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# STRENGTHENING COORDINATION FOR INCREASED WOMEN'S ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

End of Mission Report

August 2010

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by KARA N. BARRETT- DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES AND NOUR MOGHRABI-USAID JORDAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

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USAID JORDAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM  
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JORDAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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# **PART I: Overview**

## **ACTIVITY PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION**

To anyone observing the scene of women economic integration in Jordan, it surely comes across as a busy one. Many stakeholders have realized the importance of increasing women's economic participation and have opted on designing and executing programs addressing this issue. However, and despite the compelling need to coordinate efforts amongst the various key players working on this theme, little is done to facilitate this coordination.

Gender disparities in economic participation are often attributed to women's lack of access to factors of production and enterprise development (e.g. land, water, credit, and training); beliefs and perceptions concerning appropriate roles for men and women; and, legal and regulatory institutions that discriminate against women. Addressing gender based constraints to employment can lead to increased productivity, competitiveness, and overall economic growth.

The Government of Jordan, international donors, NGOs, and professional women's associations are also committed to improving women's economic participation. The efforts, however, are fragmented and lack a coordinated and strategic plan to ensure that both men and women benefit from increased competitiveness in the priority sectors.

To increase the impact of the Program's own initiatives, there is a need to learn from best practices on gender programming in specific sectors; understand gender challenges and opportunities in the sectors; and, identify actions to be taken by THE PROGRAM and the larger community (GOJ, international donors, associations, and the private sector) to increase economic opportunities for women in the priority sectors.

## **PROJECT OBJECTIVE**

The objective of the project is to eliminate, by the year 2015, twenty five constraints impeding women from economic participation and capitalize on identified opportunities in five economic sectors

## **PROJECT PHASES**

The project consisted of three phases, the results of each of which fed into the next. The three phases in the project are:

- 1- Roundtables
- 2- Seminar
- 3- Status Report

Following is a description of each one of the three phases:

### **Phase I: Round Tables**

This phase encompassed five round tables, each focusing on one economic sector. A detailed description of the round tables methodology will be mentioned later in this report.

### **Phase II: Seminar**

In order to disseminate knowledge amongst key stakeholders about the outcomes of each of the round tables, the project team organized a seminar entitled: Jordan Women in the Economy- 2015, in collaboration with the Jordan National Commission for Women (JNCW). The seminar brought together representatives of governmental bodies, NGO's, business associations and donor programs, who participated in a seminar discussion about the outcomes of each sector round table. THE PROGRAM team selected one representative from each round table to present the outcomes of the sector round table, including major constraints of women's economic participation and the suggested solutions. A total of sixty five participants attended the seminar and participated in the Q&A session towards the end.

The JNCW gave a presentation about the status of Jordanian women's employment, laying the grounds for the discussion which later followed.

### **Phase III: Report**

This report comes as the third phase of the project, documenting the main findings and recommendations for better integration of women into the five economic sectors at hand.

## **INCREASING GENDER EQUITY IMPROVES ECONOMIC OUTCOMES**

The critical role that women play in economic development is increasingly recognized. Women produce more than 50 percent of the world's foodstuffs. Women contribute to global gross domestic product (GDP) more than to either new technology or the new economic giants, China and India. Furthermore, the value of women's unpaid work, including housework and child-rearing, accounts for over half of world output.\* As the *Economist* declared in a 2006 article, "economic growth is driven by women."†

While women play a vital role in economic progress, on the whole, women's economic potential is limited by gender-based constraints.‡ Women often lack access to and control over productive resources, new technology, and market information. In addition, the majority of women earn on average about three-fourths of the pay of men for the same work and are more likely than men to face barriers in the workplace. These

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\* *Economist*. "Womenomics," 12 April, 2006.

† Ibid.

‡ Gender-based constraints are restrictions on men's or women's access to resources or opportunities that are based on their gender roles and responsibilities.

inequalities are inefficient; they undermine productivity and impede competitiveness. The effectiveness and sustainability of development assistance is compromised when gender issues are not addressed.

There is a positive and synergistic relationship between gender and economic growth; gender equality is linked to greater economic growth, and concomitantly, economic growth generates new opportunities for women's income generation. As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated, "Supporting women is a high-yield investment, resulting in stronger economies."<sup>\*</sup> The case for advancing women's economic opportunities is well documented at the macro and micro level. The section below reviews the key arguments for why addressing women's economic participation is imperative for a country's overall productivity, growth, and competitiveness.

- **Increasing women's employment reduces poverty through intergenerational transmissions of wealth.**

When women control cash earnings, they invest them in human development inputs such as food and education for their children. In the Philippines, increased consumption of calories and protein is positively correlated to the increased share of income accrued directly to women.<sup>†</sup> A study in Mexico found that men spend only 50 percent of income on their family, whereas women spend close to 100 percent. In the same way, when credit is given to women, they make significant investments in the household.<sup>‡</sup> In Bangladesh, one study showed that for every 100 taka lent to a woman, household consumption increases by 18 taka as opposed to an 11-taka increase in consumption for every 100 taka lent to a man.<sup>§</sup>

- **Increasing women's employment increases economic growth.**

In 61 countries, a positive correlation was found between growth and women's participation in the labor force between 1980 and 1990.<sup>\*\*</sup> This can be attributed to the fact that gender inequalities exact a high cost on the economic and human development of countries around the world, undermining their productivity and human capacity to contribute to the economy.

- **Addressing gender-based constraints can increase competitiveness.**

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<sup>\*</sup> U.S. Department of State. "International Women's Day," 8 March 2008. <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/03/120129.htm>

<sup>†</sup> Ranis, Gustav, Frances Stewart, and Alejandro Ramires. "Economic Growth and Human Development." In *World Development* 28, no. 2 (2000): 197–219.

<sup>‡</sup> Seguino, Stephanie. "All Types of Inequality Are Not Created Equal: Divergent Impacts of Inequality on Economic Growth." Burlington: University of Vermont, 2005.

<sup>§</sup> Smith, Lisa, Usha Ramakrishnan, Aida Ndiaye, Lawrence Haddad, and Reynaldo Martorell. "Public Policy to Improve Women's Status." In *Household Decisions, Gender and Development: A Synthesis of Recent Research* edited by Quisumbing Agnes, 187–93. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute, 2003.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Tran-Nguyen. "Economics of Gender Equality, Trade and Development." In *Trade and Gender: Opportunities and Challenges for Developing Countries*, edited by Anh-Nga Tran-Nguyen and Americo Beviglia Zampetti, 1–54. New York and Geneva: United Nations, 2004.

Efficient use of labor is an important part of economic development, particularly in countries that rely on inexpensive labor as one of their resource endowments. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has noted that discrimination faced by women and minority groups is a significant obstacle to economic efficiency and social development. Where more than half of a country's potential labor is not used efficiently, it is inevitable that competitiveness with other countries is negatively affected.\*

- **Women positively impact the bottom line:** A Catalyst report on 353 Fortune 500 companies found a connection between gender diversity and financial performance. The group of companies with the highest representation of women on their top management teams experienced better financial performance than the group of companies with the lowest women's representation in terms of return on equity and total return to shareholders.

