in its partnership with YDI.
3. Introducing ALWANE and modern women's empowerment programs to the community, and stressing the need to develop true partnerships between men and women in leading the community and understanding women's rights and freedom.

The Commission applied these three axes despite many obstacles, including:

- The deteriorating security situation and lack of stability directly contributed to the difficulty of communication with officials and establishing action plans with them.
- The ongoing deep political crisis weighed heavily on the work of the Committee making it difficult to achieve a true balance in the efforts made, and caused the media to divert attention away from such minor social activities.
- The lack of financial resources and the difficulty of obtaining financing. Applications for grants are submitted at the beginning of the year for the entire year. This program, however, started in the middle of the year.
- Occupied with academic obligations, the delay in conducting university exams, and Ramadan were events that limited the efforts of the Committee.
- The delay in issuing the Arabic version of the Future Search Report also contributed to the delay in applying the three axes that were agreed upon.

Despite the sadness and pain that we were feeling because of the ongoing events in our country and our inability to fulfill our obligations toward the program, our commitment and motivation for our effort made us creative in utilizing that which was possible and available. Our passion for spreading our message pushed us to think and work hard. We were able to accomplish many activities related to the program, including:

1. Meeting with the Minister of Youth and Sports, Engineer Jassim Mohammad Ja'far, to discuss the ALWANE Iraq plan, and the possibility of providing the logistical support and adopting the policies indicated in the report. 3,000 copies of the report were ordered to be printed, and distributed to all youth forums across Iraq.

2. Meeting with the Adviser to the Minister of Youth and Sports in a lengthy session to discuss the contents of the Iraqi Future Search Report and the possibility of overcoming the obstacles facing the adoption of the policies laid down in the report.
3. Meeting with Dr. 'Athraa Abd Al-Amir, Adviser to the Head of Parliament on Youth Affairs. During the meeting ALWANE Iraq hopes to schedule another meeting with the Head of Parliament to present the Report to the Women's Committee and the Committee of Youth and Sports. The objective was for the report to become legislation. Due to the political crisis, such a meeting has not yet been scheduled.
4. Contacting Mr. Na'eem Suhail, Advisor to the President, hoping for him to deliver the report to the President. Due to his illness and treatment abroad the issue did not go through. Currently, attempts are being made to arrange a meeting with the President.





5. Sayyed Hussein Al-Sadr, sponsor of the Youth Development Institute, printed 1,000 copies of the Future Search Report. Printing is on the way and we hope to present the report at the next conference.
6. Coordination with the Ministry of Women to conduct a ceremony for releasing the report. We are in the final stages of preparing for the ceremony.
7. A team of young people from the organization roamed the streets of the Holy City of Kadhimiya upon the spread of a rumor saying that non-veiled women will not be allowed to enter the city. This rumor triggered panic among non-veiled women. The youth roamed the streets of the city and coordinated with government departments to deliver the message that the city was a city of peace and coexistence, that it was open to all cultures, and that the freedom of mobility was guaranteed.

8. ALWANE Iraq in collaboration with the YDI conducted 9 Fox Group workshops in 8 Iraqi provinces as part of the strategy set in the National Human Development Report on Youth. After drawing conclusions, the Future Search Report was adopted as a base paper for composing the report because of the accuracy of the notes included in it.
9. ALWANE Iraq took part in the ceremonial Arab Environment Day in Al-Zoraa Park in the center of Baghdad. The committee was able to meet with a number of officials and introduced the ALWANE program and Future Search Report. Among the officials were the Minister of the Environment, the Chairman of the Committee of Youth and Sports for the Baghdad Provincial Council, a number of representatives of non-governmental organizations, and many citizens.
10. ALWANE Iraq, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and the UNDP, took part in organizing the largest celebration of peace in Iraq defying all security and logistics obstacles. The celebration was attended by more than 1,000 people from all parts of Iraq. The UNDP office issued a letter of thanks to the ALWANE Iraq Office Director and Committee member Dr. Muhannad Al-Baya'.

#### CONCLUSION:

ALWANE Iraq is full of dreams, potential, and ideas. Despite its greatest efforts to achieve some of these goals, the difficult security situation created serious obstacles that prevented the committee from realizing all of its goals. As a result, ALWANE Iraq has re-strategized and identified new and more effective approaches that take into consideration the insecurity and instability of the country.

1. Creating low-budget community-based initiatives in which women participate in public events would create an accepting public opinion that will ultimately achieve the desired goals.
2. Creating an internal alliance of feminist organizations concerned with this issue in order to reduce pressures and achieve the farthest possible reach.
3. Benefiting from educational institutions in the promotion and implementation of activities that contribute to increased awareness. The Committee was unable to achieve this item because of the year-end vacation.
4. The need to allocate finances to cover some of the logistical cost and publications that contribute significantly to increased awareness and outreach.
5. The program must focus on women with disabilities and special needs and widows. There are many such women in Iraq with needs not fulfilled because of societal constraints.
6. Understanding the political and economic requirements related to the status of women. Women do not have a clearly defined role, and therefore, their participation is very weak.



**ALWANE Iraq gained a strong committee with youth as its foundation. The youth are full of energy, goodness, ambitions and determination to achieve their goals. In addition, the committee includes experts who worked diligently to achieve their goals ...Thanks to you all.**

*Special thanks to Dr. Essam Asaad, ALWANE Iraq Country Officer for his drafting of the report.*



# JORDAN

## *Toward Increasing Participation of Jordanian Women in Decision-Making Economic, Social & Political Committees & Councils*

### INTRODUCTION:

Though it is poor in natural resources, Jordan has prioritized efforts to generate qualified human resources through education, training and capacity building. In Jordan, human resources have emerged as an important source of investment for the state, which has been keen to provide educational and health services as well as infrastructure services to all citizens. The government has a strong belief in the equality of all citizens regardless of race, language and religion. The second chapter of the Jordanian Constitution stipulates: **"Jordanians shall be equal before the law. There shall be no discrimination between them as regards to their rights and duties on grounds of race, language or religion."**



Despite this equality under law, studies have shown that males require less years of duty to attain leadership positions than their female counterparts. There are some obstacles that prevent women's access to such positions including the inability of institutions to create opportunities for the advancement of women. This leads to women focusing on clerical or administrative work even if they possess the skills and high qualifications to qualify for higher positions. These limitations prevent ambitious women from gaining leadership positions. The skewed male/female ratio regarding leadership positions leads women to feel isolated and unable to engage in the prevailing administrative environment, and thus less able to lead and influence others.

These studies also indicate that the lack of women's access to leadership positions is due to the fact that current decision-makers and power holders are men. Therefore, they make decisions that meet their interests without taking into account women's qualifications and experience. Many men in these positions claim that women are not qualified to carry out large tasks, and that their work is temporary and not important. They believe that men are and should be the primary breadwinners. They also claim that women are less realistic and less creative than men. At the same time, some women in our society suffer from an inability to make decisions, which may be attributed to the prevalent education and socialization techniques at home and within the community, that view women as executors of decisions, not decision makers. Based on these indicators, this paper discusses the status of women and makes necessary recommendations to increase women's participation in decision-making.

The study details the reasons for women's lack of access to effective decision-making positions. Some of the primary reasons which emerged include:

1. Family: The perspective of family responsibility that rests on the shoulders of women, making them primarily responsible for household duties, such as cleaning, cooking and buying household needs.
2. Children: It is difficult to find someone to watch over the children, especially those who are 0-14 years old.
3. Seniors: The study indicates that 31.5% of female managers consider the presence of an elderly family member such as parents, uncles, aunts or older brothers who are in need of care a hindrance to the advancement of women to senior management jobs.

4. Institutional barriers: The prevalent notion that women cannot be successful managers because of their family circumstances, and the dominant cultural notion that senior positions must be run by a man.
5. Hidden gender discrimination: Although the law does not distinguish between women and men, women continue to experience and stress the presence of such discrimination.
6. Masculine culture: It is believed that masculine power as an institutional force marginalizes women and excludes them.
7. Self-confidence: The self-confidence of men is much higher than that of women. Although the qualifications of women are sometimes more than those of men, their lack of self-confidence prevents them from applying to managerial posts.
8. Networks: The lack of relatives who are in high positions may be a prominent obstacle in women's lack of access.
9. Stereotypes: These are considered one of the main deterrents to women's progress. Decision makers are men, and they do not appoint women to high positions only because they are women. In addition, a woman's upbringing often does not encourage her to find a job, and instead relegates her to the domestic sphere. This type of stereotyping limits the positions that women can assume.



Based on the above, this paper was prepared to address the status of women, and to make the necessary recommendations to increase women's participation in decision-making.

### THE OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Active, empowered Jordanian women should have the opportunity to achieve equal representation in high level and managerial positions in both private and public sectors throughout the country. Until full equality can be achieved, women should strive to obtain no less than 30% representation in these positions and gradually move towards a just 50% male/female ratio. This shall be the case for positions of policy and decision making within councils of various sectors, whether elected or appointed.

### SUB-GOALS TO BE ACHIEVED

1. A Jordanian woman who is active and empowered to assume leadership positions in political parties and civil society organizations.
2. A Jordanian woman who is actively participating in various leadership positions in the executive branch and in municipal councils.
3. An empowered Jordanian woman who is actively involved in both the Senate and House of Representatives.
4. A Jordanian woman who is represented in various judicial bodies such as the Judiciary Council and the Constitutional Court.

### I. JORDANIAN WOMEN IN SOCIAL COUNCILS RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this, ALWANE Jordan would like to present the following recommendations:

1. Integrate rights of women in all social activities and not limit this to committees or councils for women or men alone
2. Increase acceptance of women in all active social councils

3. Achieving a fair balance of representation in social councils, considering that the society consists of both men and women.
4. Focus on creating social change by ensuring that there is active representation and not just the appearance of representation.

### II-JORDANIAN WOMEN IN POLITICAL COUNCILS RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this, ALWANE Jordan would like to present the following recommendations:

1. Increasing the presence of women in political councils requires a radical change in the meaningful inclusion of women. Women must be included in the electoral process from the beginning, and not just at election time.
2. Raising social awareness among men and women regarding the importance of proper political participation of all segments of society.
3. Emphasizing the important role of women in fostering an effective and transparent political environment for the benefit of the entire nation.
4. Raising awareness of the benefits gained from the presence of women in the field, including attending meetings. For example, women are less likely to become involved in corruption cases.



### III- JORDANIAN WOMEN IN ECONOMIC COUNCILS RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this, ALWANE Jordan is presenting the following recommendations:

1. Women's point of view must be represented at leadership and decision-making levels because women play a crucial economic role in the society and at home.
2. Considering that women play a role in the workplace, economic policies affect them as much as they affect men. Accordingly, society is responsible to take women's opinion into consideration.
3. In the event of any economical decision, working women have a right and responsibility to affect these policies. Equal representation of women in these councils will enable these policies to be fully implemented and realized.



# KUWAIT



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women in Kuwait are considered to be among the most emancipated women in the Gulf region. They can travel, drive, and work without their fathers' or husbands' consent, and they even hold senior government positions. Women in Kuwait are true trailblazers for women's economic rights in the region, as they are able to work freely and can achieve positions of power and influence.

Women in Kuwait gained the right to vote and stand in parliamentary and local elections in May 2005. And in October 2009, Kuwait's Constitutional Court ruled that women were able to gain their own passports, without the consent of their husbands.

In 2005, the Emir of Kuwait appointed the first Kuwaiti woman as the Minister of Planning and the Minister of State for Administrative Development. In efforts to take the Kuwaiti woman's political role to a higher level in the next government reshuffle, His Highness approved three women to become ministers. Furthermore, in the 2009 parliamentary elections, four women were elected as Members of Parliament.

Kuwaiti women are also allowed to become police officers, royal guards, members of the Special Forces, and immigration officers.

The Kuwaiti government's Service Bureau of Employment states that women in Kuwait are entitled to pursue job opportunities and high level positions as equals to their male counterparts.

Despite this significant progress, women in Kuwait still face legal and social discrimination. In the family courts (i.e. those controlled by religious bodies), one man's testimony is sometimes given the same weight as that of two women; however, in the civil, criminal, and administrative courts, the testimony of women and men are considered equally. Additionally, women face unique challenges in trying to own and run small and medium sized businesses, as many women entrepreneurs suffer from restrictive registration processes and a law that impedes their ability to secure their rights and launch their own business.

Nevertheless, starting and managing a small business requires a great deal of know-how on a variety of topics and it is extremely important to stay on top of the latest and best practices. Entering into the world of entrepreneurship can be an exciting yet daunting experience. ALWANE Kuwait, has successfully launched a self-paced, easy-to-use instruction guide that covers a variety of business basics, including how to start your business, how to write a business plan, how to franchise, and how to adopt technology for business benefits.

## OVERVIEW:

Kuwait has a population of 3.4 million people of which nearly 40% are female and more than 2.3 million are expatriates (UN 2008). The State has one of the highest literacy rates in the Arab world at 93%, and over 67% of university graduates are female (Kuwait Education Indicators Report 2007, p 122), demonstrating high educational attainment amongst the youth population. A recent estimate by the UNDP (2006) suggests that 49% of the workforce is female, which makes Kuwait hold one of the highest proportions of women's employment in the Gulf, largely in medicine and the public sector.

It is important to point out that certain labor market regulations have restricted female participation in the workforce, notably the banning of women working between the hours of 8pm and 7am (ibid). However, gender reforms, which have been implemented since 2005, have given women full political and electoral rights and demonstrated a shift, in which many women have begun to hold senior positions in government. For example, Dr. Ma'ssoumah al-Mubarak was appointed as Minister of Planning and Administrative Development shortly after these reforms took place.

A survey designed and implemented by ALWANE Kuwait was carried out on a sample group of 40 women small business owners. The survey results showed that more than 80% of Kuwaiti women small business owners are suffering from, legislative restriction, licensing complications, and a bureaucratic system that is very difficult to navigate. Although there are some companies that provide loans to small businesses, most of the women surveyed have problems accessing startup capital holders.



However, there are some positive initiatives currently being implemented in Kuwait aimed at the advancement of women-owned businesses, including the launch of Business Professional Women (BPW) Kuwait which seeks to motivate women to continuously develop their capacities and to increase their participation across social, economic and political activities (Arab Times 2009).

The BPW Kuwait Expo held earlier this year capitalized on these aims and visions by providing women information about, and access to a number of small and medium sized businesses owned by BPW women. These businesses were displayed throughout the exhibition, allowing participants to engage in and explore the various options available to them in terms of employment, as well as providing exciting networking opportunities (ibid). Such exhibitions provide extremely important societal frameworks for women to be able understand and engage with other women who have successfully entered the labour force.

**ALWANE KUWAIT IN ACTION**

ALWANE Kuwait has contributed to this movement through the launch of a special initiative that is taking Kuwaiti society by storm. This initiative was not focused on encouraging women to work in already established companies, but rather on how to lead, guide and coach women to open their own small enterprises. ALWANE Kuwait aims to

invest in the minds of Kuwaiti women, and to give them the tools they needed to make their entrepreneurial dreams into real businesses.

Through a series of intensive business training sessions, ALWANE Kuwait successfully linked 25 small business women enterprise startups to 25 established small business women mentors. One entirely new small business will be launched in Kuwait through the help of Mrs. DalalJenaie who serves as an ALWANE mentor and is the owner of Mars and Venus Coaching Company. Through her work with ALWANE, Ms. Janaie was able to link one of the program's trainees with Mrs. Noor Almtawa (Chocolate Bar owner) and now they are working together in a 6-week internship training program which aims to support and provide practical advice to an emerging businesswoman. A new chocolate business will be opened soon thanks to the ALWANE Kuwait committee's help and dedication to women's businesses.

ALWANE Kuwait's efforts have received great praise across Kuwait's media landscapes. Mrs. Jana Albanna, the ALWANE Kuwait Country Officer, had extensive interviews in Al-yaqaza and Sarab magazines. The committee activities highlighted the objectives of ALWANE in contributing greatly to the field of women's empowerment, specifically working to enhance women's abilities in launching their own small enterprises.



**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

ALWANE Kuwait is focused on working with the government to legislate new laws that reinforce women's ability to legally register their small to medium sized enterprises.

These positive developments, aimed at enhancing female participation in the economy, have shown much promise, but can be further expanded and capitalized upon. This can be achieved through creating home working opportunities to facilitate women's entrance into the labor market.

Even though, the government is more focused on securing official licensing and registrations, policymakers need to establish policies that create a freer and more supportive business environment, one which encourages and facilitates the growth of more women owned enterprises.



**CONCLUSION:**

The long-term benefits of these developments to the Kuwaiti economy will be seen through increased female participation, allowing optimal use of the entire population's skills and qualifications, which will eventually aid in closing the gender gap in terms of full educational and employment attainment.



# LEBANON

## BACKGROUND

Although women represent 52% of the population in Lebanon, outnumbering men in a number of fields, they only claim 21% of the labor market. In Lebanon, women are subjected to a variety of forms of gender inequality on a daily basis; whether in their work place, communal sphere, social circles and at the top, through the government and legislative body. The situation of women in Lebanon is double-edged, as there exists wide participation of women, outnumbering men in schooling, social and economic life, but at the same time, an acute suffering of women through systemic discrimination maintained through prevailing family codes set by social patriarchy along with a deteriorating participation in the political stratum. Women's participation in the parliament has been exponentially declining throughout the last rounds of parliamentary elections, with only "Women in Black" having the chance to be represented with a seat in the parliament after a husband, a brother, or a father has been assassinated. The current Lebanese cabinet has zero women ministers, with no law that exists imposing a certain quota of women ministers.



