

Palestinian Female Labor Market Participation:

Despite the high level of people receiving an education, Palestinian women do not seem to be reaping the full benefits of it when it comes to participation in the labor market. Although the Palestinian Basic Law and Labor Law both acknowledge the right of women to work and prohibit gender-based discrimination, the rate of participation of Palestinian women in the labor force is very low in comparison with males, as it does not exceed 14%. It is also low when compared regionally (29% in the MENA region), and globally (52%). Average of male participation in the labor force reached 67%. The low rate of women participation in the labor market is because of lack the needed practical training experience and to raise the awareness on the importance of women's economic contribution, raising their capacity and increase their professional skills.

Female Education & Labor market

- Female Willingness to start a project was highest among women with vocational diplomas (74%), followed by those with academic diplomas (71%). This percentage declines for women who have finished a bachelor's degree or higher (59%) and is even lower among women who just have a basic education (53%). Consequently, relatively more educated women without university degrees are more likely to start their own business. Opportunity factors make female entrepreneurs more likely to establish businesses in urban areas than in rural areas and refugee camps. Female entrepreneurs also face challenges that stem from local culture, customs and traditions, in addition to limited property rights, among other things

The economic siege which has imposed on the Palestinian people lead to continues job opportunities decrease, and women are the first to lose jobs and the last to get them if available. This is due to the belief that the work of women is not essential in sustaining the household. Married males are seen as the breadwinners of the family and the market seems to prefer them, with a 83% employment rate. Furthermore, there is a big gap in the wages: a high number of women receive low or in-kind wages in return for their work because of dire need. Most employers ignore working women's rights, especially maternity leave, or weekly or annual leave.

Women are present at different levels of employment, but their presence decreases in upper management and decision-making levels, and increases in middle and low-level jobs. This reflects clear gender-based discrimination in employment, since women, regardless of their level of education, do not get equal opportunity in work. The role of women and their participation in Palestinian development is not solely about their rate of participation in the work force only, but also the seniority of the positions they occupy, the economic sectors they work in, their rate of representation in decision-making levels and their equitable access to resources and productive assets.

Characteristics of the project carried out by Palestinian Female:

Generally the characteristics of women-owned and managed projects (compared to those managed by men) are:

- 1- Smaller in size;
- 2- Slower in growth;
- 3- Less risky;
- 4- More committed to family responsibilities;
- 5- More conventional and in line with societal tradition

The obstacles that Palestinian female entrepreneurs face when starting entrepreneurial ventures

- The educational institutions do not play an active role in tracking the labour market requirements and do not follow up with the scientific developments or research to the extent required and develop concept accordingly.
- Regulations and policies don't encourage female entrepreneurship . A reform of the investment promotion law, in addition to other commercial laws, is required to successfully promote female
- opportunities for female graduates in addition to the political cultural and geographical employment determinants in Palestine. Thus, not entering the labour market wasn't merely personal choice.
- Obtaining funding and loans** is another problem that Palestinian women face, not only because of the high guarantees and collateral demanded which women have trouble because of the scarcity of loans available and the high interest charged.

Challenges that affects. The growth and development of entrepreneurial projects.

Traditional societal outlook to women's work, and to women who launch projects, especially if such projects are oriented to areas traditionally occupied by men in the horizontal and vertical gender division of labour. Many women suffer from the restrictions and control to which their behavior and movements are subjected. They lack the necessary public relations networks needed for the success of any project, with their relations often confined to family or other limited circles. This is in addition to their low level of participation in the labour market, and in political and economic 'blind' to women's problems, and those of small investors.

political, legal and developmental environment in which Palestinian

Businesswomen live generally does not differ from that which creates problems for men. But it discriminates more against women because of social gender relations. The unstable political situation, the increased violence of the occupation, the siege,

Barriers, impoverishment and inability to move, are all problems which greatly affect men and women alike. But the legal and developmental environment is generally deeply later.

Obtaining professional and technical training is also a basic problem which

Women face. First, because of a societal outlook that does not appreciate the value of professional labor, and second, more importantly, the absence of appropriate vocational and technical training available to women that is related to the needs of the Palestinian labor market.

All these problems are urgent and delicate, and could be studied individually in great depth. Solving them is a priority, and will both improve the situation of women and encourage investment in the economy.