## **WOMEN'S ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION IN JORDAN**

Women remain an under-utilized force for economic growth in Jordan. According to recent estimates, women comprise less than 15 percent of the labor force (Al Manar). Unmarried women are more likely than married women to participate in the economy. Between 2001 and 2005, over 90 percent of married women were economically inactive compared to roughly 85 percent of unmarried women (Al Jidara). A 2007 opinion poll found that key barriers to women's economic participation included: distance to workplaces, long working hours, and low wages (See Figure 1). The poll results stress that perceptions surrounding women's primary role as mothers and caregivers negatively affects their economic opportunities.

Further, the Jordanian labor force is characterized by high levels of sex segmentation. Women and men are clustered into different sectors. For example, women are largely found in sectors such as education, medical services, and manufacturing. Several studies have examined women's economic participation across sectors; this report will focus exclusively on women's participation in The Program target sectors: pharmaceuticals, local economic development (LED), information and communication technology (ICT), business processing outsourcing (BPO), and clean technology and water.

### **FIGURE 1: HINDRANCES TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE WORKFORCE**

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Source: Women Opinion Poll, February 2007

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\* Walker. "Human Rights, Gender, and Trade." In *Trade and Gender: Opportunities and Challenges for Developing Countries* edited by Anh-Nga Tran-Nguyen and Americo Beviglia Zampetti, 321–46. New York and Geneva: United Nations, 2004.



## **PART II: Results of the Sector Roundtables**

### **Sector Roundtable Methodology**

The sector round tables were constructed in such a way that incorporates the participants' thoughts, experiences and knowledge to come up with lists of factors impeding and constraining women's economic participation in the sector, as well as lists of suggested actions to overcome these constraints.

The project organized five economic sector roundtables to discuss women's economic participation in each sector. The roundtables highlighted the achievements and challenges of gender-integration efforts in these sectors, and sought to identify opportunities and suggested activities for increasing women's opportunities within the sectors. The project focused on sectors already established as priority economic sectors for THE PROGRAM. In addition, the following three criteria served as guidance in the sector selection process: presence of women within the sector, potential growth for women's economic opportunities, and existing government, international donors, and NGO projects focused on increasing women's participation in the sector. Based on the criteria outlined above, the round tables covered the following sectors: Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), Pharmaceutical and CRO's, Local Economic Development (LED) and Energy, Water and Environment (EWE).

Each of the round tables served as a platform for structured discussion. Attendees of each round table were invited to represent various stakeholders such as government, business associations, women associations, NGO's and the private sector. At the beginning of each round table, a presentation was given to level the knowledge of participants on gender issues. The presentation gave basics about the definition of gender, gender roles and gender relations, and linked these terms to development goals and advancement of economies.

Attendees also were introduced to the four dimensions of gender-based constraints\*, which are:

- Access to Assets
- Practices and Participation
- Beliefs and Perceptions, and
- Laws, policies and regulations

The participants were then presented with a number of examples for constraints and the dimension to which they stem from. Attendees were asked to write down what they thought was common belief, information, and popular sayings regarding men and women in society as a whole. These facts and information about men and women were put to the table without any challenge and were considered as a reference point for the next set of questions.

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\* For more details, see Appendix B

Afterwards, the facilitators asked attendees to brainstorm, in groups, in order to come up with a list of what they thought were gender-based constraints in the sector, with attention to those related to women, and with which of the four dimensions does each constraint correlate.

Each group presented the list it had come up with to the rest and discussed any ambiguities. After all groups understood the constraints and their relevance, each attendee was requested to vote for what he/she believes to be the top five gender-based constraints in the sector.

Based on the top five selected constraints, each group was asked to come up with suggested solutions for each constraint. As well, the groups were asked to indicate who do they think is responsible for implementing these solutions. A general discussion then followed and attendees were thanked for their participation.

### Gender-Based Constraints to Women's Participation across Sectors

Gender issues shape economic life:

- Men's and women's jobs,
- Men's and women's access to and control over resources, and
- The benefits men and women receive from productive activities.

Women's economic participation is mediated by multiple factors. As mentioned above, the roundtables explored four factors that often impact women's economic opportunities: access to assets, practices and participation, beliefs and perceptions, and laws, policies, and institutions.

The roundtable results below details the factors that influence or limit women's participation in particular sectors. While the factors have different manifestations and

consequences within particular sectors, several common constraints emerged across sectors including beliefs and perceptions, access to assets, and labor laws.

Social expectations limit women's participation in each sector. The following beliefs and perceptions were identified across multiple sectors:

**Access to Assets:** Gender relations shape access to the resources that are necessary to be active participants in society. Men and women often have different levels of tangible and intangible assets: land, labor, capital, credit, education, knowledge, and social networks. Men's and women's assets shape their employment options.

**Practices and Participation:** Ideas about gender shape how people behave. Men's and women's roles and responsibilities often differ. Men and women are often: responsible for different tasks within the household, hired for different tasks in firms, and clustered into different economic sectors.

**Beliefs and Perceptions:** All societies have belief systems that shape ideas about appropriate roles and responsibilities for men and women. These expectations affect men's and women's: educational opportunities, economic activities, wages, and mobility.

**Laws, Policies, and Institutions:** Men and women are often treated differently by formal and informal laws and policies including issues surrounding: ownership and inheritance rights, due process, employment opportunities, wages, and access to state resources (e.g. health, education, basic infrastructure, and public goods).

- Women's role as mothers and caregivers is considered primary; their role as workers is secondary
- Low societal expectations for women's professional achievements are prevalent
- Employers perceive women workers as less committed and career oriented than their male counterparts.

Not only do women face obstacles to obtaining and retaining jobs based on these social beliefs, they are often uninformed of new opportunities because of their limited social networks. Restrictions on women's mobility as well as ideas about the appropriateness of women socializing outside of work hours hinder women's access to this key asset. Women lack awareness of emerging opportunities from Business Process Outsourcing to Clean technology and Water.

Finally, the Jordanian labor market does not accommodate to women's dual roles as caregivers and workers. Currently, women must decide between working full-time or not at all. Labor laws do not provide for part-time or flexible work arrangements. Women's economic participation across sectors would greatly increase if laws were amended to help women reconcile domestic and work responsibilities.

## **Roundtable Results**

The sections below provide a discussion of the results from each individual roundtable. Each section includes the following:

- Sector overview;
- Summary of women's participation in the sector;
- Gender-based constraints to women's participation in the sector; and
- Recommended actions to address gender-based constraints.