Gender inequality and stereotyping have prevailed in the Lebanese community since the post-war years and there have been increasingly more male leaders in authority positions. The dysfunctional political sphere in Lebanon deprives women from being represented in positions of power. Adding to this injustice, laws do not secure protection for women, which is evident through the non-existence of laws that protect women from domestic violence, and do not assure the citizenship of women who are married to non-Lebanese men by not granting their husbands and children Lebanese nationality, while in return granting it to the wife and descendants of a Lebanese man married to a non-Lebanese.

"Lebanese women are subject to different family codes depending on which religion and denomination they belong to. In all these different community codes women are discriminated against in terms of rights and obligations, although this discrimination differs from one community to another", says blogger and women rights activist, Nadine Moawad. Integrating gender equality and the human rights of women in laws, policies, strategies, and government plans in addition to preventing and protecting them from gender based violence will improve women's role and social and political engagement at a national level.

## THE TOPIC OF FOCUS

ALWANE Lebanon brainstormed the best way to tackle gender inequality in the country. They came to the conclusion that it would be more effective to focus on just one aspect of women's inequality, rather than attempt to embrace all of the challenges and aim too high without accomplishing anything. This comes also from the belief that all these issues are interrelated in some way.

In the time of global economic hardship, ALWANE Lebanon decided to choose the topic of women's economic empowerment as its primary focus. To truly claim one's rights, one needs to achieve independence, which first comes from economic independence. ALWANE Lebanon believes that when a woman has the capability of providing for her own financial needs, it gives her the possibility to emancipate herself more easily.

There are many women who work very hard to make a decent living. Some take the initiative to start their own businesses or start new initiatives. ALWANE Lebanon will focus on this group of women, who are courageous enough to start something new, not following the standard path of others. The committee was interested in knowing more about the women who decide to open their own shops, sell their handmade products, decide to become cab drivers or start their own companies, all this while taking care of their families. In Lebanon, only 1% of those who start their own business are women. ALWANE Lebanon wants to see this number grow.

Economic independence is the first step before social and political autonomy. There is not enough emphasis made on women working on their own. The aim of this project is to shed light on these successful women trailblazers and to encourage others to undergo the same track, by showing that it is doable despite the many obstacles.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

ALWANE Lebanon found that the issue of women's economic independence was still a very broad topic that needed to be defined more clearly. The committee decided to publish a book profiling 50 inspirational women. This book is titled "Qa'idat" ("Women Leaders"), named after ALWANE Lebanon's greater initiative to implement new programs in the areas of Lebanon's legal framework, education and advocacy (discussed further in ALWANE Lebanon's policy recommendations).

The committee felt as though the publication of these stories on the internet alone would have missed its target audience, middle-aged working women, who are generally not avid online users. A book helps make these case studies of successful business women more accessible all over the country.

The book will be in the form of 50 portraits of exceptional and successful Lebanese women. The ALWANE Lebanon committee set up several criteria for these women in order to be truly representative of Lebanon's work force, as well as diverse in terms of geography, domain and age. Through these portraits, the committee aims to demonstrate what obstacles these women overcame and how they did so. Most importantly, ALWANE Lebanon hopes these women can become a source of inspiration for others. These portraits are very personal, whereby the encounter of the interview process alone inspired the persons interviewing the women.



Many people outside of ALWANE Lebanon suggested names of interesting and successful women to interview. As a result, the committee created a very diverse list of women, working in the education, health, agriculture, business and artistic sectors, in addition to work in the municipalities or in governmental facilities. Each woman has had a very different experience and circuitous path in reaching where they are today. Some had to face societal pressure, others more economic oriented barriers.

Most of these women do not realize the importance of their achievements. Indeed, they consider what they have accomplished as only “normal” and hardly acknowledge the hardships they had to go through to get there.

The Lebanese publishing house Tamyras is interested in publishing the completed book. Tamyras is a very well established publishing house in the country, which always manages to have its books available in the largest numbers of libraries.

At the same time, since the ALWANE sub-regional meetings, Nasawiya has become a café space. It is an opportunity for the committee to have its own hands-on experience in creating and managing a business from the ground up and attempting to become a self-sustainable space. Nasawiya members take shifts at the café, instead of hiring an outsider to take care of it. The committee and Nasawiya members wanted to experience firsthand the difficulties of being self-sustainable, but also want insight into learning how to overcome these difficulties.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of Lebanon Committee suggest immediate action plans in the following areas: the Legal Environment, Education and Public Advocacy and Awareness.

### Legal

The Lebanese legal system, especially in the context of economic policies, does include articles that support economic fairness in terms of gender, but also includes regulations that stand as major obstacles to simple economic tasks, such as opening a bank account. Extensive research can result in identifying positive articles as well as the legal loopholes and understanding how they may affect women and men differently. In Lebanon’s current legislative framework, amendments of laws require sending a draft to specific parliamentary committees, which study the draft and propose it to the parliamentary assembly for agreement and enactment.

### Education

The promotion of gender equality needs to be better integrated into the education system. This is very important for achieving women’s economic independence. One major challenge women face as they strive to achieve financial independence is their belief that they are meant to manage the household and society’s expectation of them to prioritize their families and renounce a bulk of their freedoms in order to become devout wives and mothers. These social norms are closely tied to gender identities and gender roles reinforced through Lebanon’s current education system.



ALWANE members have already noticed that teachings on gender identity and gender equality should be introduced at an earlier stage. It is very difficult to promote gender equality to the young generation (18-30 years old) after societal norms have already shaped them and taught them distorted ideas of gender identities and gender roles distribution. It is understandable that it will be very difficult to reach consensus on the material that needs to be taught in Lebanon’s education system. For instance, the educational institutions will have to decide if special programs should be created on these subjects, or if the discussion of gender equality can be integrated throughout the overall social studies curriculum. While these discussions take place, the most pressing issue is to remove all sexist educational curricula which advocate specific tasks for girls/women and puts them in positions where they are forbidden certain liberties and boys/men are granted others.

Another important measure is to support NGOs working to introduce gender identity terms and gender equality teachings to children through entertaining ways, such as school plays or themed outdoor events. Feminist non-profit groups can work on designing these workshops (plays, outdoor events) in the most effective way and start working closely with school administrations and the Ministry of Education to allow these groups access to schools.



## Media and Advocacy

It is important to both monitor the media’s representation of women and simultaneously launch advocacy and awareness raising campaigns that promote a more gender sensitive depiction of both sexes. The media is loaded with sexist messages that reinforce beliefs that women cannot be entrepreneurs or are only capable of performing simple administrative tasks. Media campaigns should encourage female entrepreneurship and highlight entrepreneurial success stories of women. ALWANE Lebanon’s Qai’dat\* book intends to do this by not limiting the term “entrepreneurial” to business innovation, but have it include the fields of politics, social activism, media, cinema and even on the most personal of levels.

## Notes & Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Nasawiya for its endless dedication and support of women’s empowerment initiatives and collective feminist action in Lebanon and across the region and the authors of this report: Micheline Tobia, Mira Daher, Farah Shamas, and other ALWANE Lebanon Committee members.





# LIBYA

## BACKGROUND

Despite the fact that Libyan women have enjoyed an impressive amount of political, social, and economic freedom since the revolution of 1969, there exists an incredible potential for sustained and lasting reforms for women in Libya following the recent conflict in the nation and its shift towards democracy. Yet there are also numerous factors which continue to hinder progress towards gender equality, which may in fact serve to cause backsliding in the politically volatile nation. As Ali Zidan - Libya's newest Prime Minister - takes office, he must seek to reconcile the wants, needs, and desires of countless geographic, political, and social factions which currently exist within the fractured Libyan society. However, these decisions which he and the National General Congress will make in the coming months may forever impact the scope and effectiveness of women's advancement in Libyan society, and in the region as a whole. It is imperative that these decisions be forward-looking, and seek to enhance the role of women in society, rather than diminish it.



Though it is argued by some that women's advancement was a political tactic used to gain favor from an emerging sector of society, Libyan leaders under the rule of Muammar Gaddafi were committed to improving the rights and standing of women in society within the framework of Islamic law. Women were afforded the right to vote, as well as the right to form associations, gain employment outside of their home, divorce, and own property independent of their husbands.

Yet despite the impressive amount of rights granted to women for the region, the true progress achieved as a result of these benefits remains small and drawn along economic and cultural lines. While the Libyan government provided the impetus to generate increased female employment, the definition of what the government considered "spheres suitable for female labor" were limited by antiquated tradition, hindering true development, and resulted in only 7% of women participating in the Libyan workforce in the 1980s, and only 25% today.

Politically, though women had been given the right to vote since the early 1960s, their participation in politics was minimal, as only one woman managed to attain a national cabinet position by 1987, standing as Assistant Secretary for Information and Culture. Furthermore, Gaddafi's "state feminism" benefited only an elite sector of women in Libya who could afford—either economically or politically—the influence to ensure beneficial treatment. The vast majority of women in Libya had these progressive institutions of equality side-stepped by social traditions and mores, creating barriers to attaining influence, resources, and funding necessary to thrive in society or attain elected office. Though several female ministers eventually gained influential positions in the Government, such as Salma Ahmed Rashed, who eventually became an ambassador to the Arab League

of Nations, more and more the opportunities touted by the Gaddafi government as beneficial for women became seen by an increasing number of female college graduates as ways of paying lip-service to women's empowerment, while failing to achieve any real gains.

In the period following Gaddafi's deposition, Libyan women have faced, and continue to struggle against opposition to gender equality and participation. Despite the fact that women played central roles in organizing, leading, and publicizing the protests which eventually lead to the democratization of Libya, women have since found themselves shut out of the conversations necessary to ensure political restructuring which provides equality to women. Only one woman was present on the National Transitional Council of 102 members, and none were present on the Libyan Election Commission. Furthermore, Prime Minister Ali Zidan has named just two women in his 27 member cabinet.

Without women's voices present in the newly formed government of Libya, gender equality cannot be guaranteed. Women candidates made historic inroads in the national legislature, as the country voted in its first democratic elections in nearly 50 years in July of 2012. However, the rise of increasingly conservative parties in the General National Congress holds the potential to scale back many of the rights gained by women during the previous regime, and as the Government convenes to draft a new national constitution, women must struggle to become a part of the process, ensuring that women are given the rights and equality they deserve.

## ALWANE LIBYA

ALWANE Libya will take advantage of this unique window of opportunity in Libya's political history. In spite of the promising outcomes of July's election, much work remains to be done on the issue of women's political participation in this post-conflict nation. Although 33 of the incoming representatives are women, this is only a small glimpse of women's influence in politics and the potential results of their participation. Of the 1,206 candidates, almost half were women. Similarly, women accounted for 40% of the participating voters. Such a high level of involvement has the fortunate side consequence of forcing even the most conservative parties to heed women's interests and cultivate them as voters. The advocacy efforts of ALWANE Libya in the coming months will focus on the potential of such an amazing groundswell of support for women's involvement in political processes. As ALWANE Libya Committee Member Ms. Azza Maghur stated,



“Libya has a unique opportunity to start anew, and to cast off the shadows of the oppressive autocratic system that has caused so much bloodshed and marginalization for over three decades. The brave men and women of the ALWANE Coalition will over the next few months be working to transform Libya into a nation in which men and women move forward as equal stakeholders.”

## CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS

ALWANE Libya aims to ensure that women are included in all levels of political leadership, post-revolution. Prior to the elections, committee members pushed for the modification of the Electoral Law in order to replace a 10% women's quota with a “zipper system” on all party lists. The Committee is now focusing on ensuring that women are represented in the country's 60-member Constituent Assembly, which based on Article 30, of the Libyan Constitutional Declaration will be responsible for drafting a permanent constitution for Libya. The Group is also striving to overturn and/or prevent laws and regulations that prevent women from reaching positions of leadership.



# MOROCCO

*Girls' Education: The Key to Improving Women's Status in Morocco*

## I- INTRODUCTION: WHY EDUCATION?

Members of ALWANE Morocco consider women and girls' lack of access to education as a key issue and major axis for the development of women's leadership and development status.

The committee is founded on the basic premise and belief that education is the first step to effective development. The UNDP considers primary education to be at the heart of human development. Educating women and girls is the key factor for improving their status and enabling them to lead and take control of their lives.

Amartya Sen, the 1998 Noble Prize winning economist, stressed the role of education in the formation of individuals' potential. He said, "An educated person is more open. [Her] abilities to choose and carryout [her] responsibilities are larger and wider."

Therefore, ALWANE Morocco believes that it is not possible to integrate women into public life, and to make them effective developmental agents of their society unless they are educated and able to realize their own rights.



## II- PROBLEMS FACING GIRLS' EDUCATION: THE CURRENT SITUATION AND UNDERLYING REASONS

### 1 - Situation Assessment

Across the world, illiteracy has always been a predominantly feminine phenomenon. The lack of equal opportunities between the sexes regarding education is, unfortunately, an international given. The number of illiterate women is generally twice that of illiterate men.

In Morocco, illiteracy remains one of the major problems causing Morocco to rank at the bottom of the Human Development Index.

As for gender equality, the most recent World Economic Forum Report ranked Morocco 129 out of 134, making it the country with the third lowest level of gender equality in the Middle East and North Africa. Only Saudi Arabia and Yemen were ranked below Morocco. The reason for this is primarily the lack of women's access to the labor market which includes only 28 women for every 84 men out of every 100 people. In addition, the income of women is four times less than that of men (\$1,603 per year for women compared to \$6,694 for men).

Outside of discriminatory hiring practices, this low level of participation and low income may be explained by the lack of qualifications. In 2011, the illiteracy rate for Moroccan women aged 10 years and more was 41.3% (vs. 54.7% in 2004). In rural areas, the percentage reaches 58%, with a recorded decrease of 16.5% between 2006 and 2011. These figures show that the illiteracy rate, whether in urban or rural areas, have declined significantly. Yet, it remains at high levels compared with international standards.

If we take into account illiteracy for both genders, since the year 2000, there has been a gradual rise in the number of adults who are unable to read or write in any language.

This clearly shows the failure of compulsory education schemes. Experts attribute the high proportion of uneducated adults to the problem of dropout. A significant number of children dropout before completing the initial stages of education. In addition, the levels and methods of early education are inadequate and of low quality in Morocco. Even the ABC's of basic training are not being taught in a sustainable manner.

It should be noted, however, that Morocco's education budget went up from 9.2 billion Dirhams in 1990 to 23.3 billion Dirhams in 2003. This important rise demonstrates that education is considered a priority in Morocco. In 1990, the education budget constituted 24.1% of the state budget. In 2003, that percentage increased to 28.2%.

### Statistics on Illiteracy in Morocco (for the year 2011):

Illiteracy rate: 30%  
Illiteracy rate among women: 41.3%  
Illiteracy rate among rural women: 58%



## 2 - School Dropouts

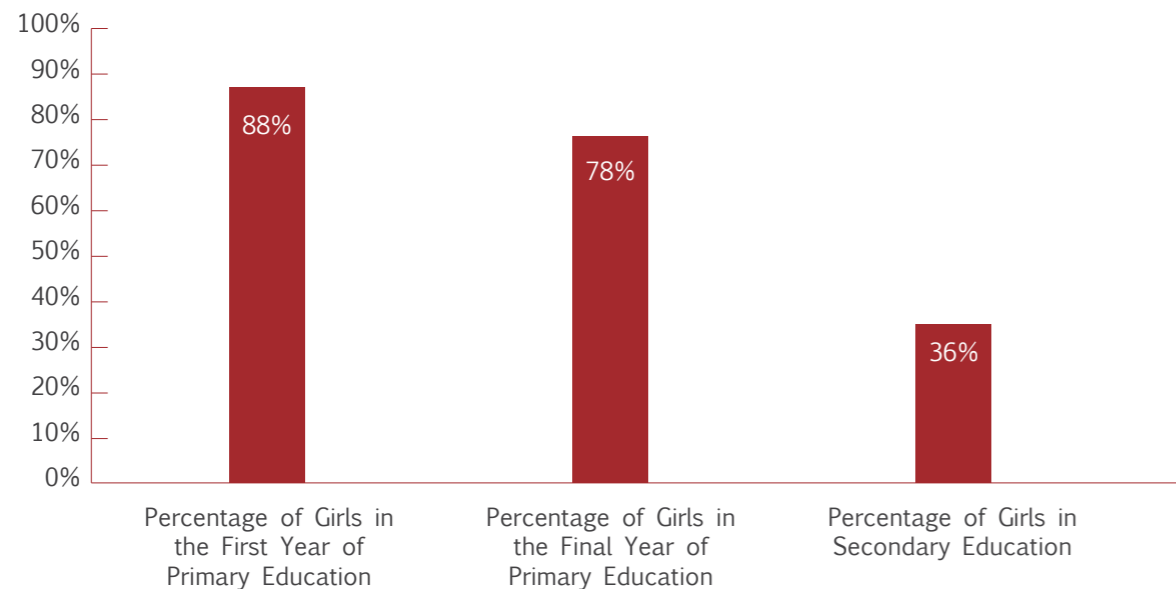
According to a 2004 study by the State Secretariat for Literacy and Non-Formal Education titled, "The Cost of Not Schooling in Morocco," each additional year of elementary schooling (primary education) enabled a person to earn an additional 12.7%, and an additional 10.4% for each additional year of the secondary level. The same study confirms that the income rate increases by about one additional percentage point with regard to women. Thus, it is evident that women's lack of schooling reduces their chances of gaining financial independence, which impacts their lives, independence, dignity, and integration in professional, political and social lives in general.

On the other hand, Morocco suffers greatly from the problem of school dropouts. Between 300 and 400 thousand children leave primary school each year in Morocco. Of them, 80% live in rural areas, and 58.4% are females.

58.4% of children who are victims of dropout are females

According to UNESCO, the number of Moroccan girls who enrolled in primary education between 2005 and 2010 was 88% of the total girls of school age. Yet, only 78% of them reached the final year of primary level, and only 36% reached the secondary education level.

