

Progress in the implementation of these interventions was affected by several factors. They include the lack of an effective mechanism within the Ministry of Women's Affairs to monitor the strategy's implementation; the structure of the Palestinian economy and its poor ability to offer new job opportunities; the inability to put the proposed legislations and procedures on the agendas and priority lists of concerned stakeholders; and the limited availability of financial resources to implement the proposed interventions. At the same time, the proposed interventions remain a priority for action in the coming period, although the focus should be placed on some major issues and priorities.

## Way Forward: Priorities for promoting gender equality in the employment sector

- Increasing women's employment in production sectors already employing women, such as agriculture and manufacturing.
- Developing and adjusting women's skills to the needs and requirements of the labour market, through a focus on technical and vocational education and training for women.
- Facilitating women's entry into promising production sectors in the Palestinian economy, such as communications and information technology.
- Reviewing and developing legislation regulating the labour market to ensure laws are responsive to gender needs, and ensuring their implementation.
- Enhancing women's access to assets and resources, particularly credit, and supporting women's entrepreneurship.
- Providing supportive services to facilitate women's entry into the labour market.
- Supporting products of women and women's societies by protecting them and enhancing their ability to compete in local, regional and international markets.
- Ensuring the provision of gender-disaggregated data and statistics and providing the required guides and tools for the development of gender-responsive economic policy.
- Implementing community-awareness programs on women's right to work and how their participation can improve the economic and social situation of the family and society.



## WOMEN & ECONOMY



*Review report of the Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy and the outcomes of consultative workshops conducted in the framework of the development of the Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy 2014-2016.*

*Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Labor Force Survey: Annual Report 2012.*



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The right to work is a fundamental human right enshrined in international conventions and treaties, as well as in local Palestinian laws. Women's participation in the labour market is important for society – in addition to its role in empowering women and expanding their social and economic choices, women's participation helps achieve satisfactory economic growth rates, reduce poverty and achieve the general goals of development. Gender-equal access to production inputs would enhance productivity and efficiency in the Palestinian economy, leading to better development outcomes.

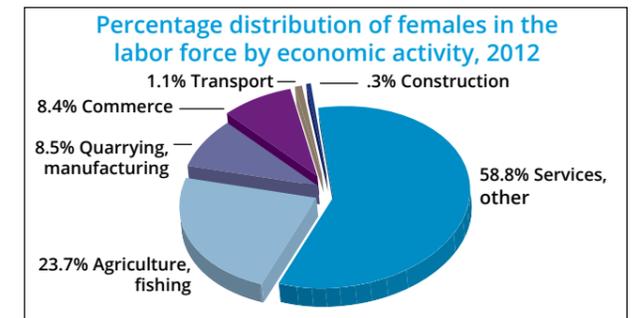
There are various factors that may influence the level of women's participation in employment. These include low demand for women's labour due to the distorted structure of the Palestinian economy, which tends to concentrate women's involvement in the informal sector. Also a factor is women's limited access to and use of assets and resources (such as credit). Finally, an existing mismatch between education outputs and labour market needs, and demographic changes in Palestinian families associated with poor provision of supportive services for working women both play a role.

## Facts and trends

- The government decided to create a national committee for women's employment, which has worked on developing a national strategy on the issue. The government set the minimum monthly wage level at NIS 1,450.
- Despite the high rates of educational attainment among females, their participation in the labour market remains low compared to regional and global rates.
- In 2012, participation in the labour force was 17.4 per cent for females, compared to 69.1 per cent for males. The participation rate was higher in the West Bank than in Gaza for both sexes. Nevertheless, female participation in the labour market has increased over the past few years.
- Females have a higher unemployment rate than males. In 2012, the unemployment rate among females was 32.9 per cent: 25.3 per cent in the West Bank and 50.1 per cent in Gaza. This was compared to 20.4 per cent for males: 17.3 per cent in the West Bank and 26.8 per cent in Gaza. Statistics indicate that unemployment rates have increased among females and decreased among males over the past few years.
- On average, women receive a daily wage that is equal to 86 per cent of the daily wage of men. In 2012, the average daily wage of females was USD21.3, compared to USD24.6 for males.
- Deir Al-Balah Governorate had the highest unemployment rate for females among all Gaza governorates, at 54.9 per cent, compared to 24.4 per cent for males. In the West Bank, Tulkarem Governorate had the highest unemployment rates for both sexes, at 35 per cent for women and 26.1 per cent for men.
- Women's participation in the labour force was the highest among women with 13 years of education or more compared to other educational attainment groups. The participation rate was 43.7 per cent for women with 13 years of education or more, compared to 6.6 per cent for women with 9-12 years of education and 12.9 per cent for women with 1-6 years of schooling.
- Women's participation in the labour force was the highest among women 25-34 years of age compared to other age groups. In comparison, men aged 34-44 had the highest participation rate.
- The vast majority of working women (81.7 per cent) were concentrated in two economic activities: services and agriculture. By comparison, these two sectors employed 40 per cent of men in the labour market. At the same time, only 1.4 per cent of women worked in the communications and transportation sector and construction activities, which together employed 24.9 per cent of males.
- Around 23 per cent of women worked as unpaid family members in family-run enterprises, compared to 5.5 per cent of working males.
- Participation in the labour market was higher in rural communities compared to other types of communities for both sexes: at 20.1 per cent among females and 72.9 per cent among males. Women's participation rate in

urban communities and refugee camps was 16.8 per cent and 15.7 per cent respectively.

- Refugee camps had the highest unemployment rates for both sexes compared to other types of communities, at 42.1 per cent for women and 26.4 for men. The women's unemployment rate in rural and urban communities was 34.6 per cent and 23.6 per cent respectively.



## Review Report on the National Cross-Sectoral Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality 2011-2013

The National Cross-Sectoral Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality 2011-2013 provided for raising the rate of women's participation in the labour market. To this end, the strategy adopted five policies and 13 policy interventions. The review report revealed that only modest achievements have been made towards the overarching objective, with inadequate progress in the implementation of the agreed interventions. Five interventions have been partially implemented and eight have not been implemented at all.

Interventions that have been partially implemented	Interventions that have not been implemented
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Amending the relevant laws and developing executive bylaws for the Palestinian Labour Law</li> <li>■ Developing and disseminating data and information on the labour sector</li> <li>■ Mainstreaming gender issues in ministries concerned with economic activity</li> <li>■ Increasing women's awareness of their legal rights</li> <li>■ Coordinating with the Ministry of Local Governance and Ministry of National Economy for the registration of all women working in the informal sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Drafting and developing a strategy for matching the outputs of higher education with the needs of the labour market from a gender perspective</li> <li>■ Providing facilitation and services to support working women</li> <li>■ Creating job opportunities for unemployed women with 13 years of schooling or more</li> <li>■ Validating domestic work as part of the national economy</li> <li>■ Enacting a law providing partial tax exemption to institutions marketing the products of rural women</li> <li>■ Providing women's cooperatives with guarantees for tax exemption</li> <li>■ Providing custom facilitation to institutions exporting the products of rural women abroad and/or marketing them locally</li> <li>■ Ensuring a linkage between the inclusive health insurance scheme (once approved) and registration of women working in the informal sector</li> </ul>