## **LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED)**

### **Overview of LED**

The purpose of local economic development (LED) is to improve the economic capacity of a local area. LED provides an opportunity for the local government, the private sector, the non-profit sector, and the local community to work together to improve the local economy. Projects are not planned or implemented in isolation without support and interaction of community and local authorities. The local community is the starting point of development projects to provide basic needs to beneficiaries. Focus is also put on local resources, training and citizen involvement in implementation process. LED aims to enhance competitiveness in a way that is both sustainable and inclusive.

The Government of Jordan (GOJ) has taken steps toward decentralization as a means to increase the participation of local institutions in the development process. Since 2002, GOJ has developed governorate strategies. These strategies empower various institutions and components of Jordanian societies to participate in preparing their own solutions to local development needs. In addition, two civil society councils exist in each governorate. Their aim is to supervise the decentralization process and monitor the

implementation of local development programs and administrative affairs of the governorates. Despite these efforts, little progress has been made to delegate power to the local authorities.

In addition to the administrative challenges, the following obstacles are impeding the economic development of local areas.

- **High incidence of poverty and unemployment.** Fourteen percent of Jordanians live under poverty line. The current unemployment rate is 12.5 percent. The dependency ratio, which is a ratio of individuals typically not in the labor force (below 15 and over 64) compared to those that are in the labor force (15-64 years old), is 68.4 percent. When the burden of supporting the population is spread over a relatively small portion of the population, low individual incomes and decreased savings and investments often result.
- **Limited production capability.** Production is largely concentrated in Amman and Zarka.
- **Uneven distribution of foreign investments.** Most direct foreign investment is concentrated in the construction and textiles sectors. Both sectors rely heavily on migrant workers.
- **Scattered LED efforts.** Governorates lack strategic visions to upgrade and improve local economies.
- **Centralized decision-making.** Strategic planning often occurs without input from the local community.
- **Low economic participation rates for women.** Women comprise only 15.6 percent of the total labor force and 13.6 percent of people employed.

### **Women's Participation in Local Economic Development (LED)**

Women's economic participation in Jordan is low in general, but their absence as formal business owners is striking. Of the 15 percent of women engaged in the labor force, 50.8 percent work in the public sector and 47.5 percent work in the private sector. Less than two percent of working women own and operate their own business. The majority of women's entrepreneurial activities occur in the informal sector. Informal work is characterized by variability and volatility of income, lack of worker benefits and social protection, lack of training and career prospects, and uncertain legal status (Chen et al. *Women Work and Poverty*). The success of LED is dependent on the active participation of the local community, including women.

### **Gender-based Constraints to Women's Participation in Local Economic Development (LED)**

The following gender-based constraints were identified as inhibiting women's participation in LED. The chart describes conditions of gender inequality and factors contributing to the gender disparities and then provides statements of gender-based constraints.

Condition of Inequality	Factor(s)	Gender Based Constraint
Women have lower productivity levels than men in the workplace	<b>Beliefs and perceptions:</b> Society has low expectations for women in the workplace. Women are not taken seriously as workers.	Women's productivity is constrained because of low expectations of their ability to perform at work.
Women have low levels of economic participation	<b>Beliefs and perceptions:</b> It is commonly believed that women's primary role in society is that of a caregiver. Women are perceived to be better suited for household activities than professional activities.	Women are constrained from entering the labor market because of societal expectations that they are better suited for household tasks.
Less than 5 percent of land is owned by women	<b>Beliefs and perceptions:</b> Men are considered the protectors of the family's assets including land. <b>Beliefs and perceptions:</b> It is considered inappropriate for women to demand their inheritance rights. <b>Access to Assets:</b> Women often lack knowledge about inheritance laws. <b>Laws and regulations:</b> Laws and regulations that uphold women's right to inheritance lack enforcement by local institutions.	Women's access to land is constrained by beliefs about men's roles as protectors of land, women's lack of knowledge about inheritance rights, and limited enforcement laws and policies surrounding women's inheritance rights.
Women lack fewer education and training opportunities than men	<b>Beliefs and Perceptions:</b> A married woman's primary role is believed to be that of a caregiver. Her professional role is of secondary importance. <b>Practices and participation:</b> Women's limited mobility often contributes to the inaccessibility of training/educational opportunities.	Women lack fewer educational and training opportunities because beliefs and perceptions about the role of married women in society and mobility limitations.
Women are under-represented in decision-making positions	<b>Laws and regulations:</b> Current laws and regulations do not address the issue of women's representation in key decision making positions.	Women are constrained from decision-making positions because of the lack of attention to gender equality in laws and policies concerning governing representation.

### **Actions to Address Gender-Based Constraints**

Based on the identified gender-based constraints, the following actions are recommended.

<b>Constraint</b>	<b>Recommended Action (s)</b>	<b>Responsible Actor(s)</b>
Women's productivity is constrained because of low expectations of their ability to perform at work.	Recognize the achievements of women in the workplace	HR managers in private sector firms, Media
	Develop training programs to increase the confidence of women in the workplace.	Universities, INJAZ, Irada, NGO's
Women are constrained from entering the labor market because of societal expectations that they are better suited for household tasks.	Promote the benefits of women's participation in the economy	Media, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Social Development
	Promote image of women as both mothers and working professionals.	Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education, Media, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Mosques and Churches
Women's access to land is constrained by beliefs about men's role as protectors of land, women's lack of knowledge about inheritance rights, and limited enforcement laws and policies surrounding women's inheritance rights.	Educate women about their rights and the legal framework for supporting their rights	NGO's, Associations, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education
	Create legal enforcement teams and social support groups that promote the implementation of women's inheritance rights.	Parliament, Ministry of Justice, family protection centers, NGO's
Women lack educational and training opportunities because of practices surrounding early marriage, limitations on women's mobility, as well as beliefs and perceptions about the role of married women in society.	Ensure the trainings are offered in locations and venues that facilitate women's participation.	Ministry of Higher Education, Donors, NGO's, INJAZ
Women are constrained from decision-making positions because of the lack of attention to gender equality in laws and policies concerning governing representation.	Design and implement laws that promote the participation of qualified women in key decision-making positions.	Parliament
	Raise awareness of the importance of equitable representation for democracy.	Civic Society, Business Associations,
	Create formal and informal networks of women to support one another in elections.	Business Associations, Women's Associations