Percentage of Female Students in Different School Levels



## 3 - Obstacles Facing Women's Education

The high illiteracy and dropout rates among Moroccan females may be attributed to a diverse set of barriers, notably:

### A - Economic Problems:

- Young girls help their families in farming, housework, or as maids in the homes of other families
- Books and school supplies are very expensive and families are unable to meet the needs of their children. This gives preference to boys with education and forces girls to stay at home. This is mainly due to widespread poverty, vulnerability, and discriminatory stereotypes that say investing in boys' education is more important.

### B - Weak Infrastructure:

- There is a geographical dimension where girls in remote areas are forced to travel long distances to reach educational institutions
- The lack of adequate transportation
- Logistical problems, such as the absence of toilets in many educational institutions in rural areas cause parents refuse to enroll their daughters.

### C - Governance

- The absence of a unified vision among the various governmental components causes each government sector to act individually and to be semi-secluded from other sectors.

### D - The General Perception of Education

- Parents' lack a general awareness of what can be achieved by their daughters in school and in life after school. There is an absence of incentives for attending school for girls.
- The gradual absence of education as an incentive for social advancement in the public mind.

## E - The Stereotypical Image of Women in School Curricula

In addition to the national illiteracy and drop out problems in Morocco, there exists an even larger issue facing women's education in their image and representation in school curricula.

According to several studies by the Ministry of National Education and some women's and human rights associations, the image of Moroccan women in school curricula is "catastrophic". Young girls are either absent from school curricula, or are depicted helping their mothers in household chores. A male child is either playing or sitting with his father in the living room.

In general, the "Islamic Education" curriculum in Morocco remains the most stringent regarding the image of women and girls.

One study showed that, even at the quantitative level, the presence of women remains very weak in general. They are represented 7 times less than men in the same curriculum. Even when a woman or young girl is present, students are held back by degrading preconceived, stereotypical images.



### III- WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

#### 1 - The Role of Government

The Moroccan state provides free education to all segments of society. However, because of the government's poor logistical resources, lack of access to marginalized communities and groups, and lack of financial resources and information for parents, a good number of children remain out of public school, or suffer from the aforementioned dropout problem.

To face these problems, the State has organized programs for combating illiteracy and dropout rates. Between 1982 and 2001, for example, among the two million Moroccans who benefited from literacy programs organized by the government, about 80% were women.

In addition, during the past decade the State adopted a policy for building "The Role of Girls," which consists of state-owned population centers located near educational institutions. Disadvantaged girls who lived in remote areas resided in them for free during study period. Unfortunately, these efforts faced criticism by civil society and the media, as they were considered inadequate.

Most literacy programs are limited to teaching reading and writing using very traditional and simple means that are only adequate for preparing beneficiaries to play minor roles in their communities.

Sometimes the State offers solutions that are not keys to solving major social dilemmas. For example, at the beginning, "Girls Boarding Houses" presented an innovative solution for housing female students living in remote areas to enable them to continue their studies in secure social conditions. With time, "Girls Boarding Houses" began to receive girls who were not students and who suffered from various social problems. This confused beneficiaries and had a negative

impact on them. It also reduced the accommodation capacity of these centers and thus reduced the number of girls living in remote areas who sought to pursue their studies.

#### 2 - The Role of Civil Society

Numerous civil society groups and non-governmental organizations are active in the education and development sectors.

Although the State's primary role is in the development of the national education systems, and women's access to education in particular, civil society organizations have begun to play an active role as well as they fill the gaps in areas where the State's role is weak or ineffective. In addition, civil society groups enjoy the flexibility that government lacks. They are much closer to the target, marginalized and vulnerable groups, and more aware of their needs and adverse conditions.

In many developed countries, non-governmental institutions provide what is referred to as "informal education", defined by UNESCO as, "All orderly and sustainable educational systems not necessarily subject to the regulations of classic formal education. Informal education can therefore be provided in educational institutions or elsewhere, and may benefit people of different ages." Between the years 1997 and 2006, this educational method educated about 300,000 children who were then able to join secondary education or vocational training institutions. In 2010, for example, 38,197 children, 9,038 of them girls (58% of total), received education by 264 non-governmental organizations.

### IV - CONCLUSION: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Finally, we would like to underline the following:

- It is necessary to introduce equity laws to enable women's access to decision-making positions. However, such positions will always be held by educated, elite women, and will not alter the reality of women from middle and low class families. Even positive aspects of equity become of limited usefulness, given the rampant illiteracy among the majority of women.
- It is important to amend laws (family, inheritance, employment ...) to ensure more women's rights. But, how will women take advantage of their rights if they are not educated and aware of them?
- It is a must to change the image of women and girls in school curricula because this will contribute significantly to the shaping of the minds of future generations.
- The State must put in place government programs with a common vision, in order to activate the various educational programs seriously and radically, and not through emergency or "band-aid" solutions that do not take into account the different social and logistical components of the parties involved.
- It is necessary to raise awareness regarding the importance of school and education in all settings, and restore the role of the school as a means of social advancement.

### V- RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### 1 - At the Government Level:

- Accelerate procedures for issuing official documents in rural areas and suburbs to facilitate girls' access to schooling
- Intensify State efforts to ensure equal opportunities to all and to fight high dropout rates. Making primary education compulsory did not produce adequate results due to the lack of enforced punishments. Mandatory education ensures education and awareness of future generations, both male and female.
- Intensify State efforts to increase literacy rates among women in rural and urban settings.
- Provide basic infrastructure in rural areas to increase access to schools
- Encourage civil society initiatives aimed at informal education and combating illiteracy
- Promote women's access to the labor market to ensure physical and moral autonomy
- Improve the image of women and girls in school curricula
- Provide educational spaces for extracurricular activities
- Value education as a means for social advancement
- Ensure the quality of education
- Enforce compulsory education
- Combat dropout rates

#### 2 - At the Level of Civil Society:

- Develop volunteer work to establish effective elements in the education of children
- Create checks and balances to State control through accounting and transparency measures
- Develop a collective fabric/network for education
- Control the enforcement of international conventions in the field of education

### 3 - At The Level of The Media:

- Educate parents on the importance of girls' education
- Improve the image of women in the media
- Generate awareness campaigns to change the perception about education and fight against illiteracy

### 4 - At the Level of International Organizations:

- Conduct monitoring and evaluation follow-up with funded projects
- Provide technical support to State institutions and civil society organizations active in the education sector
- Unify efforts by taking a holistic approach in addressing women's issues

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*Special thanks to ALWANE Morocco Committee Members, Sana' Al-'Aji (Coordinator), Laila Belmahi, Salma Bushaibah, Hanan Al-Suwailami, Hind Al-Touissat*



*Making a Vision a Reality: Transforming the Sultanate of Oman's National Vision on Women and Integrated Strategy*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALWANE Oman aims to create a generation of young entrepreneurs interested in women's issues, and to raise awareness of women's rights in an interactive framework. ALWANE Oman is guided and supported by a diverse array of experts and national consultants in the field of women's rights, and human rights in general.

The meaning of ALWANE in Arabic, "my colors", and its colorful logo are central to the Oman Committee's mission as they demonstrate the full diversity of women and their roles, contributions, and walks of life.

ALWANE Oman consists of a main Committee and four-sub committees. The Committee is comprised of mentors and mentees, as well as male and female volunteers. The four sub-committees are as follows:

- A. Training Committee
- B. Scientific & Training Materials Committee
- C. Marketing & Coordination Committee
- D. Information & Social Media Committee

To facilitate the operations of ALWANE Oman, the Committee formed several partnerships with public, private and civil institutions; notably:

- 1. The United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)
- 2. Said Al-Shehri Center for Legal Training
- 3. The Omani Women Associations in Muscat and Al-Seeb

#### WHY WOMEN?



Attention to women's issues stems from 5 primary sources that meet at the common goal of achieving equal participation and equality. These five sources are

- 1. **Women's subjection to traditional practices:** Some customs are harmful to women and deprive them from enjoying full equality in society. These limitations have pushed women in Oman to build their competencies and skills, and become increasingly self-assertive in order to claim their rights and equality.

- 2. **Women's important role and contributions in Oman's Development:** It is important to recognize that women have a unique perspective and a set of planning priorities that can differ from—and complement—those of men. Women must not face discrimination because of their maternal duties, and must not be excluded from participation in the many areas of development. In fact, a good Human Development Index (HDI) strongly correlates with advancing the status of women in society and in state institutions. The status of women is now an established indicator in measuring the progress and well-being of a community.

- 3. **Millennium Development Goals and Bridging the Gender Gap:** The eight goals pledged by countries around the world, including the Sultanate of Oman, intersect directly (the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth goals) and indirectly (first, seventh and eighth goals) with the status of women. Any progress in achieving these goals must target women's advancement as a means and to an end.

- 4. **Establishing Anti-Corruption and Transparency Standards:** Studies by the World Bank and Transparency International point to a correlation in most countries between the decline in corruption, and women's rise to power and participation in decision-making. This is because women are usually the most affected by corruption, but are typically outside influential political frameworks that benefit from this corruption. Furthermore, governmental institutions that are working towards achieving equal opportunity for men and women are less likely to be corrupt, and rely on high levels of transparency and clarity.

- 5. **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):** This agreement is one of the most powerful legislative tools and guidelines of the United Nations. It was ratified by many countries in spite of some important reservations. Many commitments arose from this agreement, most of them structural and intellectual. These commitments need to be uniformly and consistently translated into practical steps, legal instruments and national procedures and measures. The Sultanate of Oman ratified the Convention in May 2005, was deposited in February 2006, and became effective in the Sultanate starting March 7, 2006. This is very significant considering that by virtue of the State Statute, ratified international treaties and conventions become national law that prevail over any contradicting national legal texts.

#### WHAT IS THE MAIN ISSUE?

ALWANE Oman's campaign seeks to shed light on the key issue of translating Oman's national vision on women into an integrated strategy. ALWANE Oman supports stakeholders and lobbies decision-makers to push towards this objective.

The Committee selected this issue after examining the status of women in the Sultanate, and the mechanisms, institutions and measures that serve and support women. In its analysis of the most pressing issues facing women, the committee adopted a rigorous methodology based on 8 developmental standardization dimensions/aspects: participation, the rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, responsibility and accountability, and finally the future strategic outlook and vision. Each aspect was discussed separately in accordance with the aforementioned context, and procedural goals that should be given the most attention were summarized. Please refer to the following table.

Standardization Aspect/Dimension – The Resulting Procedural/Interim Goal

- 1. **Participation:** the provision of an environment that enables the private sector and civil society institutions to organize and execute activities aimed at the advancement of women.
- 2. **The Rule of Law:** addressing women's general complaints and grievances through the lens of Oman's commonly agreed upon and understood rule of law.
- 3. **Transparency:** increasing the level of transparency in general, and in particular with respect to information on the participation of women in various fields.
- 4. **Responsiveness:** facilities and services designed to respond to the needs of women need to be developed and improved.
- 5. **Equity:** increased attention to the status of women, and giving priority to women's basic rights, such as receiving a retirement salary.
- 6. **Effectiveness & Efficiency:** raising awareness on women's rights which will increase the efficiency of grievance mechanisms (if any), to facilitate women's full enjoyment of their rights, and protecting these rights from violations.
- 7. **Responsibility & Accountability:** ensuring human rights complaints and grievances are handled from a service perspective instead of a civil rights perspective alone, which eliminates leaving the full responsibility to the public.
- 8. **Strategic Outlook/Vision:** translating the national vision into a national strategy that addresses women's issues and integrates them gradually and consistently.



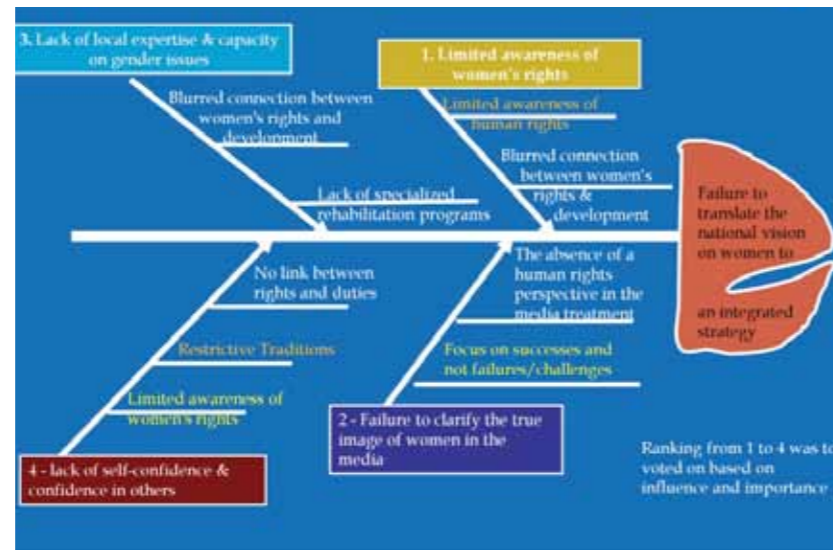
ALWANE Oman found that the presence of an integrated strategic outlook and clear future vision is the most important step and optimal procedural framework that will address all of these aspects. In this context the Committee analyzed the main obstacles that prevent the establishment of a clear national strategy for women despite the existence of a national vision - though scattered- about women and their role, and despite the presence of political support at the highest levels. By applying the Ishikawa Analysis Method (the fish), an analysis method that studies motives and effects as shown in the illustration below, the committee has identified a set of factors that are linked to this issue. These factors were arranged in terms of the impact, importance and effect as follows:

1. Limited awareness of women's rights is generally associated with the limited awareness of human rights and their importance to human development. In addition, there is a lack of awareness of the connection between women's rights and human development in the minds of the public and a many decision-makers.
2. Failure to clarify the true image of women in the media due to the lack of integration of human rights principles in humanitarian and developmental discussions, and also because of the media's tendency to highlight only the bright side by focusing solely on only the successes, rather than challenges and failures, suffered by women in the Sultanate.

3. Limited availability of local expertise related to gender issues is also linked to the limited understanding of the connection between women and human development by the legislatures and executives, as well as the lack of specialized capacity building programs in this regard.
4. The lack of confidence of many women in themselves and in others is linked to the limited awareness of their rights, the lack of awareness of the strong relationship between their rights and duties, and the continued practice of certain harmful traditions.

With this in mind, the Committee has proposed an integrated national strategy for women through the program "My Rights, My Blessing in Life." This program recognizes that public awareness of women's rights is a clear path to activating these rights and empowering women in society. Awareness is also essential to the society's response to and recognition of women's basic needs and other rights, and in mainstreaming human rights (and particularly women's rights) in development.

#### Analysis of Reasons, Causes & Effects



The program focused on raising awareness of women's rights in two directions. It promoted awareness horizontally by increasing familiarity with women and gender issues, and educating the largest number of people within the present constraints and available resources. It also focused on raising awareness vertically by deepening the knowledge of interested young men and women, exploring in depth the question of gender structurally, intellectually, and legally.



#### RECOMMENDATIONS

We in the Oman ALWANE Committee believe that the Sultanate needs to adopt an integrated national strategy for women where all parties (governmental, non-governmental, formal, informal) take part and work to achieve its goals. This would replace the current scattered efforts that appear to lack planning.

Strategic objectives and axes may be formulated in conjunction with the standardization dimensions and aspects that were analyzed and discussed in the above table. Implementation of the executive plan must revolve around these three axes. Additional practical axes shall be added as a result of the regular and systematic strategy evaluation process. The initial three axes are as follows:

**First Axis:** Enabling the exercising of rights through the following three parallel tracks:

- A. National programs raising awareness of women's rights: These programs should target women in all parts of the Sultanate of Oman, both in Oman's formal and informal communities. This track is the most important, and these awareness programs should not restrict themselves to traditional means and frameworks. Instead, they must employ traditional and modern social media. These programs must also continuously highlight both the achievements and the challenges faced by women. They can do this by highlighting Omani women who are models of success. These women must be chosen through an inclusive process where the public has input regarding which figures will to be highlighted.
- B. Processes to ensure and facilitate the establishment of women's rights through the creation of necessary frameworks, measures and institutions. Solid monitoring and evaluation systems will need to be put in place for this purpose.
- C. The creation of national mechanisms that institutionalize non-intervention policies, and the integration of these mechanisms in all arenas including, constitutional, legislative, executive, judicial and civil. This would include facilitating systems for ensuring women's access to competent authorities with complaints, problems, and objections, and systems in place to address and respond to these problems effectively.



**The Second Axis:** Building local capacity and expertise in studies of gender and women's rights issues. This will achieve the following (1) It will strengthen the local dimension and outlook of policies, laws and regulations that are formulated to support women, removing from the issue all sensitivities related to foreign interference, and (2) It will provide human resources and expertise necessary to achieve the first and third axes on the ground. This axis may be expressed through three parallel executive programs as follows:

- A. Drafting curricula at different educational levels addressing issues of citizenship, gender and social studies
- B. Create national training programs to build young local capacities and expertise through realistic practices and projects that link with activities of the first and third programs. These programs may be created in official or civil frameworks or in frameworks common to both.
- C. Creating a research institute or a research think tank concerned with the follow-up of this axis. This institute should dedicate a fund to the financing of both above mentioned programs, especially program (B). This is to ensure the sustainability of the strategy, and to publish and disseminate findings that result from the measurement of the program's results, impact, and success.