## **INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY (ICT) SECTOR**

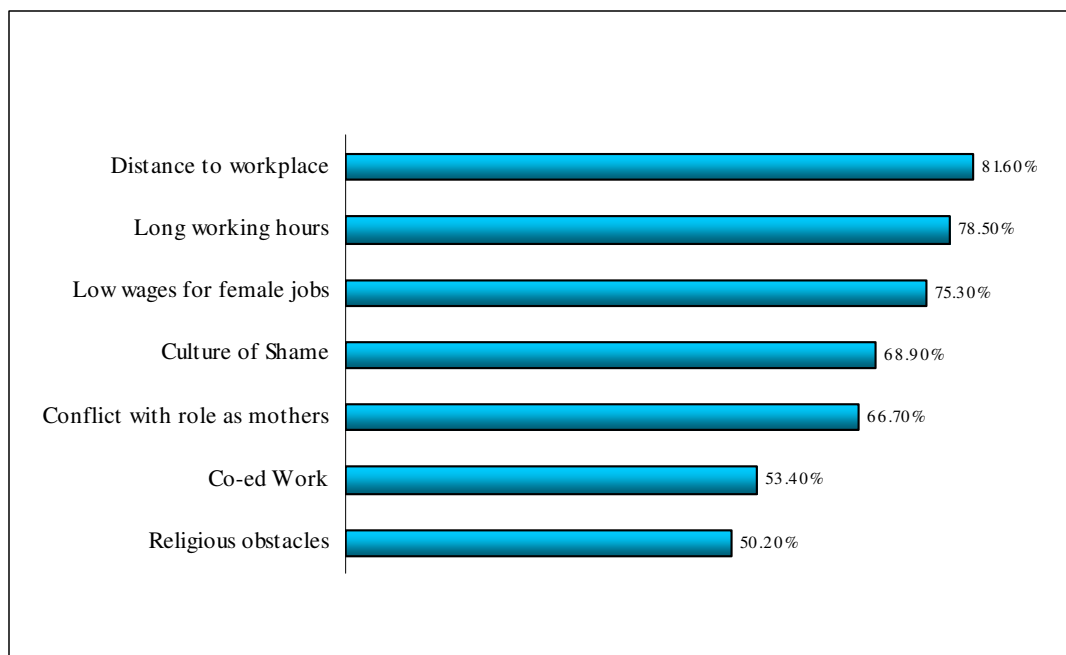
### **Sector Overview**

The ICT sector is by far one of the fastest growing sectors in Jordan; it is the third largest contributor to GDP, accounting for 10% of the total GDP. According to Jordan Investment Board report, this sector has expanded by 30% annually. The National Agenda (2006-2015) highlighted the viability of the growth of this sector: “The ICT sector is a major contributor to economic growth and social development. The increase in ICT investment drives GDP growth and is vital to attracting investments to other sectors. ICT is a key tool to educational reform and development and enhancing effectiveness of public services.”

The sector is composed of around 900 registered companies that employ 16000 workers. The industry contributed to 19% of exports, while the gross production of the ICT sector in Jordan amounted to JOD 969,950,000 in 2006 representing 13.25% of the manufacturing sector's overall production (2006). A steady flow of 7000 graduates in Information Technology related studies enter the market each year. As such, Jordan is emerging as a regional leader in the ICT sector.

### **Women's Participation in the ICT Sector**

Women's representation in ICT is higher than most other sectors. The number of women in core ICT jobs is on the rise. A report by Al Manar Project shows that women comprise 23 percent of the IT and 20 percent of communications sector. Furthermore, women represent 20 percent of the total employees in the ICT related jobs and 30 percent of the total employees in other related jobs such as sales and marketing (Int@j). However, women are under-represented in senior management positions in the sector. Only 8 percent of women working in the ICT sector are in the top three managerial positions at the companies they work for. Women's low levels of participation in management are attributed to perceptions about the nature of the work and the role of women in the household. ICT work is characterized by long hours and travel. These two characteristics are believed to conflict with women's domestic duties according to UNIFEM's report. The chart below provides a list of reasons women do not pursue careers in the ICT sector.



(Add reference)

### **Gender-Based Constraints to Women's Participation in the ICT Sector**

Participants in the ICT roundtable identified the following gender-based constraints to women's participation in the sector. The chart describes conditions of gender inequality and factors contributing to the gender disparities and then provides statements of gender-based constraints.



Condition of Inequality	Factors	Gender-Based Constraint
Women are under-represented in managerial positions	Access to assets: Women lack the training required for managerial positions Practices and Participation: Mobility constraints limit women's travel which is often required of managers	Women are less likely to occupy higher managerial positions because of their lack the training and mobility required for managerial positions.
Women's participation in the ICT industry is mostly short-term	<b>Beliefs and perceptions:</b> Women are viewed as secondary income earners. Women's work is often viewed as a "luxury" and not a necessity.  <b>Practices and Participation:</b> Women often lack support from their families to balance their household and work activities.  <b>Access to assets:</b> Women lack access to re-integration programs. Because the industry is fast-paced and the skills necessary for employment change, once women leave the industry it is difficult for them to re-enter.	Few women achieve long-term careers in the ICT sector because they lack the support necessary to balance household and work responsibilities and they lack access to re-integration programs.
There are few women role models in the ICT sector	Laws, policies and institutions: There is a lack of attention to promoting women at the firm level.  Beliefs and perceptions: The capacity of women to lead is often under-estimated.	Few women role models exist in the ICT sector because of beliefs about women's leadership capabilities and a lack of intentionality on the part of firms to promote women to leadership positions.
Women possess limited networks in the industry	<b>Beliefs and perceptions:</b> women shouldn't travel for work nor attend business social events	Women's industry-related networks are limited because of beliefs and perceptions that it is inappropriate for women to travel for work purposes.
Women's participation in the sector is low compared to the number of women graduating with degrees in ICT.	<b>Laws and regulations:</b> Laws do not support part-time employment. This leaves women to choose between full time jobs and no job at all.  <b>Beliefs and perceptions:</b> Some employers believe that technical jobs are too difficult for women to handle	Women are less likely than men to participate in the ICT sector because beliefs about women's capabilities and the lack of part-time opportunities for women to balance their domestic and professional responsibilities.

## Actions to Address Gender-Based Constraints

Based on the identified gender-based constraints, the following actions are recommended.

Constraint	Recommended Action(s)	Responsible Actor(s)
Women are less likely to occupy higher managerial positions because of their lack the training and mobility required for managerial positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure that trainings are held at times and venues that facilitate women's participation</li> <li>- Allow more women to occupy managerial positions that do not require frequent travel and build their skills to reach such positions</li> </ul>	Private sector, NGOs, Business Associations
Few women achieve long-term careers in the ICT sector because they lack the support necessary to balance household and work responsibilities and they lack access to re-integration programs.	Develop laws that facilitate part-time employment options.	Government, Ministry or Labor
	Raise awareness of the benefits of women's economic participation.	Business Associations, Media
Few women role models exist in the ICT sector because of beliefs about women's leadership capabilities and a lack of intentionality on the part of firms to promote women to leadership positions.	Promote the achievements of women in the sector	Media, business associations
	Promote gender equitable employment practices within firms	Women's Associations, NGOs
Women's industry-related networks are limited because of beliefs and perceptions that it is inappropriate for women to travel for work purposes.	Conduct workshops during business hours/days to facilitate networking opportunities	Government, NGO's, Private Sector
	Create interest groups bringing together women in the industry	Intaj, Associations & women NGO's
Women are less likely than men to participate in the ICT sector because beliefs about women's capabilities and the lack of part-time opportunities for women to balance their domestic and professional responsibilities.	Develop laws that facilitate part-time employment options.	Government
	Conduct gender sensitization training with private sector to dispel negative gender stereotypes.	NGO's
	Develop trainings to increase the confidence of women in the workplace.	Universities, INJAZ, Irada, NGO's

## **Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) SECTOR**

### **Sector Overview**

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) refers to the process whereby a company hires another company to handle business activities on their behalf. It encompasses a number of functions that are considered "non-core" to the primary business strategy, and is usually sought when a company wants to save overhead and operational costs. The BPO sector in Jordan is expanding rapidly. Jordan has been named in the 2009 A.T. Kearney Global Services Location Index in 9<sup>th</sup> place worldwide as a BPO destination. Three key reasons for the rapid expansion of the BPO sector is the availability of educated labor market, the prevalence of neutral Arabic and English accents, and cost efficiency.