**The Third Axis:** Restructuring the Sultanate's informational infrastructure so it properly addresses gender issues and adequately measures the changes in women's status. Currently, official bodies (governmental, private and civil) seek to obtain official statistics broken down by gender. But they only do so as a governmental statistical policy, and the available data is not broken down by gender on a geographical basis, and in the case of the private and civil sectors collecting data does not go beyond being the interest of some individuals. The reason for the lack of interest in genderizing information infrastructures (i.e. categorizing information by gender, and designing knowledge systems accordingly) is that the statistics law promulgated by Royal Decree No. 29/2001



did not provide a binding text for categorizing information on the basis of gender. The Royal Decree was issued to regulate information gathering, analysis and dissemination.

With regard to this axis, the following steps may be taken:

- A. Amending the aforementioned statistics law by adding a clause mandating genderizing data, information, and all the tools that are used to collect, save, analyze and disseminate this information. This mandate must apply to all geographical and administrative levels in the Sultanate. It is also important to decree appropriate punishments to deter violation of this article, as well as appropriate incentives for adhering to it.

- B. Establishing technical assistance programs – first for government actors, and then for private and civil actors- in collaboration with the National Center for Statistics and Information, the Technology Authority and the United Nations, to help official bodies on the re-structuring of its philosophy, procedures and information systems.
- C. Standardization of statistical terms and their meanings, and the equations used to process the data in the Sultanate. Terminology must be consistent with that of the UN, and must facilitate the formation of a quantitative and qualitative picture of the situation of women in the Sultanate. This will facilitate conducting interface comparisons in the Sultanate, with neighboring countries and other international organizations.



# PALESTINE

## INTRODUCTION:

Development aims to achieve the most noble of human objectives, such as freedom, justice, equality and dignity, while focusing on acquiring economic, social and civil rights for all citizens regardless of gender, race, religion, disability and place of residence. Development must be manifested in the continuous improvement of materialistic and spiritual livings standards. It is not limited to improving the standard of living and satisfying basic human materialistic needs. Development is an intellectual philosophy that flourishes to accommodate moral aspects of a decent human life: self-realization and enjoyment of dignity that arise from active participation in all community affairs <sup>1</sup>.

Achieving development in Palestine is one of the biggest challenges faced by the Palestinian government and civil agencies. For example, the Palestinian labor market suffers from chronic unemployment and limited participation as a result of the Palestinian economy's structural imbalances. This has weakened the economy's ability to absorb the entire workforce. The Palestinian labor market is characterized by a rate of growth of qualified labor at a faster pace than is demanded by the market. Data shows that the Palestinian economy's ability to absorb the labor force will decline even more over time <sup>2</sup>.



Repeated setbacks in the Palestinian economy reduced its ability to absorb human resources flowing annually to the labor market, both in the public and private sectors. Statistics show that the percentage of participation in the workforce among individuals 15 years and over reached 34.4%, with a large gap between males and females, 68.9% for males and 17.3% for females. Yet, data indicates that females are more likely to enroll into higher education than males, 8.6% for males (15-29 years old), and 11.1% for females of the same age group <sup>3</sup>.

According to the expanded definition of unemployment, the rate has increased in the Palestine from 24.8% in the fourth quarter of 2011 to 27.4% in the first quarter of 2012. The unemployment rate reached 22% for males compared with 31.5% for females, and the highest rates of unemployment in Palestine was for the age group 20-24, reaching 41.2% in the first quarter of 2012. Also, females who have completed at least 13 years of schooling showed the highest rate of unemployment among all females, 42.0% <sup>4</sup>.

On the other hand, according to Palestinian statistics, the proportion of young entrepreneurs did not exceed 14.2%. As for young women who created their own projects, they constitute only 6% of the category of young entrepreneurs <sup>5</sup>.

Social and cultural challenges are among the biggest obstacles facing Palestinian women to engage in the economic life. Some of the social restrictions facing women are: social acceptability of some types of work, that women's work is typically a continuation of their reproductive role, and the promotion of the social concept that the man is the family breadwinner. Due to the dynamic population growth which is a characteristic of the

Palestinian labor market, the labor force is growing at a faster rate than market demands <sup>6</sup>. In addition, media stereotypes about the leadership of women played a major role in society's rejection of these concepts, considering them contrary to Palestinian customs. This impacted women's participation in the labor market.

The presence of conditions that are not conducive to women in the work environment, such as low wages compared to their male counterparts, leads to exploitation of all levels. Women also face challenges during their early stages of career development. Men dominate high management positions and control personnel policies, making them biased to men, while providing less leadership and training opportunities to women. In addition, women are excluded from male networks outside the workplace, and there is a deficiency in women's involvement in decision-making at the workplace. All of these factors cast a shadow on women's participation in the Palestinian labor market. In summary, the lack of women's participation in the labor market reflected negatively on their representation in decision-making positions in the public and private sectors alike.



<sup>1</sup> Refer to Palestinian Human Development Reports on [home.birzeit.edu/cds](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds)

<sup>2</sup> Makhool et al 2001

<sup>3</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics [pcbs.gov.ps](http://pcbs.gov.ps)

<sup>4</sup> ibid

<sup>5</sup> Toward a Policy of Strengthening Leadership Among Youth in the West Bank and Gaza, Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, March 2007

<sup>6</sup> Ayman Abd Al-Majeed 2010

## ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERING WOMEN IN PALESTINE

When considering both sides of the equation "economic participation and empowering women" within the Palestinian reality, we note that both sides of the equation suffer from marked deterioration as a result of internal and external influences. Common factors that overshadow both sides of the equation may be summarized as follows:

The exclusion of women from the labor market may be attributed to several factors that are related to the social, economic and political structures <sup>7</sup>:

**Israeli occupation:** The Palestinian territories face a life of no political stability as a result of the prolonged Israeli occupation. Hence, the Palestinian territories witnessed sharp declines in economic and living conditions, and an increase in the difficulty of economic and day-to-day life.

In this regard a young Gazan female said: "Work is a challenge in these circumstances because the country's situation is difficult, and there are no jobs available. The reasons are conditions of siege and closure. It is very difficult for someone to find work in these difficult conditions that are imposed by the occupation."

**The centralization of the Palestinian economy:** Women also spoke about the centralization of the labor market within city centers, especially Ramallah, which weakens their mobility and easy access to jobs.

**Structure of education as related to the labor market:** young women indicated that the transition journey from education to the labor market faces many challenges associated with the structure of the educational system. Young women spoke at length about the most important of these

difficulties: the gap in planning, linking education to labor market needs, problems in the quality of education and its outputs, the outcomes of the educational system are mostly incompatible with the needs of the labor market and its structure, education lacks major specialties such as vocational education which would fulfill key market needs. In addition, culture affected the orientations of young women regarding education, especially in choosing their specialization. Families of young women impose socially acceptable restrictions on them, in terms of mobility, location and degree of mixing with the opposite sex, in addition to hours and class of work. The educational system lacks the technical and professional disciplines, which are still the biggest labor market needs.

In assessing her path of education, one young woman says: "The current education system is not interested in the issues faced by students entering the labor market. All that matters is the university certificate. There is no coordination. The proof is the presence of too many graduates with certain degrees, while a lack of graduates in other disciplines."

**The social and cultural structure:** The social and cultural structure affects young women in several ways. For example, young women face social restrictions regarding certain types of work. It also promotes stereotypical jobs for young women that are consistent with their "reproductive role," which only reinforces the continuation of this role. The patriarchate role of men as the breadwinner gives priority to male youth employment at the expense of young women. As a result, there are more opportunities for young males to assume their responsibilities as part of the current patriarchal system. Young females face family restrictions

regarding entering the labor market. These restrictions are linked to exclusion and the provision of a suitable environment for maintaining prevalent societal conditions.

One young woman said that despite the availability of education for young women, jobs remain closed in front of them as a result of social constraints: "My family doesn't want me to work, they gave me my right to education, but not to work."

In addition, access to available job information is related to gender in several ways. There are social and cultural practices that restrict the mobility of young women, sometimes to the extent of oppression, exploitation and exclusion. Mobility is more readily available to young males.

In this regard, a young woman says: "Of course, it is easy for men to become aware of job opportunities. The problem is with girls because they do not have enough freedom of mobility to search for work, and cannot build connections like young men. Therefore opportunities are fewer for girls."

The labor market structure and its adaptation to the growing youth labor market: The youth explained that there is a decline in the labor market's ability to absorb graduates. The Palestinian territories suffer from the increase of young graduates at a rate faster than labor market demand.

The jobs available are predominantly inappropriate or very difficult to perform. This generates many problems that ultimately lead to hardship and exclusion.

In this context, a young Gazan woman says, "Inadequate opportunities for young people means that they will resort to unsuitable jobs compared to their potential and level of education. This causes them not to be pleased with the type of work."

The young women also indicated that the environment in the labor market may exclude women through exploitation and sexual harassment that are a function of spatial conditions and the nature of non-gender sensitive work practices. This can eventually lead to unfair dismissal and exclusion from participation in the economic labor force.



<sup>7</sup> This section benefited from the policy paper that was developed for Alwane - Palestine by the researchers Ayman Abdel-Majeed and Maram Oweiri

## WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP IN PALESTINE

The number of women owning and running special projects is on the rise in most parts of the world. The difficult political, economic and social conditions experienced by the Palestinian society force Palestinian women to think of starting their own projects. In many families women have become the main breadwinner. In Palestine, female entrepreneurs face restrictions and challenges that include:

### Volatile Political and Security Conditions

The Israeli occupation is the biggest obstacle facing male and female entrepreneurs in Palestine. Restrictions imposed by Israel on the market, and the roadblocks within Palestinian cities limit the expansion of business, and increase the risk conditions, leading to the infanticide of entrepreneurial ideas before their birth.

### Marketing Risks

The small size of the Palestinian market, the intense competition among traders, flooding the market with Israeli goods, Israeli checkpoints between cities, restrictions on the movement of goods at home and abroad, the lack of women's marketing experience, the changing conditions and social restrictions on women's movement, all make marketing one of the most difficult tasks that haunt women entrepreneurs. This leads them to resort to intermediaries to run their marketing affairs.

### Sources of Funding and Lending

Finding a source of capital is a major impediment facing the establishment of any project or pioneering work. In Palestine, sources of funding are mainly microfinance institutions, traditional banks, and other sources of funding. Efforts by female entrepreneurs to obtain funding for their ideas are continuously hampered by the political circumstances and the unstable security situation. This affects their commitment to the lenders. The paucity of information available to them on financing institutions and the conditions of lending, in addition to the reluctance in supporting women's entrepreneurship by banks and lending institutions for lack of confidence in their abilities and efficiency, many entrepreneurs abandon their ideas and projects.

### Limited Training and Habilitating Programs:

Motivation is not sufficient for a female entrepreneur to become a successful leader in the business world. There are no programs or business centers that qualify and train women on leadership, and encourage them to establish projects. For a woman to become an entrepreneur in the business world, she must have basic facts that will enable her to succeed. She must also learn the language of business management and to view problems as an entrepreneur ought to. While there are many young programs that focus on this aspect in Palestine, they are still in the process of growth.

Entrepreneurial projects assist in the redistribution of a nation's wealth more effectively, and in the reduction of the poverty levels and unemployment. They also contribute to the creation of

new jobs, and increase the flexibility of production to accommodate the changing economic conditions. This is because they support small and medium-sized enterprises which are more flexible than large and mega projects. Upgrading work, initiatives and entrepreneurial projects need to embrace a culture of entrepreneurship by all sectors of governmental and non-governmental organizations, and to standardize efforts in the following areas:

### Educational Curricula

Introducing courses that teach entrepreneurship, and to apply their content while making the connection with reality. Such courses must be taught in schools (elementary, junior high, and high school) and universities. Circles need to be established for providing entrepreneurial guidance for training students on pioneering skills, research and development as well as continuous monitoring of their projects. Such circles must link them with businessmen and businesswomen in the labor market.

### Laws and Regulations

The nature of economic and social systems, the presence of appropriate infrastructure and the availability of a favorable investment climate, and laws and legislation that are periodically modified so as to support small projects established by young people, and applying tax breaks, facilitating establishment procedures and dealing with official bodies, all play an important role in increasing entrepreneurial projects. This, in turn, reflects positively on economic development, especially that the political situation is not conducive to investment.

### The Media

The media must promote entrepreneurship through awareness campaigns that focus on the importance of entrepreneurial projects and identify sources of funding, loans and micro-financing. The media must also promote the participation of women in these projects.

### Access to Funding and Lending Sources

Funding and lending conditions must be consistent with the circumstances and conditions of the Palestinian community. Institutions must seek to create mechanisms that facilitate locating funding for establishing income-generating projects. They must reduce loan preconditions. Loans for female entrepreneurs must be facilitated, and banks and financial policy makers must be encouraged to develop programs to finance entrepreneurial projects for women.

### Providing Incentives to Female Entrepreneurs

Family support is one of the most important sources of self confidence for female entrepreneurs to establish their projects. Motivating women to take risk and head towards the business world is the responsibility of the society as a whole. Governmental and non-governmental agencies, lending institutions and the provision a suitable environment for investment will all contribute to female entrepreneurs establishing their businesses <sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Islaah Al-Iqtisaadi Magazine, Women and Entrepreneurship in Palestine, Abeer Abu Ghait, 2010

## THE REALITY OF WOMEN AND COOPERATIVES IN PALESTINE

Cooperatives provide many economic and social services to their members. On one hand, they contribute to the improvement of the quality of life, and strengthen the role of cooperatives in achieving the goals of national development, particularly economic and social development. The most important of these services: group buying which saves buyers about 20% of their expenses. Collective-marketing services increase revenue through the distribution of profits, increasing knowledge, building up capacity, and contributing to social responsibility.

In spite of the long history of the cooperative movement in Palestine, women's participation in it is recent. Most women's cooperatives were established after the year 2000 due to external motivating factors such as the policies and strategies of donor countries to finance the development sector. Awareness is still limited with regard to the best interests of communities, principles of governance, cooperation, as well as concepts of cooperative projects that contribute to the emergence of the productive capacity of women on a large scale.

Membership of Palestinian women in cooperatives is relatively low because customs and traditions dictate that such cooperatives are to be dominated by men. Out of 461 registered cooperatives in the West Bank for the year 2009, women participated in 101 of them. This is due mainly to the limited access that women have to material and financial resources necessary for membership, and a preference by women to join women-only cooperatives over mixed-gender ones. Working women's cooperatives operate in all Palestinian provinces but 44% are concentrated in Ramallah, and constitute 20% of those in the West Bank. There are many cultural and social, economic and regulatory challenges that impede the trend of gender equality in the Palestinian cooperatives. These challenges are as follows:

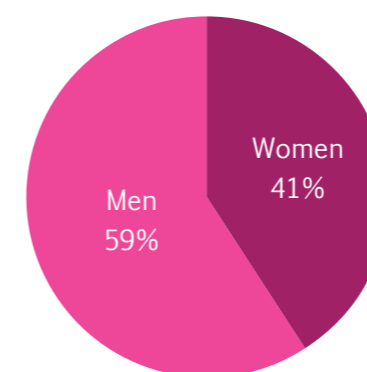
- The low educational attainment of rural women, and low income levels, as well as limited access and control of their savings and property. Tribal and inheritance laws do not provide protection for the right of women to own land, and in some areas deprive women of inheritance of land, which makes it very difficult to continue to support and promote economic and agricultural projects independently. Even in women-only cooperatives, women lack the ability to improve the financial and physical resources to contribute to their cooperatives in the long term.
- Women are deterred from taking the lead in entrepreneurial initiatives within the cooperative. In fact, female members of collaborative councils are not active, and are usually appointed to non-decision-making position such as the secretary of the board, the treasurer, or clerical jobs that are "culturally acceptable". These problems are exacerbated by the fact that the extra production tasks related to women do not lead to their involvement in re-production tasks performed by men. Therefore women continue to play their roles alone in having children and caring for the family. As a result, they can participate in the cooperatives, but receive less opportunity than men, and are represented in the collaborative activities because of the unequal share of the daily work.
- In some cases, women's participation in cooperatives may be viewed shallowly where men are involved and pay membership fees on behalf of their female relatives (wives and daughters and sisters) in an attempt to maximize their shares and earnings from the cooperative financial association. Men resort to this because of the cap on the amount of equity that may be owned by each member. In addition, there are a large number of cooperatives that attract female members in order to receive support from donor countries.

- Finally, the geographic isolation of some rural communities, and the lack of good and effective transport systems, in addition to restrictions on women's mobility imposed by the Israeli occupation: points of inspection, the wall, and curfews, limit women's access to work support programs, and limit their market participation. These factors have a negative impact on the ability of women in cooperatives to market their products, to contact other institutions, and to benefit from available capacity building programs. This geographical dispersion and the difficulty of access to a number of areas hinder the effective integration of women in the market and in economic development.

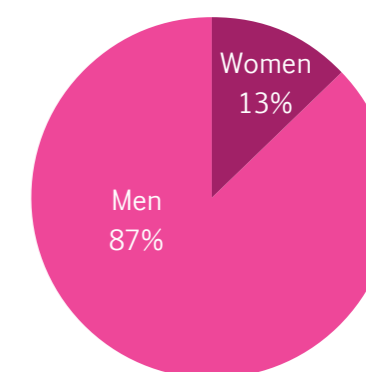
## PUBLIC SECTOR AND PALESTINIAN WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP BODIES

Statistical data that was published by the Central Bureau of Statistics for the year 2011/2012 showed that the rate of participation of women in public office in the West Bank was 41.1% versus 58.9% for men, and that 12.6% of workers in the public sector of the A4 manager level were women versus 87.4% of the same class were men.

Employees of the Public Sector



Public Sector Employees With an A4 Managerial Level



These indicators reflect a problem in women assuming leadership positions in the public sector. They do not reflect women assuming the same public positions as men. Hence, ALWANE Palestine performed an analysis of the representation level of women in leadership positions in ministries that suffer from male dominance, such as the Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Economy and Planning. ALWANE Palestine has conducted an extended meeting with the Civil Service Bureau to determine the representation rates of women in leadership positions in the aforementioned ministries.