The Jordanian BPO client base includes local, regional, and global firms. Employment in this sector is anticipated to soar if growth continues at the current rate. Over the last two years, the sector grew from a couple of hundred employees to a couple of thousand employees. It is hoped that the growth of this sector will provide new opportunities for both Jordanian men and women.

### **Women's Participation in BPO**

Women's economic participation in the BPO is viewed as one of the most promising. Although the sector is novice to Jordanian economy, companies operating in this sector are hiring high percentages of women. Not much information has been gathered about the sector yet, but the work conditions, benefits and nature of the job are all factors that encourage the employment of women in this sector.

### **Gender-based Constraints to Women's Participation in BPO**

Participants in the BPO roundtable identified the following gender-based constraints to women's participation in the sector. The chart below provides a description of a condition of inequality, the contributing factors, and a statement of the gender-based constraint.

Condition of Inequality	Factors	Gender-Based Constraint
Women are unaware of opportunities in the BPO sector	<p><b>Access to Assets:</b> Women's relatively small networks limits their exposure to new market trends</p> <p><b>Beliefs and Perceptions:</b> There are misperceptions about the nature of BPO work.</p>	Women are unaware of the opportunities in the BPO sector because of their relatively limited networks and misperceptions concerning the nature of BPO work.
The sector, though very flexible in nature, cannot find enough flexibility to pursue different types of employment, such as work from home and part time employment arrangements. This may leave many women out of the market simply because they do not fit the defined profile of workers in the labor law	Laws and Regulations: Some women are excluded from the job market as they cannot fit the profile of a full-time worker and prefer to work on a part-time basis	Labor law does not provide clear legislation for needed flexibility and laws for this sector, such as part-time work, sexual harassment. As well, there is no serious enforcement of certain laws that give rights to women workers, such as maternity leaves, nurseries, etc.
Unemployment rates in Jordan are very high, and especially among women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Beliefs and Perceptions:</b> Many women graduate from college or university for the sake of education, and not for the sake of work. Being well-educated is usually a ticket for marriage and not for a career. Therefore, very few women seek advancing their skills in languages, professional communication, etc. beyond their degree.</li> <li>- <b>Access to assets:</b> Women don't have enough information about the sector and not enough networks to get them into the sector successfully. As well, little training programs target women.</li> </ul>	Lack of skilled women to enter the sector, and general preference among women not to use and/or build on their education and enter the job market. This is a result of social belief that the woman should be more family-oriented and should not aggressively pursue a career.
The sector is fairly new and not very well-known to new job market entrants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Access to assets:</b> women are not as exposed to new market trends as men are, and so, they are less informed about the</li> </ul>	There is a dominantly poor understanding of the sector as well as negative attitudes among women towards considering this sector (it is

	sector boom and its privileges, and ways to get advanced in it.	mostly considered as secretarial work, some do not want to deal with people from other countries or be on the phone with men)
There are no strategic plans that are comprehensive and clear that aim at advancing women employment in this sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Beliefs and perceptions:</b> The sector is believed to be part of ICT sector, which is to a large extent untrue. This creates confusion among entrants to the sector, both men and women, and will ultimately not belong to a well-defined sector and would not understand their potential in it, especially if they are coming from non-IT backgrounds.</li> </ul>	There is little understanding among government officials about the sector and its significance, and thus it is difficult to estimate the potential of women's role. This may exclude women from the move to advance this sector and the sector may evolve as male-dominated just like other more mature sectors.
Not many workers, including women, prefer this field as a long term career and employment in this sector usually runs over short periods when compared to other sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Beliefs and perceptions:</b> Most women consider this sector as a temporary step until they get a more desired job or get married and stay at home. This is due to the nature of this job which is believed to be secretarial and not-so-professional</li> <li>- <b>Practices and Participation:</b> For many women, working is a temporary thing until they get "settled" in a family. This could limit women's thinking in staying in this sector even before entering it. As well, some women can't go forward in the existing career paths since doing so may require working late shifts/hours, which is not very common practice among women workers.</li> </ul>	The sector currently lacks well-defined career paths and especially for women working as part time and/or from home, as well as for women aspiring to advance in their career but who cannot cover late and/or night hours.

## Actions to Address Gender-Based Constraints

Based on the identified gender-based constraints, the following actions are recommended.

Constraint	Recommended Action(s)	Responsible Actor(s)
Women are unaware of the opportunities in the BPO sector because of their relatively limited networks and misperceptions concerning the nature of BPO work.	Conduct awareness campaigns among college and university students that specifically target young women	Private Sector, Government, Donors
	Highlight success stories and the benefits of working in BPO to attract more women to the sector	Private Sector, Government, Donors
Labor law does not provide for clear legislation needed flexibility and laws for this sector, such as part time work, sexual harassment. As well, there is no serious enforcement of certain laws that give rights to women workers, such as maternity leaves, nurseries, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Amending the law to give rights to part time workers, working late hours, and to allow the sector to bring foreign workers in order to keep momentum of the sector growth</li> </ul> <p>Address issues such as sexual harassment to protect women who enter the labor market</p>	Ministry of Labor
Lack of skilled women to enter the sector, and general preference among women not to use and/or build on their education and enter the job market. This is a result of social belief that the woman should be more family-oriented and should not aggressively pursue a career.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduce mandatory communications curricula in universities and colleges</li> <li>- Emphasize verbal communication skills in both Arabic and English</li> <li>- Conduct Train the Trainer courses in skills that are needed in this sector</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry of Education Ministry of Higher Education</p> <p>Donor Agencies NGO's</p>
There is a dominantly poor understanding of the sector, resulting in negative attitudes among women towards considering this sector (it is mostly considered as secretarial work, some do not want to deal with people from other countries or be on the phone with men)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct awareness campaigns among college and university students</li> <li>- Highlight success stories and the benefits of working with Jordanian companies in the field to attract more employees to the sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Companies in the sector</li> <li>- Donors</li> </ul> <p>Government (national campaign)</p>
There is little understanding among government officials about the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Define the BPO sector in a manner distinctive from other sectors in the economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry of Industry and Trade</li> <li>- Department of Statistics</li> </ul>

and its significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct studies on the sector for better overall understanding</li> </ul>	
The sector currently lacks well-defined career paths and especially for women working as part time and/or from home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduce career paths to the sector that can be found in countries with more advanced BPO sectors (such as India and Egypt)</li> <li>- Expand vertical specialization in the sector (medical outsourcing, engineering outsourcing, etc.) to accommodate for highly skilled, well-experienced professionals who are willing to work from home, and/or on a part-time basis</li> <li>- Reach out to other sectors to encourage them to outsource some of their business activities to fellow-Jordanian BPO companies.</li> <li>- Create awareness among existing and potential employees in the sector about possible career paths and get rid of the idea that the career path is so limited</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BPO sector private companies</li> </ul>