% of men in leadership positions	% of women in leadership positions	% of men working in ministry	% of women working in ministry	Ministry
72%	28%	74%	26%	Ministry of Economics
91%	9%	73%	27%	Ministry of Interior
67%	33%	66%	34%	Ministry of Planning
91%	9%	75%	25%	Ministry of Finance
90%	10%	75%	25%	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Administrative Positions)
97%	3%			Ambassadors

### ACCESS TO INFORMATION:

Policies and regulations that are currently in place, and the current environment within ministries do not provide equal access to information. Such environments suffer from obvious discrimination against women. The 2009 Aman Survey demonstrated that 63% of all of those surveyed believed that nepotism and favoritism are the most prevalent forms of corruption in the public sector in Palestine.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The ALWANE Palestine Committee developed its strategy by focusing on a number of policies:

#### Recommendations for the Public Sector and Palestinian Women in Leadership:

**First:** Adopting the principle of equal opportunities which was stipulated by the Basic Law for senior level appointments.

**Second:** Activating the supervisory role of the Bureau of Personnel over the performance of public administrations in appointments and promotions.

**Third:** Publishing information related to recruitment and promotion.

There is no doubt that publishing information concerning the procedures for appointments and promotions is considered one of the most important tools for promoting the philosophy of good governance, justice, equity and the principle of equal opportunity among staff. Publishing such information and giving everyone access to it will enhance the possibility of employee and citizen oversight. It can also achieve:

- The sense of satisfaction and confidence for citizens because they become aware of how authorities arrive at their decisions in the field of recruitment and promotion.
- Citizens become confident of the soundness of the decision, and thus the possibility of intervening to defend his rights.

- Publishing decisions and granting citizens the right to access information will enhance the preventive dimension, which will lead to reducing the number of violations committed by the administration. State apparatuses will always be mindful of their obligation to disseminate information regarding their decisions and actions. Therefore, directors will always be under the impression that there will always be some oversight over their decisions. This would imply that individuals and bodies may intervene to expose their violations, and they may move to impeach and prosecute the authorities in court.

**Fourth:** Work must not be limited to exterminating all forms of discrimination against women's access to senior positions. The elimination of discrimination must be handled within the spirit of higher human development. Women face many challenges that cannot be overcome by simply eliminating discrimination. Positive work in the form of preferential or egalitarian systems is needed, and measures need to be taken at several levels.

**Fifth:** The creation of an enabling environment wherein women can enjoy competitive and professional leadership.

**Sixth:** Increased support to the judiciary in response to violations by the administration regarding appointments and promotions. It is not enough to have guarantees of legislative and monitoring oversight to push the administration to respect and implement the provisions of the law. The absence of accountability for violators has encouraged some administrators to violate the law. We believe that it is important for those who have been subjected to violations of any of their rights regarding appointment and promotion to resort to the judiciary.

### WITH REGARD TO LEGISLATION:

1. Stipulating mechanisms for appointments to senior positions by the governing laws, to ensure the realization of the principle of equal opportunity.
2. Amending the Civil Service Act to ensure:
  - Eliminating confusion between the role of the President and that of the Council of Ministers regarding appointments to positions of the general category.
  - Explicit procedures for the appointment and promotion of senior staff.
  - Establishing modern and creative rules for determining the terms and conditions of senior employees, and not strictly adhering to rules of seniority.
3. Stipulating the neutrality of senior level staff, and that they do not belong to any political party, in order to avoid partisanship in appointments while transferring authority.
4. Regulating the specifications of the interview committees, and mechanisms of actions, and how to calculate the points.

### WITH REGARD TO PROCEDURES:

1. Promoting transparency and fairness in applying procedures within the Administrative Ministerial Committee.



## THE INITIATIVE: "SHE IS A PARTNER IN BUILDING ... A PARTNER IN LEADERSHIP"

The initiative aims at networking and increasing pressure toward increasing the representation of women in leadership positions of the public and private sectors. The objective is to change policies adopted by the public and private sectors toward achieving this goal.

In the first phase of the initiative, ALWANE Palestine focused on the public sector, especially key ministries such as the Ministries of Economy, Finance, the Interior, Foreign Affairs and Planning. These ministries suffered from a low presence of women in leadership positions, in spite of the fact that several of the interviewed officials recognized the efficient work of female employees in these ministries.

Through this initiative, ALWANE Palestine stresses all legitimate rights of Palestinian women of not facing discrimination or differentiation, and their right to hold different positions and to access decision-making positions on an equal footing with men.

Based on the principle of equal opportunity, ALWANE Palestine asserts fairness in addressing issues with Palestinian women such as their enjoyment of their right to assume decision-making positions, the right to work and to hold public office, and other rights given to women under international declarations. All of this requires effective intervention by the Palestinian government in favor of empowering Palestinian women and encouraging them to participate on an equal footing with men in the leadership community. We believe that the Palestinian government has the duty to remove all obstacles and barriers that prevent women from achieving their legitimate aspirations to reach centers of decision-making. The principle of equal opportunities stipulated by the Basic Law must be enforced in senior appointments. Departments of the Palestinian National Authority are required to translate this principle into action. Through its initiative "She is a Partner in building ... A Partner in Leadership" ALWANE Palestine advocates the following:

1. Publishing information related to appointments and promotions is considered one of the most important tools to enforce the philosophy of good governance within government departments. Through it, justice, equity and equal opportunity among employees will be promoted. Dissemination of such information, and providing all people with the access to it will enhance the oversight of employees, citizens and those concerned.
2. The Palestinian government must adopt procedures and policies that enable women to reach decision-making positions and specifically the need to adopt a clear quota for women in managerial positions. Women must get the opportunity to participate and be represented in international forums and organizations, and diplomatic missions.
3. Holding a national conference by the Palestinian government to study methods of increasing the opportunities of true involvement of Palestinian women in decision-making positions.

### 4. Existing Social Policies (A Critical Perspective) <sup>9</sup>

- Instead of following the collective

development approach, social policies of this occupied country in which we live take the path that is assigned to it by "relief"

<sup>9</sup> This policy summary policy on a study entitled "Low Participation of Youth in the Labor Markets of the Palestinian Territories: the Causes and Determinants From a Gender Perspective". This study was funded by the International Development Research Center (IDRC), for the benefit of the Population Council International - Cairo. In addition, this summary benefited from results of the workshops and surveys conducted by the Alwane team in the occupied Palestinian territories.

social services. Social policies have been based on the institutional system of power. They go by the limited cash and in-kind relief provided primarily by the Ministry of Social Affairs, and secondarily by the Ministry of Labor. In addition, institutions of the Palestinian Authority have unleashed the privatization and free market economy policies without restrictions or controls. This was based on the orientations set to it by the international institutions and donors (especially the World Bank).

- In the absence of the private sector's social responsibility, considering that the private sector is the biggest employer, and with the legal expansion of a market economy, this player (the private sector) controls general economic policies. Gaps between the rich and the poor are promoted, and women, a dynamic economical group, are exiled from economic life. These gaps are governed by social and cultural contexts that have increased economic marginalization of social groups that are already marginal. Eventually, this led to a reduction of employment opportunities for women in general, especially young women.
- Laws continue to constitute a divide in the general Palestinian context because they are not compatible with the difficult economic reality. Palestinian laws encourage free market economics, which are incompatible with economic and social justice. In addition, there is still a lack of knowledge regarding these laws and their importance, and the implementation of these laws continues to be tainted by subjectivity, cronyism and lack of implementation. The most important indication for this is that Palestinian legislation is void of laws that effectively regulate this absolute freedom of the free market through a strong and fair taxation system. Laws also do not guarantee the right of women as part of this openness, the reinforcement of social

protection programs and the activation of social security programs. The presence of rules and regulations that have not gained legislative approval created numerous contradictions and inconsistencies within these systems. It is necessary to channel these rules and regulations into the legal framework, otherwise, women in the labor market will carry enormous burdens and have limited ability to exercise their rights.

- Representative, union and civil bodies distance themselves from the conditions of women. They have no central role in women's economic life or in women's journey to search for work and to gain protection. These bodies only address some of the problems faced by unskilled female labor, and provide follow up to some operational programs coordinated either through the Ministry of Labor or other donors. They also provide different exercises for young men and women to develop their abilities in some common areas.
- With regard to educational policies, there still remains a big policy gap with respect to vocational training. The Palestinian approach is theoretical, and it is based on the learning process based on theoretical knowledge, with no tendency toward technical and training programs. Technical and art education is neglected, and there is a deficiency in new materials such as social, technology and applied sciences, especially in primary and secondary education. On the other hand, the Council of Higher Education does not apply any control over the rapid increase in some other disciplines, especially in humanities and science. Yet, obtaining higher education is affected by the social class of the students. Higher education is provided to students from rich families through the parallel education system, which is not available to poor students.

## MEANINGFUL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

**Vocational Education and Training:** Young women face many challenges associated with their transition from education to the labor market. Most of such difficulties relate to the structure of the educational system. The rebalancing of the education system through the appropriate key indicators will harmonize education with market needs:

1. All concerned parties ought to conduct studies on the true future needs of the labor market, and to link them to higher education through a strategic plan. These strategies must address female dropouts from primary and secondary education, and they must ensure the integration of more young women in vocational and technical education.
2. Creating a balance between academic and vocational education by raising enrollment rates in vocational education, and integrating courses that teach arts, crafts and vocational teaching into scientific and literary academics. This certainly requires the development of core curricula for elementary, secondary and higher education through the addition of new educational materials to social, technology and applied sciences. It also requires the addition of arts and crafts education which has suffered from negligence. This will support the practical aspect of Palestinian education.
3. The importance of training and the need to support it with a practical volunteering program in coordination with the different economic, community and educational institutions. Female students need to go through a volunteer training program within the institutions as part of the practical program for higher education.
4. Activating the Higher Education Council through the formation of technical committees that study different disciplines and their relationship with the labor

market, and promote work between universities to overcome the overexpansion and inconsistency among the disciplines themselves (for institutions of higher education).

### Projects of Employment and Poverty

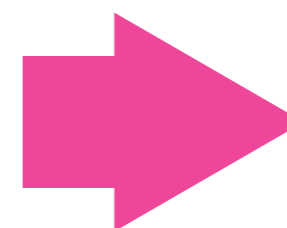
**Reduction:** In spite of the immediate need for such projects to alleviate the general burdens of Palestinian families, and to provide temporary opportunities for male citizens (opportunities available to young women are noticeably lacking), such projects do not include any developmental comprehensive goals. With this regard:

1. These employment projects must have a rehabilitative and training vision for young women in particular.
2. The projects' outlook must be more scientific and practical so as to integrate young women into employment institutions (especially councils and local bodies) and to temporarily absorb young women to become more prepared to be integrated in the labor market.
3. These projects should be more just so as to target the poorest and most vulnerable women.
4. Young women must get the impression that these projects are important and productive. They must not be complacent and not believe that participating in such programs is an earned right where they need to offer nothing in return.
5. Young women must be integrated according to their different specialties, experiences and capabilities. Projects must not promote disguised unemployment.

## LABOR MARKET ENVIRONMENT:

1. In the first stage, social responsibility of employment sectors (the private sector) must be activated because social responsibility achieves some level of justice and provides more secure and safe opportunities to young women, especially married ones. It is important to enter into a serious discussion about social security and social protection laws for women within the different work categories and age groups.
2. Reduce duplication of positions, especially for public sector employees. Some employees occupy several positions in addition to their civil service position. Duplication of positions limits Employment Equity and deprives women from entering the labor market and receiving proper training.
3. Transparency in announcing new jobs in the different employment sectors, and guaranteeing access of information especially to young women, targeting the most marginalized female groups. It is important to eliminate nepotism and favoritism and to give real opportunities to young women to obtain different jobs.
4. With regards to young women in particular, it is important to activate laws and regulations for the employment of women so the work environment becomes safer and more secure for women. Protection in the work environment must be provided through inspection and control committees. This will limit exploitation of young women in the labor market, limit their exclusion, and encourage families to accept that their daughters work outside of the home.
5. Innovative Employment: With ongoing technological advancements, the limited mobility of young women, and the limited employment opportunities, there is a need for local partnerships to establish employment bodies via the internet, especially with local and Arab businesspersons in fields of software, accounting and programming. Such a process will promote leadership and specific technological opportunities.

Indicators that help integrate women into the economic life



- Transparency in access to jobs and advertizing them
- Media campaigns that advocate and support women
- Developing institutional policies that are more sensitive to the integration of women in the labor market
- Social responsibility of the private sector
- Provide a safe and protective environment for young women
- Activation of technical and vocational education
- Enhancing the practical training in addition to theoretical education
- Activation of the Higher Education Council especially with regard to discipline coordination and connections between universities.



## A FUTURE DEVELOPMENTAL OUTLOOK

1. Promoting the establishment of new investment projects and encouraging the return of capital that had fled the Palestinian Territories.
2. Any job opportunity must be linked to providing real opportunities for women. Favoritism has become a young woman's enemy when accessing the labor market.
3. Cooperation between various institutions and capitalists to establish special employment projects that invest in young women.
4. The need to focus on supporting national industries and products, and to consume Palestinian goods in order to strengthen local projects that provide jobs and economic markets for young women. This requires taking necessary decisions to stop the import chaos that significantly reduces demand for domestic goods and increases the consumption pattern.
5. Attending to the various economic sectors such as agriculture: the agricultural sector has been neglected despite that the unutilized agricultural Palestinian lands could have employment and developmental and political dimensions if properly invested in. Investing in the agriculture sector will support the Palestinian economy through creating new job opportunities, and will contribute to creating new manufacturing job opportunities as well.
6. Last but not least, it is not possible to revive the economic market except through the cooperation between various institutions and through cooperative initiatives. In addition, everyone must be mindful of factors that are beyond the Palestinian framework. There is a strong need for international support to overcome this problem and to achieve freedom, self-determination and liberation for the Palestinian people from occupation.

In connection with general policies, there are some primary measures that must be achieved:

### First: Raising awareness about the importance of women's participation in the economy at a national level

To achieve this policy it has been proposed to work on the following fronts:

#### 1. Establishing a consolidated list of pressing challenges that prevent women's full and equal participation in economic development in Palestine through:

- Monitoring factors that limit women's access to the labor market
- Monitoring factors that contributed to the exclusion of women from the labor market, and to propose solutions
- Monitoring case studies of Palestinian women who are strongly participating in economic activity, and to identify the greatest challenges that they have faced, and factors that contributed to their success
- Presenting the results to civil society, human rights institutions and decision-makers through multiple means
- Promoting results and raising awareness regarding the results by holding a series of workshops in all Palestinian cities



#### 2. Adopting media policies highlighting the importance of women's participation in the labor market and seeking to change concepts that negatively affect the status of women, through:

- 2.1 Assessing the media vision in relation to women in Palestine, and comparing them with success stories in other countries
- 2.2 Developing the media's vision with regard to women's issues through:
  - Developing media discourse aiming to change negative cultural stereotypes and practices related to women and gender issues, the non-discrimination on the basis of gender, and the equalization of opportunities
  - Publishing female success stories (female entrepreneurs and businesswomen) in the labor market
  - Monitoring success stories of women in decision-making positions and identifying the biggest obstacles that they overcame
  - Publishing success stories of women in non-traditional occupations within the labor market
  - Dedicating television and radio programs concerned with changing the stereotypical image of women, raising awareness regarding the importance of their participation in the labor market, and changing some misconceptions about their participation in development.

#### "Tell Your Own Story in Your Own Colors" Initiative

The initiative aims to improve the media image related to women's issues by changing its stereotypical image in our society. Focus must be given to the importance of women's participation in the labor market, and publishing success stories of Palestinian women who found solutions to difficult issues. These stories will serve as a guide for other female Palestinian entrepreneurs aspiring to bring about change.

#### 3. Promote positive outlook towards the presence of women in the labor market by monitoring and refuting cultural legacies that perpetuate discrimination against women, and raise awareness among community leaders

- 3.1 Hold workshops in rural and marginalized regions
- 3.2 Reciprocal visits among promising female entrepreneurs (to exchange experiences through direct discussions)

#### Second: Increasing the participation of Palestinian women in the local and global labor market

1. Establishing employment projects through the use of modern technology.

With ongoing technological advancements, the limited mobility of young women, and the lack of employment opportunities, there is a need for local partnerships to establish virtual employment opportunities via the internet. Such initiatives could promote leadership and advanced technological opportunities. This applies especially to fields such as software, accounting, programming and translation, which all promote entrepreneurship and private business.

2. Establishing a project that creates telecommuting job opportunities for Palestinian women.

## "STAY ONLINE" INITIATIVE

There is a remarkable development in the use of information technology and communications tools in Palestine, especially among those (15-29) years of age. Data for the year 2011 showed that the percentage of young people who use computers reached 67.5% in the Palestinian territories: 70.4% in the West Bank and 62.7 % in the Gaza Strip. In 2004 that overall percentage was 47.6%. In addition, the gap receded between males and females with regard to computer use. The proportion of male computer users is 69.8%, versus 65.0% for females in 2011. Based on 2010 statistics, 72.7% of males in the Palestine use the internet compared to 66.2% for females. In 2011, the percentage of young people who owned an e-mail account was 42.9% in Palestine: 45.9% in the West Bank, and 38.2% in the Gaza Strip, compared to 14.3% in 2004. The percentage of males and females with email accounts was 51.1% and 34.4% respectively in 2011.

Based on these statistics, and based on ALWANE Palestine's belief that economic empowerment of women contributes to empowerment in other areas, the Palestine Committee designed this initiative to create women new horizons for job opportunities in a world that is seemingly becoming a small village. ALWANE Palestine aims to create a model that is workable, successful and sustainable to support the economic empowerment of women. The committee also aims to enable women to have a leading role through the use of modern technology as a base for virtual employment. The project will contribute to creating job opportunities for women through networking with local companies and institutions both in the region and internationally.



### 3. Create effective partnerships with grassroots feminist organizations in economic sectors through:

3.1 Monitoring female, cooperative, economic cases and activating them. Examples include women's cooperatives and savings and loan associations and other links to the national economy.

Women's cooperatives play a vital role in the development and improvement of women's economic leadership by providing its members with:

- Training and guidance in managing skills related to production, institutions and negotiations
- Production tools, and capital loans
- Providing opportunities for participation in local fairs, and initiatives of advocacy and support.

Palestinian Authority institutions and local and international NGOs that have a desire to provide support in this area, can assist targeted women's cooperatives to organize themselves more effectively, to create income-generating projects and to become capable of responding to the needs of members. They can also help in responding to community needs where there is demonstrated high quality participation and representation.

Ultimately, this will lead to investment in women and it will affect their social and financial lives, thereby enhancing economic security and independence.

### Third: A supportive legal environment that promotes the leadership role of women in the economic sector

- Increasing Palestinian legislation supporting the advancement of economic leadership of women.
- Surveying legislation related to economic aspects related to women's possession of a legal personality
- Applying pressure to amend legislation that prevents women from assuming leadership/economic roles

### Fourth: Governments and relevant authorities adopt policies that promote the leadership role of women in the economic sector

Developing a focal policy paper for dialogue:

- Conduct a survey of the decisions and instructions related to women's economic participation
- A lobbying campaign to amend the decisions and instructions that prevent the advancement of the leadership role and economic status of women
- A lobbying campaign to generate policies and clear instructions that promote economic leadership roles for women



# QATAR

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to empower women small businesses-owners to be successful entrepreneurs, ALWANE Qatar is focusing on policy efforts to legalize home businesses in Qatar. Though home businesses are currently not legal under Qatari legislation, many unregistered businesses – owned by both locals and expatriates – do exist in Qatar. Although the government is aware of these businesses, it does not take formal legal actions to sanction or discourage these start ups. Despite this de facto protection, unregistered home businesses are limited in how much they can expand since they are, strictly speaking, illegal. Similarly, there is no guarantee that the government will not penalize such businesses in the future. The women who are running these home businesses are therefore restricted in how much they can sell and how entrepreneurial and successful they can become. In light of this, ALWANE Qatar’s focus is to empower these women by legalizing home businesses, thus allowing women owned SMEs to flourish in Qatar.



This report summarizes findings from the committee’s national, regional, and international research, as well as recommendations for important next steps in policy making ALWANE Qatar understands that legalizing home businesses in Qatar will require much more dedicated research, as well as the engagement of more stakeholders through the formation of strategic partnerships. The Committee looks forward to engaging in the next stages of this project.

## FINDINGS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The research below consists of existing data and information, along with original research conducted by members of the ALWANE Qatar committee. This research was divided into two main categories: primary research and secondary research.

### 1- Primary Research:

#### A. Survey – “Women & Business in Qatar”

##### Description

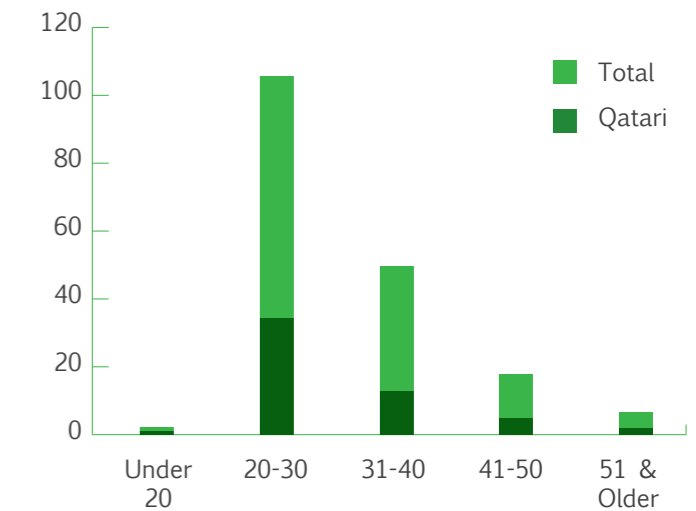
The ALWANE Qatar Research & Policy team put together a comprehensive report entitled, ‘Women & Business in Qatar,’ which was distributed across the country via Survey Monkey. The main purpose of the survey was to gather information regarding what challenges established and emerging Qatari businesswomen and entrepreneurs are currently facing with regards to establishing and running a home business. The survey consisted of two main sections: Personal information, and business-related questions. The survey split women into three main categories: 1) women who plan to start a business, 2) women who currently own unregistered businesses and, 3) women who currently own registered businesses. A glossary of keywords was provided for the survey respondents along with two translations of the survey in both English and Arabic.

##### Findings

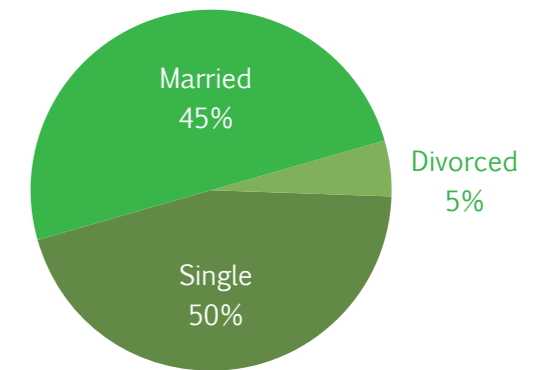
A total of 124 women participated in the survey, 71 of whom were Qatari citizens. It is important to note that not all women completed all survey questions.

The majority of survey respondents were young educated women. Ages ranged between 20 and 50 years of age, but the majority of respondents were between 20 and 30 years of age. 50% of respondents hold at least a Bachelor’s degree. Half of the participants are single, while 45% are married. The majority of respondents are employed with 26.6% of

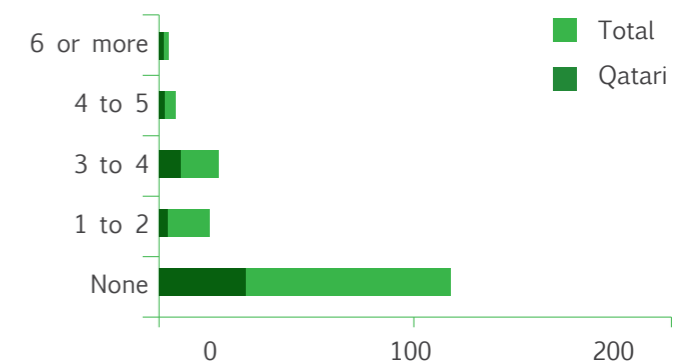
survey participants reporting over 10 years of work experience and 37% between 1-5 years of experience.



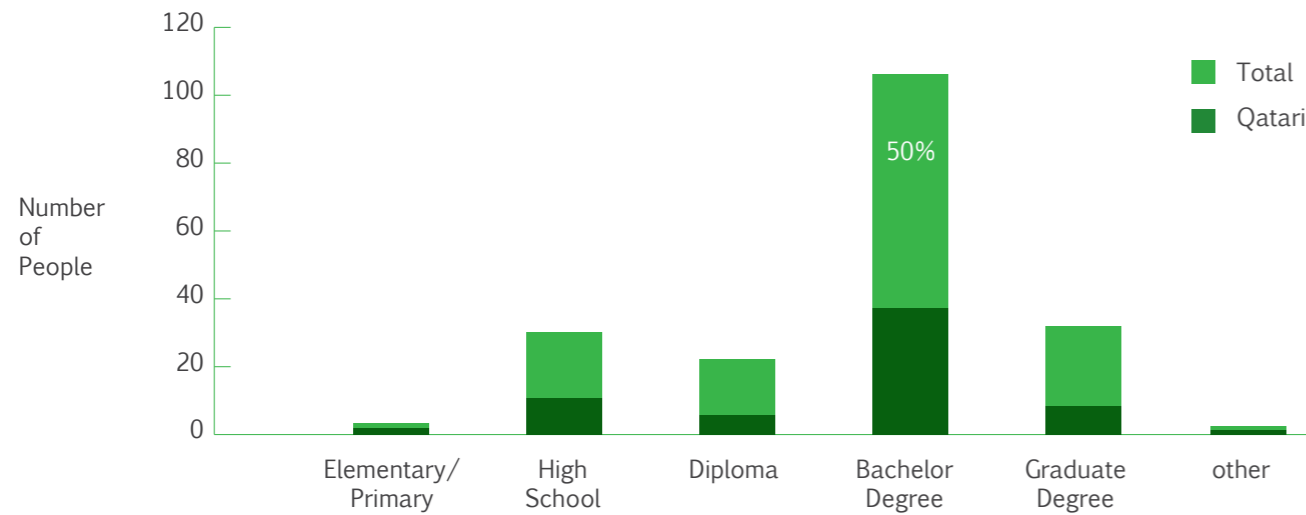
1.1 A graph showing the age range of women who took the survey



1.2 A pie chart showing marital status percentage



1.3 A column graph showing the number of children women have

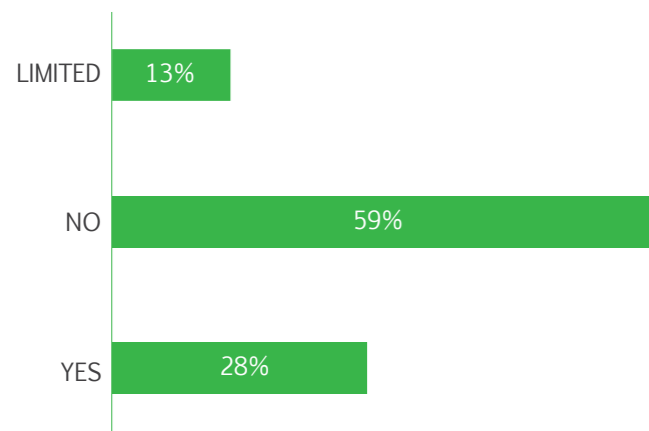


1.4 A bar graph showing the different education levels of women

In the second part of the survey, the Committee found that out of the 115 who responded to the question, 55 reported that they wanted to start a business, while the remaining 60 indicated that they already own a business. This includes both registered and unregistered businesses. Surprisingly, 73% of the women respondents reported no entrepreneurship experience. In fact, 59% of women aspiring to establish their own

business reported having little to no knowledge of the process, rules, and regulations to creating one's own start-up. This demonstrates that there is either unclear information or a lack of information readily available within the country itself. In addition, there appears to be a lack of capacity building, guidance, and education opportunities for women in this sector.

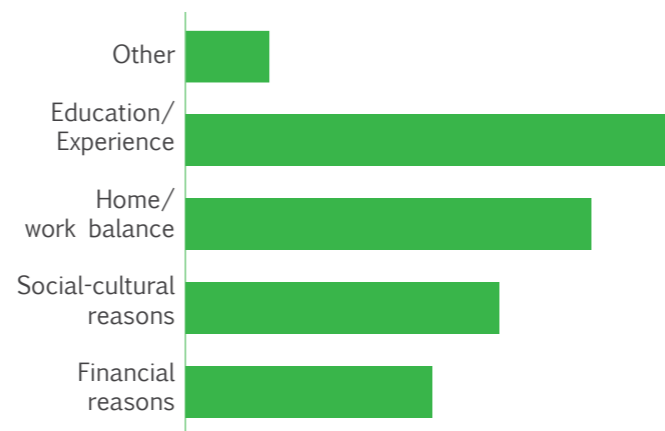
### Knowledge on Establishing Businesses in Qatar



1.5 A bar graph depicting the percentage of women who don't have a business' knowledge on steps to take in Qatar

One of the top reasons that women provided for wanting to operate a business from their homes included the desire to have a better balance between their homes and work life.

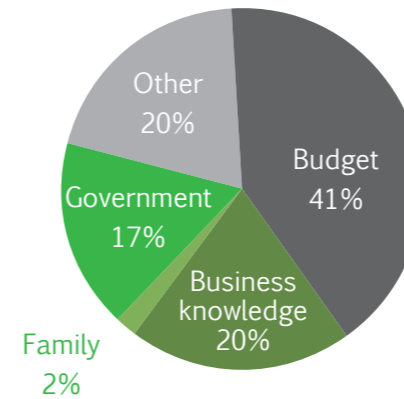
### Reason for preference of working from home



1.6 Reasons for women preferring to work from home

The greatest challenge women reported to establishing a home business is the lack of an adequate budget or loan opportunities. This trend is consistent across all three categories of women respondents. This is closely followed by the lack of business knowledge, experience, and government support. Very few women indicated that their families stand as an obstacle to establishing a business.

### Barriers / Challenges



1.7 A pie chart showing the biggest challenges women found

This survey successfully demonstrates the perceived gaps and barriers that exist for opening a business in Qatar. It also sheds light on the kinds of public and private support women business owners are seeking in growing and/or establishing their SMEs. It is evident that there is little to no information and guidance for women when it comes to business skills and financial management. It is also clear that without enforced penalties for unregistered business, women owned small businesses will not see the incentives and benefits of registering for their own growth and success.

### B. Meeting with Ministry of Business and Trade

#### Description

ALWANE Qatar held an in-depth, in-person interview with a representative from the

Ministry of Business and Trade. The interview covered topics ranging from the challenges of unregistered home businesses, their consequences on the economy, and the Ministry's plan of action.

The Ministry is aware of the many illegal home businesses operating in Qatar. As a result, it is trying to find ways through other institutes, to properly register all Qatari and expatriate-owned businesses. The Ministry encouraged ALWANE Qatar to build a case for the legalization of home businesses and present its policy recommendations for review. The Ministry also invited ALWANE Qatar to conduct more research moving forward so as to strengthen its case for the consideration of this legislation.

### C. Interview with home business owners registered through Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA)

#### Description

ALWANE Qatar interviewed an entrepreneur who is currently registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA). This interviewee is contracted through the Ministry to provide traditional food for national events. MOSA is considered to be one of the most empowering governmental organizations for Qatari women and their interests.

#### Findings

In this interview, ALWANE Qatar explored the benefits women entrepreneurs can enjoy when they are legally registered through MOSA. First of all, when women-owned businesses are formally registered, they are held accountable and take full responsibility of the quality of their brand and products. The Ministry enforces this through routine check-ups. In addition, registered businesses get more visibility as they are included in a database of businesses. This allows MOSA to invite these women business owners to events and encourage them to participate in exhibitions locally and internationally.

## D. Focus groups of Business Women

### Description

ALWANE Qatar held seven focus group sessions discussing the legalization of home businesses and the current needs of established and emerging businesswomen. Participants included businesswomen and men whose wives are home businesses owners or freelancers.

### Findings

There need to be more awareness raising efforts for women about entrepreneurship and running home businesses – these include afterschool activities, training sessions, and workshops. ALWANE Qatar also hopes to apply best practices shared by Oman and UAE. These include existing legislation in these countries that allow for registering a specific room in one's home to do business. This practice would be easy, accessible and could be effectively regulated in Qatar. ALWANE Qatar also suggests establishing a business center for women that is responsible for regulating and facilitating the registration process, as well as guiding women through the necessary steps. Legalization and registration would be issued from this center in collaboration with the Ministry of Business and Trade. It would include all aspects – education/training, registration and regulation.

## E. Interview with Enterprise Qatar (EQ)

### Description

Enterprise Qatar (EQ) is an NGO which supports the growth of SMEs in Qatar. ALWANE Qatar interviewed two EQ employees to learn more about the research they have recently conducted to empower business women and the services they currently offer.

### Findings

EQ has identified the existence of a “Grey Market” in Qatar whereby there are many Qatari woman running small businesses from home that are not formally registered. In order to move from small to medium size

businesses, EQ insists that they need to be able to employ and advertise which is only possible once they are legally registered. EQ explained that there are several important requirements for legal registration, including the need for a business bank account with a required minimum amount. Surprisingly, not one of the Qatari women interviewed by EQ had a business bank account. Many of the women will not go to the bank because they have received negative feedback about banks. Unfortunately, without a formal business bank account (as opposed to a personal one) businesswomen are deprived of many opportunities including bank loans and financial plans that can help them develop and grow their businesses.

EQ found that in order to formalize this market and to help these women, they need to understand the overall market; businesswomen's needs; the networks businesswomen currently operate in; their customers base; their markets; and their business and/or manufacturing aspirations.

EQ also explained that there is a lack of understanding of the concept of mentorship in Qatar. Business owners do not trust one another because they have had their business ideas stolen in the past. Intellectual property rights are not well understood or established in Qatar. Therefore, it is difficult for businesswomen, especially those who are unregistered, to protect their business ideas, products and services from being stolen or replicated.

EQ shared a number of current projects it has in place to improve the situation. In the last two years, EQ, in partnership with Carnegie Mellon University, has conducted the Al-Fikra competition, Qatar's young entrepreneurs' business program. Currently, EQ does not conduct any workshops specifically for women, though it should be noted that the First, Second and Third Places in the Al-Fikra competition in 2012 were held by women.

## F. Interview with Bedaya Center

### Description

Bedaya Center works to provide Qatar's youth with access to training, guidance and support, so that they are better equipped to succeed professionally, establish strong businesses, and make a positive contribution to Qatari society.

### Finding

Bedaya discussed their vision of providing workshops to Qatar University students, particularly talented women, on establishing and managing home businesses.

## G. Private Sector Forum on Business & Finance

### Description

ALWANE Qatar attended the Private Sector Forum on Business & Finance. Below is a summary of the key findings from two of the main speakers at the event.