## **Clean Technology and Water Sector**

### **Sector Overview**

Jordan's increased dependency on imported energy, coupled with the country's lack of water resources has stipulated decision makers to shed more light on the field of renewable energy and water conservation. As a growing economy, Jordan's need for energy and water will continue to grow. Thus, adopting advanced energy and water technologies becomes a priority.

There are around 77,000 registered engineers in Jordan, many of whom specialized in energy, water and environmental sciences. This pool of resources is a target for joining forces with national and regional efforts to increase Jordan's reliability on advanced energy and water technologies. Through proper training and encouraging entrepreneurship in this field, the sector is expected to generate thousands of green jobs, both in the near and medium terms. \*

There are several associations and NGO's that work on initiatives and projects that incorporate green concepts and skills in Jordan. However, there are not enough laws and systems in place that regulate work in this field. Therefore, the private sector firms in this field led an initiative that seeks to maximize Jordan's renewable energy generation; create a vibrant new economic sector of energy businesses; drive research, development and commercialization of Jordanian technologies; build public awareness; and advocate for policies that will make Jordan a model of energy efficiency, water conservation and environmental stewardship.† It is expected that the EDAMA initiative, which later sparked EDAMA association, will work with the government to regulate this sector and with the other environmental organizations and associations to engage the private sector in community-based projects.

### **Women's Participation in the Clean Technology and Water Sector**

This sector has yet to employ significant numbers of workers. However, women's activity in this sector can be largely traced through projects that are led by NGO's and associations. The Jordan Environment Society (JES), for example, received foreign aid over the years to run community-based projects as well as nationwide awareness campaigns, about topics such as water conservation and recycling material. Such projects and campaign have depended largely on women's participation, as they found interest in projects of this nature. The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), has established several local community projects for commercializing products of natural origin, many of which are women-led. Other NGO's and associations have been conducting similar work around the country, and most of such work remains limited in scale.

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\* EDAMA Action Plan 2009- A private sector-led initiative for maximizing Jordan's renewable energy generation

† EDAMA Action Plan 2009



A growing number of businesses in renewable energy and clean-tech is emerging in Jordan, however, not much data is available about the nature of women's involvement within this sector. Jordanian universities are graduating thousands of women in studies related to this field annually. Fields such as chemical engineering, environmental studies, industrial engineering and chemistry provide potential human resources in the field of clean-tech and water. Women graduating in these fields constitute a base for a women's workforce in the clean-tech and water sector.

### **Gender-Based Constraints to Women's Participation the Environment and Water Sector**

Participants in the Clean-tech and Water roundtable identified the following gender-based constraints to women's participation in the sector. The chart describes conditions of gender inequality and factors contributing to the gender disparities and then provides statements of gender-based constraints.

<b>Condition of Inequality</b>	<b>Factors</b>	<b>Gender-Based Constraint</b>
Environmental strategies are not gender-sensitive	Laws, Policies, and Institutions: Decision-making bodies are not aware of gender differences in this sector	Environmental strategies and projects are not gender-sensitive because decision-making bodies lack an awareness to gender differences in this sector
Women are rarely targeted as agents in changing attitudes towards adopting environment-friendly techniques	Practices and participation: Surveys and studies usually target men	Women are not targeted as agents of change in the Environment and Water sector because of the lack of information of women's participation in environment-related activities.
Women lack awareness to income-generating activities in this sector	Access to Assets: Women's relatively small networks limits their exposure to opportunities in this sector  Practices and Participation: Few women professionals are involved in this sector	Women lack awareness to opportunities in this sector because of their relatively small networks and the limited involved women in the sector as a whole.

### **Actions to Address Gender-Based Constraints**

Based on the identified gender-based constraints, the following actions are recommended.

<b>Constraint</b>	<b>Recommended Action(s)</b>	<b>Responsible Actor(s)</b>
Environmental strategies and projects are not gender-sensitive because decision-making bodies lack an awareness to gender differences in this sector	Establish a focus group on women and the environment	THE PROGRAM, Jordan Environment Society
Women are not targeted as agents of change in the Cleantech and Water sector because of the lack of information of women's participation in environment-related activities.	Conduct studies and surveys on women and their attitudes regarding the sector.	Department of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Women's research center, Development Zones Commission, ZENID, Greater Amman Municipality
Women lack awareness to opportunities in this sector because of their relatively small networks and the limited involved women in the sector as a whole.	Conduct awareness campaign of benefits of participation in the sector that targets women	Government, Women's Associations, NGOs
	Highlight successful women in the sector	Women's Associations, Private Sector, NGOs

## **Pharmaceutical Sector**

### **Sector Overview**

The pharmaceutical sector contributes significantly to the Jordanian economy. The sector is composed of two sub-sectors: pharmaceutical manufacturing and pharmacies. The pharmaceutical manufacturing sub-sector formally employs 4000 specialists in 17 pharmaceutical companies and accounts for about 10% of Jordan's exports. The National Agenda (2006) highlighted this sector's potential to increase revenues through increased exports; a target of USD1 billion was set for the coming years. Many Jordanian pharmaceutical companies have international certification and are able to export to the United States and Europe. Workers in this sub-sector include graduates of pharmaceutical studies, chemical engineering, industrial engineering and information technology.

Another significant pharmaceutical sub-sector includes pharmacies. There are approximately 1900 pharmacies in Jordan. This sub-sector employs over 3500 specialists, most of which are informally employed. Owners of pharmacies are registered pharmacists who are given permission to open a pharmacy at acceptable locations that comply with regulations set by the pharmacists' association. A ratio of one pharmacy per 3000 residents is estimated in Jordan; a rather high ratio when compared to the world's average of one pharmacy per 8000 residents. The majority of pharmacies has less than 5 employees and is categorized as micro enterprises. In general, workers in pharmacies are either the pharmacy owner or attendant. Pharmacy attendants are usually graduates with either a bachelor's or diploma degrees. The pharmaceutical sub-sector is often overlooked because it is a consumers' market and not active in the export and/or manufacturing market.

### **Women's Participation in the Pharmaceutical Sector**

Sixty percent of students who graduate with a bachelor's degree in pharmaceutical sciences are women. The Ministry of Higher Education's annual reports consistently show a higher enrollment rate for women than men in the pharmaceutical sciences departments.