### Finding

William James Gohary, the Regional Manager of Financial Market & PE Funds at the IFC, discussed the financing needs of SMEs and startups in Qatar. He explained that it is essential to understand the landscape of the local market and its needs, as 75% of all registered businesses in Qatar are SMEs. He emphasized the importance of establishing processes which facilitate the establishment and management of a business including securing a contract, paying taxes, registration, etc. Mr. Gohary explained that one major obstacle is the fact that banks mostly finance large businesses due to lack of trust in the SME sector and low profitability. He hopes for a more enabling environment for startups in the future, where SME's will have greater access to capital, and more simple registration processes. He believes that one important step is to increase banks' trust in SMEs, and awareness of their profitability.

Mr. Shams Hasan, Board Member & Co-founder of CarSemsar.com, presented a case study regarding obstacles to establishing a business and how one can begin the process. He began on the positive note that Qatar is one of the most competitive markets in the region. Furthermore, he said Qatar is continuously working towards improvement. For instance, there is an increasing ease for SMEs to receive bank loans. Right now, banks are looking to fund innovative and outstanding ideas that support the country's 2030 vision. Mr. Hasan pointed to a number of challenges facing SMEs including the obstacles they face when trying to take their product to the market – particularly regional and international- as well as the obstacles to growing and achieving sustainability. He explained that establishing an SME can be very expensive and has found that whatever sum an entrepreneur believes he or she may need at the start of the process often needs to be doubled by the end. Time is also a tremendous limitation, as he explains that the majority of entrepreneurs are also working 80 hour/week day jobs, leaving them only their evenings to work on establishing their businesses. Last but not least, Mr. Hasan explained how a culture of frowning upon failure in Qatar and the region is a significant barrier to the establishment and flourishing of SMEs as most will avoid this path to shy away from the risk.



## 2- Secondary Research:

### A. Qatar's Statistics Authority

The Qatar Statistics Authority was established in 2007 as an independent agency to provide trusted high-quality statistical information about Qatar. The statistics supplied by the QSA to the QNFSP are key to supporting empirically grounded policy formulation. The Qatar census informed the research to establish the country's current context and reported that women make up 13.4% of the workforce. However, this percentage does not include the enormous amount of home businesses run by women in Qatar.

### B. Qatar National Vision 2030 and National Development Strategy

The Qatar National Vision 2030 and National Development Strategy set women's empowerment as a national priority. In particular, the documents highlight the importance of the entrepreneurial development of Qataris, especially of youth and women. The documents also stress the importance of investigating the "barriers to entrepreneurship," followed by the launching of initiatives such as "incentives, business training and capacity-building at home and abroad in areas relevant to labor market needs." At the same time, the documents emphasize the importance of work-life balance and their role in the family structure. While the documents respect the importance of the empowerment of women, it is also recognized that Qatari family values must be maintained at the same time. We believe that by legalizing home businesses for women, these objectives can be more easily reached. Legalizing home businesses for women facilitates an increase in the number of women in leadership and decision-making positions, while at the same time ensuring women the chance to balance their work and family activities.

### C. Abu Dhabi, UAE Case Study: Mubde'a

The Mubde'a program was established mainly for Emirati women in Abu Dhabi, by the Chamber of Commerce. The program is aimed to encourage business at home. The program is founded on strict rules and regulations, and includes businesses including retail, education consulting, social consulting, and many others. The program allows females to register their home business, meet their competition and create a healthy and legal environment of home businesses.

### D. Qatar Case Study: Foursati

Foursati was developed by MOSA through the Department of Productive Families with an aim to change the buying culture into a producing one through the empowering of productive Qatari families. The program encourages families to enter the market by providing them with a package of basic courses on basic business knowledge and skills that help deliver business ideas on paper in to profitable projects.

"Foursati" is only for local entrepreneurs who produce food, clothes designs, and traditional hand crafts. It markets them and helps them acquire more support from relevant organizations and companies such as shops with reasonable rates or centers with professional training courses. Every year, "Foursati" selects the best business and supports it with a financial reward. This selection is announced by the Ministry and is publicized by heavy local media coverage.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION OF RESULTS

Qatar is growing economically, yet there is a grey area of unregistered, illegal home businesses. These businesses support their owners financially. However, the actual consumer protection law is not transparent enough to cover this segment of home business owners who are mostly women.

### Problem

Through the results of the research, interviews and survey, ALWANE Qatar saw that the issue of legalizing home businesses in Qatar could be seen from four main perspectives. Though it is in an issue which is a clear barrier to the economic empowerment of women in Qatar, it was also problematic from other perspectives, including the following:

#### 1. Government:

According to the current Qatari legislation, home businesses are illegal. In order to run a business in Qatar, one must fulfill certain criteria in order to obtain a Commercial Registration – one of the most important and costly of which is to have a rented office space. However, the government of Qatar is aware that there are many small businesses operating illegally without an office space, commercial bank account and Commercial Registration. The government is currently 'turning a blind eye' to this fact, and as such they are not actively pursuing and shutting down these businesses. There also does not seem to be any clear mechanism or punishment for running such a business. As Qatar is a growing economy with lofty visions of being an international player in the global economy, it is very important for the country to ensure proper enforcement of the law and protection of its citizens. The fact that the government does not pursue these businesses is an indication that they recognize their purpose and importance. However, if that is the case, these businesses should be legalized and properly regulated. One of the roles of the government is to make it clear

to its citizens what is and is not legal, and to enforce the law as such. When the government turns a blind eye, it sends mixed signals to the citizens on what is and is not legal or permissible. As Qatar grows, it is imperative that there is transparency, equal treatment and clarity on the laws of the country.

#### 2. Qatar's Economy:

Qatar's economy is growing at an astonishing rate and is undeniably fast becoming a major player in the global economy. Qatar is aiming to create a sustainable, knowledge-based economy which stands as a leader in the MENA region. While the country holds one of the highest GDP's in the world, and is endowed with many natural resources including LNG, the sustainable growth of the country must be supported by the activities of the country and its citizens. In order to so, Qatar must support local SMEs to bolster the national economy. There are institutions in Qatar which support entrepreneurship; however the best support is often given to the larger SMEs, rather than the smaller ones. It is important for the government to realize that all small businesses have the potential to grow exponentially. Examples of highly successful businesses, which started as mere home businesses, include Apple Inc., Hewlett-Packard and Amazon.com. Qatar therefore must provide a mechanism for such businesses to be established and thrive within its economy, so as to support Qatar economically on a national and global level.

### 3. Consumer:

The consumer's rights must also be protected when it comes to products and services offered from illegally operating home businesses. The Consumer Protection Law was passed in Qatar in 2008. Consumers have the right to health and safety, obtaining correct information and fair pricing, amongst other criteria. However, it becomes more difficult to enforce these consumer rights when services and products are offered from rogue home businesses that are not subject to the same stringent regulations as legally registered businesses. It can also be difficult for the consumer to sue the business owner if they are not dealing with them directly. The consumer has a right to be protected from such rogue traders who offer products/services below the standards of quality with little regard to health and safety protection. Again, it is the government's duty to enforce the laws, and ensure that all business owners are responsible for the care and rights of its consumers.

### 4. Business owner:

Last but not least, the problem can be seen from a business owner's perspective. Many business owners are operating illegal home business in Qatar. The reasons are usually monetary, including the high cost of setting up a business, opening a bank account and renting a very expensive office space. When a woman is operating a small business with only 1-3 people, such a cost becomes too big of a burden, discouraging them from pursuing the legal route. Their business may not require an office space, or a business account, however there is no in-between mechanism for them to operate.

Many of these business owners are very creative, resourceful and ambitious. While running a home business may allow them to start selling their product/service, they are subject to a glass ceiling which prohibits them from growing and expanding. So as not to draw attention to themselves from the

government, they cannot advertise their business publicly. They also are limited to what contracts they can take since they do not have a Commercial Registration. Therefore, the current state of affairs is highly stacked against them and against entrepreneurship in a more general sense. Most businesses start off small, and expand as they become more successful. The current environment in Qatar only allows businesses which already have large funding to succeed. In addition, allowing home businesses to be legalized and flourish will nurture the economic empowerment of women in Qatar. Women will be able to run their own home businesses and manage their career and family/home life.

### SUMMARY

The history of home businesses started a cultural trend within Qatar. However, with the rapid development the country is undergoing, this trend needs to be formally acknowledged, validated and legalized. Home businesses need to be documented and recognized to create a community of smart functioning small businesses.



### RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION STEPS

These are the future steps for ALWANE Qatar's action plan:

#### 1- Policy Change

The main aim of this research is to generate new policies that will create a formal process for the establishment of legally registered home owned businesses, thus encouraging women to follow this process. However, in order to present a policy change proposal to the Ministry of Business and Trade, extensive research must be conducted to include both genders. If a law is established, it must be a gender-neutral law in order to eliminate gender discrimination; thus empowering women and recognizing them as equals to men simultaneously. The end result will ultimately empower women. This law will apply to Qataris primarily, as legal restrictions still exist in Qatar regarding expat ownership of businesses.

#### 2- Public Relations and Media

The ALWANE Qatar awareness campaign will utilize different media, but with a heavy focus on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.). The committee's efforts will also be featured in Arabic and English newspapers and magazines on a continuous basis. Already, the committee has been featured in Jameela Magazine, Alraya newspaper, and QF Radio. Post-summit, the committee will hold a press conference to announce the launch of the campaign for the legalization of home owned businesses where they will also be interviewed by QTV and Al Raya TV. This coverage will generate the necessary buzz to begin the push for change.

At the launch of the campaign, ALWANE Qatar will have original research to provide along with an original documentary produced by the committee. In this documentary, several key figures in the field of women entrepreneurship will be interviewed. ALWANE Qatar is also partnering with Women Leading Change Qatar, and has announced this partnership during a symposium to attendees who are all interested in women's advancement.



*Paving the path for generations to come*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are currently over 1.2 million Saudi women between the ages 20-35 that are unemployed. In order to address the female unemployment rate, recent laws have been implemented to allow women to work in the retail industry. In 2011 the Ministry of Labor announced the passing of an historic law which states that all lingerie shops throughout the Kingdom must have Saudi females working as their front office staff. This law was successfully implemented in January 2012. In July of the same year, phase two of the law was passed, stating that all cosmetic stores must have Saudi women as their front office staff. These important steps will be followed by several other laws expected to be implemented throughout the coming months and years, revolutionizing the retail industry in the Kingdom and creating thousands of opportunities for Saudi women. This new trend in Saudi Arabia has been referred to by ALWANE Saudi Arabia Country Officer, Khalid Al Khudair, as the feminization of the job market. In Mr. Al Khudair's view, this trend will be what will help balance gender equality in the workplace. Though these laws will not see wide scale benefits immediately, the Kingdom's Minister of Labor, His Excellency Adel Fakieh, has written his name in the history books of labor reform with this revolutionary step forward.

The concept of women working in the retail sector is relatively new to Saudi culture and in the Saudi market. As a result, there have been bottle necks and challenges, and though there have been strides made in policy, they have not been successfully translated into the implementation phase. ALWANE Saudi Arabia aims to address these initial challenges through the committee's original research on women working in the retail sector. This research, supported by ALWANE, Glowork, KPMG and Harvey Nichols (Riyadh), has successfully placed the retail sector under the microscope, and has shed light on the major barriers preventing the increase of women working in the retail sector that the Kingdom is striving towards.



## 3- Events and Workshops

ALWANE Qatar's workshop team is working on preparing community workshops about legalizing home businesses and entrepreneurship, in general. Group members will identify strong trainers and invite them to join the effort. ALWANE Qatar will work closely with the trainers to develop curricula and conduct relevant and appropriate workshops for the right target groups. In these workshops, the committee aims to share why it is introducing the idea of legalizing home business, and how it will allow for a healthy economy.



## 4- Verification of Results

In order to prove the authenticity of the committee's results, ALWANE Qatar will crosscheck its survey findings with the Qatar Statistics Authority (QSA).

## Notes & Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge:

The Roudha Center, for supporting us and providing an umbrella for the ALWANE Qatar project.

All members of all teams of ALWANE Qatar, without whom this report could not have been compiled.



## Appendix

### 1- Enterprise Qatar's full interview

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0ByFiXOwYcwGzbEZUeTFpd25VUXc/edit>

### 2- Qatar National Vision 2030 and National Development Strategy

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0ByFiXOwYcwGzbEZUeTFpd25VUXc/edit>

### 3- 'Women & Business in Qatar' Survey questions. (Arabic + English)

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0ByFiXOwYcwGzUkhGTU5HRG1GN2c/edit>

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0ByFiXOwYcwGzcXU3VjFHN0c0Q0U/edit>

### 4- All survey results.

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0ByFiXOwYcwGzcXU3VjFHN0c0Q0U/edit>

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0ByFiXOwYcwGzS25xdkdKZ0F3Q3c/edit>





According to research studies conducted by ALWANE Saudi Arabia team members, attracting women to work in the retail sector has proven difficult due to the lack of awareness of its positive financial benefits and preconceived negative stereotypes about “the saleswoman”. These pressures, and the dearth of information available, create barriers for retail companies trying to attract Saudi women to work. Therefore, ALWANE Saudi Arabia is focusing on the importance of conducting awareness campaigns in the Kingdom and listing the advantages and the benefits that will positively change the lifestyle and the economy of Saudi women. ALWANE Saudi Arabia hopes that the close examination and wide dissemination of the committee’s survey results and studies will result to the opening of new retail stores for women employees.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to inform ALWANE Saudi Arabia’s advocacy and policy strategy, the committee developed a survey gauging women job seekers’ perception and understanding of the retail industry. This survey was designed and disseminated in partnership with Glowork, Harvey Nichols (Riyadh), and KPMG. It was distributed to 100 Saudi women job seekers between 18 and 36 years and from across all regions of the country who were selected through Simple Random Sampling.

Priority issues that arose during the interview were explored through an in-depth interview with Mr. Siraj Mohammad Ahmed, the HR and Personnel Manager in Harvey Nichols (Riyadh).

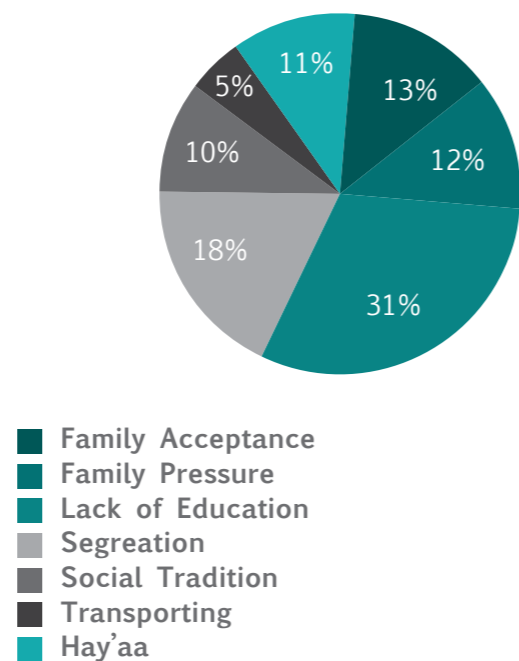
### SURVEY FINDINGS

The survey aimed to capture Saudi women’s primary reasons for not working in the retail sector. The majority of respondents (31%) from across the Kingdom highlighted lack of awareness, education or understanding of the retail sector as a main barrier to seeking employment within the sector. This is above

(and nearly double) other outstanding justifications including social traditions (10%), family pressures (12%), family acceptance (13%), and segregation (18%). Only a mere 5% cited transportation as the primary reason.

This finding is reflected in the fact that 42% of respondents indicated that they had little to no knowledge of what retail work entails. Respondents mentioned that there are not enough success stories in the region, let alone in the country, for average citizens to understand the sort of career path they would be pursuing in the retail sector. This data showcases that women currently working in the retail industry are looked down upon and de-graded, as the term “saleswoman” in Saudi has been a phrase that has been traditionally used for older women who make street-side sales. Education about the retail industry is needed, as this is an ideology that must be erased.

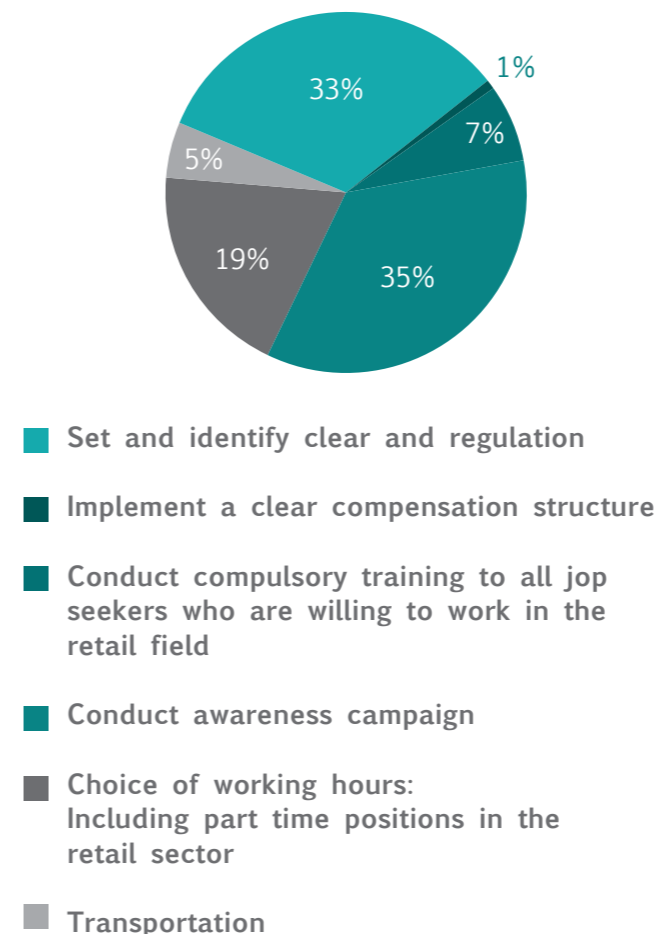
What are the reasons of not working in the retail sector



When participants were asked what would be the best approach to encouraging women to work in the retail sector, 35% of participants recommended an awareness campaign to portray success stories, as well as the benefits of working in retail. Another 33% recommended that laws and legislations be made clear to the public and employers regarding work in the retail sector. 19% responded that the choice of working hours (one shift) or part time roles should be adapted.

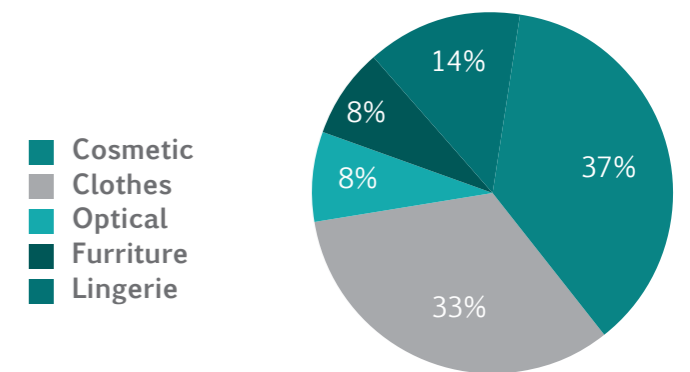
The Committee survey dug deeper into the vision of launching an awareness campaign, and asked all respondents whether or not they thought an awareness campaign would encourage more women to work in the retail sector. 82% of respondents believed that this would be an effective strategy.

Which of the following will encourage Saudi women to work in the retail sector



The survey also provided interesting insight into the types of retail stores where women would prefer to work. Survey findings showed that 37% of respondents indicated that they would like to work in cosmetic stores, 33% in clothing stores, and 14% in lingerie shops. These sectors are already open for women to work in, but interestingly, 16% also highlighted that they would be interested in working in either optical stores or furniture departments, which have not yet been opened for women.

What type of retail store do females prefer to work in:



The important conclusion of this survey along with in-person interviews with numerous HR managers, led to the committee’s decision to launch an awareness campaign recognizing women who have chosen their career path with in the retail sector by highlighting their success stories which occurred over the past year. This campaign will be implemented in partnership with Harvey Nichols and will begin by promoting the cause through the sale and distribution of pins and scarves in shopping malls across Saudi Arabia.



## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey has provided the ALWANE Saudi Arabia with the necessary information to promote and push for important policy changes that benefit women job-seekers.

Specifically, the ALWANE Saudi Arabia Committee has submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Labor that is currently under review. This proposal includes the following recommendations:

- 1) Create new laws that allow women to work in furniture and optical stores, and
- 2) Employ more Saudi women in sectors where there is currently a large contingent of male expatriates (such as the jewelry industry, tourism and IT)

The ALWANE Saudi Arabia Committee is hopeful that this proposal will become a reality by the mid-year 2013.



## INTRODUCTION

Tunisia has the potential of a promising future, and the will to find its way, and discover its possibilities, as it learns to be recognized and to carve out a special position on the political scene. Tunisian citizens are at a turning point in history where they want to decide their vision of the world. Opinions diverge and differences are heard, and conflicts erupt so that the law of the strongest prevails, and the result is not in favor of women.

In the past, Tunisian women seemed to have more advantages than women in other countries in terms of fundamental freedoms, access to education and the practice of the profession. Yet the official figures didn't reflect reality in full. Highlighting this during the revolution puts women on the defensive, as we rightfully ponder the real image that our society has of women. Is she of crucial value to the society's development? Do men consider her independent and free to make her own choices? Does a woman deserve to be an executive or a decision maker?

Tunisian women have always been at the forefront in the North Eastern region. The state has, without a doubt, guaranteed the integrity of her physical and moral self. However, the revolution and the change of the political regime have revealed the fragility of their pseudo-equilibrium. This perfect facade shatters to reveal the sad truth of a legal and security system that shaped women as a political issue that served its interests rather than the interests of their real development. At present, Tunisian women live in fear of losing their rights as their independence and their societal value are threatened. Women are subject to increasingly frequent intimidation.

We notice women's insecurities in their daily life, and the many obstacles they face. Women are scrutinized in everything they do, having some family member, neighbor, colleague, friend or even a complete stranger interfering in any decision she makes. They criticize, judge, devalue, punish, impose, shout, and beat women. A woman's environment keeps her from expressing herself as an emancipated, discerning human being with a strong character. Men desire to mold her in inherited stereotypes for social convenience. They instill in women the perception that she needs to adapt to these stereotypes so that she can be socially respectable. Women submit unconditionally to their fathers until marriage and to their husbands for the rest of their lives. She gives away her share of the meal to her brother, bears hardship so as not to annoy her husband, keeps quiet in the face of verbal abuse out of politeness, and in the face of physical abuse for fear the scandal. The examples are endless.



The society's perception of an act varies according to gender. If a merchant who doesn't give money back or sells a defective product, the claim of this right is considered a positive sign of strength of character in a man, while it is perceived as temerity and poor upbringing, or even proven vulgarity in a woman. It is preferable that she avoids direct confrontation. "Never forget that you're a girl! Silence and beauty are women's assets. Don't raise your eyes! Don't reply to offenses! Let man feel his superiority, my daughter! This is a man's job! This exceeds a woman's competencies! Ask for your husband's permission in everything! etc." An arsenal of recommendations that is supposed to guide women in their lives. This ultimately leads to many women being devalued and abused, not reacting to the abuse and often finding justifications for the male attitude to them. Verbal violence or harassment by a group of loitering youth in the street is considered normal, and doesn't even upset her. Groping on public transport has become common, not something to consciously worry about. What are the underlying causes of these acts of violence against women?

Several cases of rape emerge of this volatile context, one of which being the case of Miriam who has outraged the national and international public opinion. She is a victim of rape committed by three policemen . ALWANE Tunisia has campaigned for justice in this case through contacts and events in partnership with other social activists. Miriam's courage honors proud Tunisian women. This dignified woman freed herself from taboos. Her open-minded and understanding family largely contributed to this decision, and her self-esteem has been her major asset. She gave hope to many other women who are deprived of financial emancipation and of this sense of initiative. Inspired by her courage, ALWANE Tunisia intends to work to stop keeping governmental and social system abuse unpublished . The committee will also

work to assist women's fight for their rights in the face of every political change.

### GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

ALWANE Tunisia focuses on the major issue of threats to women's independence and their value in the society , and the challenges to the rights women took for granted . This issue concerns all of Tunisia, because of the paramount importance of women's contribution to the development of a healthy society, not only in their role as full citizens but also as builders of future generations. Empowering women has major effects at all national and international levels . Providing women with means to grow and develop professionally, socially, economically and politically guarantees the development of a healthy society. In this context, ALWANE Tunisia aims to ensure the availability of a personal and economic development environment that results in the emergence of responsible, active and independent women.

To succeed in this, the committee has current plans for the following four objectives which will be further detailed in the Action Plan below:

1. Ensuring the implementation and protection of Tunisia's woman rights legislation.
2. Helping women fulfill their potential.
3. Realizing the Fair Trade Project.
4. Facilitating a positive image of female Tunisian leaders in media.



### ACTION PLAN

The committee plans to achieve the said goals through working on the following steps:

- **Step I.** Information Gathering : As a start, the committee carried out field and online research to understand the most urgent needs and problems. To gain a base of supporters and widen the committee's visibility, ALWANE Tunisia created a Facebook Fanpage as well as a YouTube channel. The committee also created and distributed a questionnaire to understand the needs, the expectations and the obstacles encountered by women in their daily lives.
- **Step II.** Evaluation of Recent Events: the committee promptly worked to specify the most important events that affect women after the revolution. ALWANE Tunisia was intensively engaged in the case of Miriam's rape, participating in several events. The committee also participated in the efforts to provide the Miriam's case and the issue of rape in general with media coverage, including the debate on Mosaïque FM and the interview on AL TOUNISIA channel. During this phase, the committee followed closely statements by women that condemned the injustice suffered by the victim. Moreover, many committee members had the opportunity to participate in the Academy of Young Social Entrepreneurs (AYSE) program in Poland, where they were able to share their ideas and their mission with other young leaders coming from all over the world.

- **Step III.** Survey of Existing Attempts to Solve the Issues: the committee joined several well-established and experienced organizations including associations of democratic, progressive-modernist women with the aim to facilitate understanding of previous and current efforts. . Recently, these women groups launched awareness campaigns through the media by providing coverage of taboo subjects related to women in society,. They also held events across Tunisia as well as in Canada and the US, and the release of local songs supporting feminist causes. ALWANE members who participated in AYSE's activities won the best prize for their awareness video.

ALWANE Tunisia's cooperation with the different existing groups and programs benefits and reinforces the committee's work. For example, in cooperation with AYSE, ALWANE Tunisia will conduct a series of training sessions for the benefit of young social entrepreneurs in order to involve young people in personal development and social life. Furthermore, by participating in the training sessions organized by the Middle East Partnership Initiative's program for women, the committee will be able to strengthen its own capacities.



• **Step IV.** A Comprehensive Action Plan:

The committee, currently consists of over 40 people from all over Tunisia organized into several sub-committees in charge of different projects aiming at the achievement of the following four goals:

1. Educate women about the importance of voting in the next elections. These efforts will include the development and publication of a series of interviews with major female Tunisian leaders in different sectors.
2. The goal to establish a national day against all sorts of harassment against women.
3. Personal development: offering and organizing training sessions for personal development, communication, leadership and yoga for girls, women, teachers and members of women- and youth-related organizations. These training sessions will take place in universities across the country.
4. Fair Trade: the committee hopes to create a network to link artisan women to national and international market outlets, to target women with trades in disadvantaged areas. To launch this project, ALWANE Tunisia will identify optimal need areas and prepare a database of women according to their expertise and their skills level. The committee will then assess the current state (the abilities, the quality) using the generated statistics and set up the network. The network will aim to provide the necessary training (branding, management standards, making the offer attractive, etc.) and will encourage women to use new technologies for marketing their products.



## INDICATORS OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN YEMEN

Yemen has a population of 25 million people, 49.5% of whom are females. The rate of female illiteracy is very high. As education directly influences all factors related to women in a given society, the level of education in any country is the basis for the circumstances faced by women.

The enrollment rate of female students in primary education for the age group of 6 to 15 years was 59.3% <sup>1</sup>. As for higher education, the gender gap is significant. In 2007-2008 there were 39 female university students for every 100 of their male counterparts.

Statistics from the 2006 cluster survey indicate that the incidence of death among illiterate mothers was 89.3%, and for women married before the age of 20 it was 74% <sup>2</sup>. This high percentage prompts supporting the efforts calling for a safe age for marriage. In 2008, 210 women out of each 100,000 women died <sup>3</sup>, and the maternal mortality rate was 7 deaths per 100 births. These data provide troubling evidence that women suffer from many problems throughout society, including violence and exploitation in multiple spheres of life.



There is a quality gap in accessing and controlling resources, employment and trade. This is evident from the following numbers obtained from the 2004-2005 statistics <sup>4</sup>:

- Proportion of women among those employed: 24.6%
- Percentage of women economically inactive: 72.1%
- Percentage of women working in the informal sector: 92.7%
- Percentage of women participating in the labor force: 15.5%
- Unemployment rate among women: 46.4%
- Percentage of women in business: 3%

<sup>1</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics, Draft Statistical Yearbook, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> The Republic of Yemen, National Committee for Women, Report on the Status of Women in Yemen, 2009, electronic version

<sup>3</sup> Omar Zain Al-Saqqaf, Women's Priorities During the Transition Period in the Health Field, Sanaa, A Work Paper Offered to the National Convention for Women during the period 19-20 March 2012, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Republic of Yemen, National Committee for Women, The Status of Women in Yemen for 2009

These indicators in addition to negative social customs and traditions point to the extent of suffering of Yemeni women, and the social, economic and political difficulties they are facing. Such difficulties oblige the local community to work on empowering women and enabling them to stand up and participate with men in development without discrimination.

During the revolution, Yemeni women had a major role in leading men and participating with them to achieve the desired change. Yet, despite this remarkable role, women were absent in the political participation, they did not assume the status they deserve and did not reach the decision-making level.

Under pressure from the international community especially after the ratification of CEDAW and the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the Yemeni government sought to reduce discrimination against women. The National Commission for Women reviewed 57 laws and submitted proposals for amending 27 laws they found to be discriminatory against women. Some of these laws were amended in 2003 and 2008. Other laws are still under deliberation with the legislature and government, and an advocacy campaign is required for amending them.

The government established a public administration for women in state institutions, and took several measures to empower women, but still much of the female population suffers from marginalization, and do not receive equitable treatment under the applicable laws. The Human Development Report for 2011 indicated that the economic performance of women in Yemen was the weakest world-wide <sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Majid Al-Midhiji, Priorities of Women Affected by Armed Conflict in Yemen, a working paper submitted to the National Women Conference for Women, Sana'a, during the period 19-20 March 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Nabil Mohammed Al-Mutairi, Priorities of Women During the Transitional Period in the Area of Economic Empowerment, a working paper submitted to the National Conference for Women, Sanaa, during the period 19-20 March 2012.

## YEMENI WOMEN DURING CONFLICT

Yemen has witnessed a number of internal armed conflicts since the end of 20th century, and as is true with many conflicts, women and children were disproportionately affected by the violence. These conflicts impacted women in different social, economic, physical and mental aspects. In the 1994 war, the Saada war which resulted in 250,000 displaced persons at least 80% of whom were women and children <sup>6</sup>, the Abyan war, and events of 2011, many women were killed and wounded.

Although women are not party to armed conflict, they feel the brunt of their destructive results. Because of the loss of family breadwinners and loss of jobs, land or valuables, women must carry the burden of earning daily income for their families. They must perform strenuous works normally performed by men, as well as provide childcare for their home. Houses are often demolished or looted, and families are evicted and forced into homelessness, forced to live without the infrastructures for water, electricity, education and health services. Women also face the threat of severe punishment or murder for attempting to escape to refugee camps. And while in refugee camps, women face further exploitation, as men control distribution mechanisms for food and aid. This deprives women of their full needs, especially women who support large families.



The causes of internal conflict in the past years have varied dramatically, and may be defined as follows:

- Disputes over agricultural and residential land
- Sector problems and carjacking of public and private vehicles
- Personal and family disputes
- Disputes over borders and distribution of water resources
- Disputes arising from melee attacks and killings
- Disputes between citizens and the government over lands upon which developmental projects are established
- Ideological and tribal conflicts
- Conflicts between political parties

Currently, there is no specific policy that is set by the Yemeni government to protect women during armed conflicts. During such conflicts civil society and social actors assume active roles that usually receive the government's approval. Afterwards they assist in rebuilding what was ruined during conflict. Civil society organizations have a redemptive role in social welfare, a role that is supposed to be performed by the government<sup>7</sup>. For this reason, the President of the Peace-Building

Commission at the UN issued specific interim guidelines in 2007, and civil society organizations were involved in the meetings of the Peace Building Commission.

We conclude from all of the above that Yemeni women suffer from severe deterioration in areas of health, education, security and the environment. We also conclude that obstacles to women's equality present major challenges to the development process. Bridging gender gaps and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women, especially in the areas of women rights and empowerment, will have a positive effect on development. These steps are integral, and must be utilized in development strategies aiming to empower citizens, men and women, and to get rid of poverty, improve standards of living, reduce conflict, and thus achieve human development.

The Yemen Commission focused on these issues, especially the issue of conflict, and its impact on women. The Commission is advocating women's rights and working to enable them, and to shed light on young female leaders to support them in reaching decision-making positions.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is necessary to make data on the status of women readily available to researchers and interested parties. Such data is the primary means of identifying the needs of women in various fields. Based on this data, the nature of the interventions supporting the advancement of women is determined.<sup>7</sup>
2. It is essential to work with state institutions to transform policy into programs and projects. Gender issues are addressed in many programs and projects, particularly the state investment program.
3. The role of the Women's Shadow Parliament established by the National Committee for Women, must be increased to monitor issues of women who become part of the House of Representatives.
4. It is necessary to advocate for drafted legal amendments presented by the National Commission for Women before the House of Representatives and the Council of Ministers.
5. Monitoring violations against women in all fields, especially during armed conflict and beyond, must remain a priority for gender equality to take hold.
6. The Yemeni government must adopt programs and projects that contribute to the reduction of armed conflict and to peace-building, as well as involving women in dialogue and negotiations.
7. We must work with state institutions and civil society organizations in providing care and psychological support for women in areas of armed conflict and refugee camps.

*Special thanks to Dr. Mohammed Yahya Al-Najjar for drafting this report.*

## ALWANE YEMEN

In an effort to address these issues and garnish greater support, ALWANE Yemen is focusing its work on raising awareness about the impact of conflict and crisis on women in Yemen. The committee is working on this through multiple fronts. They have established a Women's Observatory Center which monitors violations against women stemming from the conflict in Yemen. In collaboration with a Cultural House, they are raising awareness of women's rights through artistic ventures including murals, painting, photography, and art workshops. The committee has also been very active in social and traditional media, having appeared in numerous television and radio shows. Most recently, they have utilized this media presence to promote the establishment of a law against child marriage.



**"On behalf of Women's Campaign International and its ALWANE Team, we would like to thank each and every ALWANE member - the mentees, mentors, country officers, and all of its partners and supporters across the region. In one year, you have proven that it is possible to paint the future with the colors you desire. We know this is only a beginning and look forward to the impact you will continue to make for years to come."**



<sup>7</sup> Martina Fischer, Civil Society in Conflict Transformation: Ambivalence, Potentials and Challenges. Berghof Research Center.