Social perceptions influence students' educational pursuits. Pharmaceutical science is considered an appropriate field of study for women. Graduates pursue employment in pharmaceutical manufacturing companies or pharmacies. More affluent graduates may also consider establishing their own pharmacy. The occupation accommodates to women's roles as mothers and caregivers as the work hours are generally flexible.

The labor market for pharmaceutical graduates is highly saturated. The supply of pharmaceutical graduates outpaces the market demand. The competition among pharmaceutical sciences graduates is very high. Many women pharmacists would accept *any* type of job in this sector. Employers often place women in low-skilled and low-paid positions, and leave better and higher paying positions for the fewer number of men competing to enter this sector. This trend is observed in the pharmaceutical manufacturing sub-sector. Women comprise 25 percent of the sub-sector and are not

evenly distributed across occupational categories. Women are disproportionately represented in low-skilled and low-paid activities such as packaging and administration.

The table below provides an overview of women's participation by labor category, according to Al Manar study report.

#	Position Category	Women representation
1	Packaging	97%
2	Administrative	60%
3	Chemical Analyst	26%
4	Supervisor	24%
5	Medical Representative	20.24%
6	Technical jobs	7.68%
7	Top Management	28.75%

### **Gender-Based Constraints to Women's Participation in the Pharmaceutical Sector**

Participants in the Pharmaceutical roundtable identified the following gender-based constraints to women's participation in the sector. The chart describes conditions of gender inequality and factors contributing to the gender disparities and then provides statements of gender-based constraints.

<b>Condition of Inequality</b>	<b>Factors</b>	<b>Gender Based Constraint</b>
Women possess fewer opportunities for promotion	Practices and Participation: Women's domestic responsibilities limit the time they are able to spend advancing their career	Women have fewer opportunities for promotion because of domestic responsibilities that reduce the time they are able to commit to work-related activities including trainings and seminars.
Women have limited networks	Beliefs and perceptions: Women are not expected to socialize outside of their family and friends. In addition, it is perceived as inappropriate for women to stay out late for networking purposes.	Business networks are highly inaccessible to women because of beliefs and perceptions that limit women's ability to attend business networking events outside of work.
Women have less opportunities for training	Beliefs and Perceptions. It is considered inappropriate for women to travel or stay out past working hours.	Women are constrained from receiving continuous training to develop their skills & competencies for higher job positions because of social beliefs that restrict women's mobility
Women are less likely to be hired than men	Beliefs and Perceptions. Employers discriminate against women because they fear that women will take maternity leave and they have to pay them for that duration.	Women face hiring discrimination because of employers' concerns about maternity leave and women's career commitment.

### Actions to Address Gender-Based Constraints

Based on the identified gender-based constraints, the following actions are recommended.

<b>Constraint</b>	<b>Recommended Action(s)</b>	<b>Responsible Actor(s)</b>
Women have fewer opportunities for promotion because of domestic responsibilities that reduce the time they are able to commit to work-related activities including trainings and seminars.	Quotas for boards of companies, supporting and defending women's rights	Gov, Private Sector
	Raise Awareness of the benefits of women's economic participation	Gov, NGOs, Associations, Universities, Donors, Media
	Develop incentives for companies to hire married women	Gov, Private Sector
Women are constrained from receiving continuous training to develop their skills & competencies for higher job positions because of social beliefs that restrict women's mobility	Ensure that training times and venues facilitate women's participation	Private Sector
	Conduct more training for women in Jordan instead of sending participants abroad.	Jordan Pharmacists Association, NGOs
	Create development fund for training women	JPA
Women face hiring discrimination because of employers' concerns about maternity leave and women's career commitment.	Raise awareness of women pharmacists about discrimination and their rights	University, media, Chambers of Commerce
	Social security fund introducing law to help companies in payments of the Maternity leave	Government (underway)

## **PART III: ECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS: THE WAY FORWARD**

The USAID Jordan Economic Development Program believes that the findings of the round tables should be taken to a further level of coordination. These findings are the result of collaborative thinking and discussions between representatives of different stakeholders. Therefore, it is best if these stakeholders are given the platform to follow up on the outcomes of the round tables. Since the Jordan National Commission for Women (JNCW) is host to the economic strategy for women in Jordan, then such coordination efforts should stem from the JNCW, who represents the authority on advancing women's position, including the economic aspects, in Jordan.

The JNCW, in collaboration with the USAID Jordan Economic Development Program, may form follow up committees for each sector, which can work on action plans to address the main recommendations of the round tables. Through building a core group that represents various stakeholders in each sector, efforts can be channeled to address prominent issues that face women's economic participation, one sector at a time. As well, an overlooking committee would draw linkages between efforts exerted in certain sectors, the results of which could be utilized in other sectors. An example would be the change of a certain law to accommodate women workers and address their needs.

The USAID Jordan Economic Development Program recommends that the JNCW becomes host to these efforts, as part of the sustainability plan for increasing women's economic participation in Jordan.

## **APPENDICES:**

**APPENDIX A: Round Table Event (12 October 2009)**

**APPENDIX B: Round Table Gallery Photos**

**APPENDIX C: عرض للواقع الاقتصادي للمرأة الأردنية (2009)**

**APPENDIX D: Key Gender Concepts**

**APPENDIX E: Jordan Women in the Economy- 2015 / Project Overview**

**APPENDIX F: Four Dimensions of Gender Relations**



## Round Table Event (12 October 2009)

Time	Topic – Activity	Notes
10:00 AM – 10:15 AM	Registration	
10:15 AM – 10:30 AM	Session One: Welcome and Introductions	History of what we did till now, what is next, expectations
10:30 AM – 11:00 AM	Session Two: Overview of Women's Participation in the BPO Sector- Companies Insight	Participants
11:00 AM – 11:15 AM	Session Three: Overview of Strategies and Activities in the BPO Sector	Profile
11:15 AM – 12:00PM	Session Four: Identifying Gender-based Constraints to Women's Participation in the BPO Sector	Gender 101, four dimensions (handout), Facilitation (Nour & Lina),
12:00 PM – 12:15 PM	Coffee Break	
12:15 AM – 12:45 PM	Session Four Continued:	Presentation, Voting
12:45 PM- 1:15 PM	Session Five: Developing Goals and Objectives to Overcome Constraints	Suggested actions, link them to OC
1:15 PM - 2:00 PM	Session Six: Conclusions and Next Steps	Open discussion
2:00 PM- 3:00 PM	Lunch	

**FINAL ATTENDANCE LIST**  
**"Event/ICT/5b.14.5.c.10.17a Gender Integration in Local Economic Development Projects: The Past, the Present, The Future"**  
**11/Jun/2009**  
**SABEQ Office, Amman**

Number of Trainees by Gender:

*Women:* 20

*Men:* 2

Total Number of Activity Attendees:

*Total:* 22

<b>Guest Name</b>	<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Business Phone</b>	<b>Email Address</b>	<b>Gender</b>
♦ Eman Abo-Shtaia	Jordan Valley Association /			F
♦ Buthaina Abu-Bandora			buthaina-bandora@yahoo.com	F
♦ Sireen Abu-Saif	Jordan-e- Direccory		info@jordan-e-directory.com	F
♦ Safa' Abu-Sbaih	Student, Agriculture			F
♦ Enas Al-Bader	JEDCO		Enas-Al-Bader@hotmail.com	F
♦ Sharefeh Al-Drabee				F
♦ Amal Al-Kharouf			aalkharouf2002@yhoo.com	F
♦ Maram Al-Qdah	Ministry of Industry and Trade	06-5629030	maram.a@mit.gov.jo	F
♦ Eman Balkar			emanbalkar2002@yhoo.com	F
♦ Nahla Elquraan	Al-Taibeh Women Association		nahla-quraan@hotmail.com	F
♦ Nahida El-Saies	World Bank, The	+962 (6) 5802666 Ext: 113	n.elsaies@mol.gov.jo	F
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<b>Guest Name</b>	<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Business Phone</b>	<b>Email Address</b>	<b>Gender</b>
◆ Mohamed Jinini	United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)	+962 (6) 5200060 x 1025	mohamed.jinini@unifem.org	M
◆ Alia Kabariti	Enhanced Productivity Centers-Wadiessier	+962 5825503	wadiessier@irada.org.jo	F
◆ Zainab Klaib	Bani Ebaid Institution			F
◆ Sawsan Madanat	Greater Al-Karak Municipality	+962 (79) 9032429		F
◆ Duha Miqdad	Jordan River Foundation	+962 (6) 5933211	duha_miqdad@jrf.org.jo	F
◆ Maram Obaidat	Greater Irbid	+962 (77) 7248593	Wema-o@yahoo.com	M
◆ Fatima Obiedat	Kenanah Association for Women			F
◆ Maha Tarawneh	Ministry of Planning & International Cooperation	+962 (6) 4644381		F
◆ Ghada Telfah				F
◆ Areeje Zgailat	Development Zones Commission		azgailat@dzc.jo	F

FINAL ATTENDANCE LIST  
 "Event/ICE/5b.14.5.c.10.17c Gender Integration Roundtable – EWE Sector" 22/Jul/2009  
 SABEQ Offices, Amman

Number of Trainees by Gender:

*Women:* 9

*Men:* 5

Total Number of Activity Attendees:

*Total:* 14

Guest Name	Company Name	Business Phone	Email Address	Gender
◆ Nour Abdel-Jawad	GAM		nouraj77@yahoo.com	F
◆ Lois Abu-Ghattas	JE-JSUP			M
◆ Malak Abu-Zant				F
◆ Rana Al-Ardah	RSS		rarda@rss.gov.jo	F
◆ Ahmed Al-Kofahi	JES		jes@jes.org.jo	M
◆ Ruba Al-Zu'bi	Development Zones Commission			F
◆ Hayat Bakir	PBWF			F
◆ Kiyani Barghouti	Women's Center		knbarg@hotmail.com	F
◆ Dina Bataineh	RSCN		dina.bataineh@rscn.org.jo	F
◆ Raouf Dabbas	Ministry of Environment	+962 (06) 5560113	neet@nets.com.jo	M
◆ Musa Naffa	ZENID	+962 (79) 5383904	Mousa.n@zeind.org.jo	M
◆ Heba Qandeel			haje-ebrahem@yahoo.com	F
◆ Mohammad Qtaish	Central Market			M
◆ Khawla Shaikh-AbuAli	JFWF			F

## **Gender Integration Initiatives in the ICT Sector: The past, the present, the future**

Dear Sir/Madam,

In line with efforts to strengthen coordination between different stakeholders in gender related activities, and in order to increase the participation of women in the Jordanian economy, the USAID Jordan Economic Development Program (SABEQ), in collaboration with Int@j, is holding a roundtable to discuss the driving and impeding factors affecting women's participation in the ICT sector. The goal of this roundtable is to agree on actions that need to be taken in order to create and maintain an environment that encourages better participation of women in this sector. Participating organizations will be encouraged to build on the efforts that have been undertaken so far and to coordinate their future efforts in this area.

This roundtable is part of a series of roundtables addressing gender issues with relation to women's participation in economic sectors in Jordan.

The ICT sector in Jordan has come a long way, and is considered to be one of the largest in the country in terms of contribution to GDP. As such, the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) recently participated in conducting a study titled: Factors Affecting Women's Participation in the Private Sector in Jordan. The study focused on this viable sector and highlighted the many challenges facing women. SABEQ believes that it is essential at this point to foster coordination of efforts among various stakeholders, in order to tackle these challenges. As active participants in these efforts, we would like your organization to take part in this roundtable, which will be conducted at USAID-SABEQ offices June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009, from 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM.

Please confirm one participant from your organization by filling the attached application form and send it to: [genderroundtable@sabeg-jordan.org](mailto:genderroundtable@sabeg-jordan.org), no later than 4 PM Monday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The round table discussion will be in Arabic, while all handouts and material will be in English.

For more information, please contact:

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## ROUNDTABLE AGENDA

Time	Topic – Activity
10:00 AM – 10:15 AM	Registration
10:15 AM – 10:30 AM	Session One: Welcome and Introductions
10:30 AM – 11:00 AM	Session Two: Overview of Women’s Participation in the BPO Sector- Companies Insight
11:00 AM – 11:15 AM	Session Three: Overview of Strategies and Activities in the BPO Sector
11:15 AM – 12:00PM	Session Four: Identifying Gender-based Constraints to Women’s Participation in the BPO Sector
12:00 PM – 12:15 PM	Coffee Break
12:15 AM – 12:45 PM	Session Four Continued:
12:45 PM- 1:15 PM	Session Five: Developing Goals and Objectives to Overcome Constraints
1:15 PM - 2:00 PM	Session Six: Conclusions and Next Steps
2:00 PM- 3:00 PM	Lunch

## Application Form

<b>Participant Name</b>	
<b>Position Title</b>	
<b>Organization Name</b>	
<b>Contact Information</b>	
<b>Type of Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Government</li> <li>b. NGO</li> <li>c. Association</li> <li>d. Private Sector</li> <li>e. Donor</li> <li>f. Other (please specify)</li> </ul>
<b>Does your organization have a strategy on increasing women's economic participation/Does it put deliberate efforts to increase women participation in the organization or the ICT sector in general?</b>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>Yes</span> <span>No</span> </div>
<b>General Overview of your organization: Please include a brief about your organization</b>	
<b>Are there any specific efforts exerted by your organization to increase women's participation in the organization and the sector in general? If so, please describe</b>	
<b>Other Comments:</b>	

## Round Table Gallery Photos:



















**USAID Jordan Economic Development Program**  
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