

When women work, economies win

EconoWin – a regional project to promote women's economic integration and employment promotion in the MENA region

The challenge: Integrating women into the economy

Countries in North Africa and the Middle East have the world's lowest female participation rates in the workforce – only one out of 5 employees in the MENA region is female. Some 60 per cent of young women graduates are unemployed in Egypt and Tunisia; in Jordan, the figure is 40 per cent, while around one third of female Moroccan graduates are out of work. Less educated women are more likely to be working but are generally in poorly paid jobs, often in the informal sector.

Right across the social spectrum, traditional role models are an obstacle to equal opportunities on the labour market. And the economic crisis that followed the 'Arab spring' has worsened the situation since 2011. In contrast, the region has witnessed an increase in the rate of girls and women participating in formal education. However, this progress is yet to be translated into the economic empowerment of women.

Promoting women economically bears a major potential for economic growth of a country. According to a study by McKinsey Global Institute, the equal participation of women and men in the economy has the potential to add up to USD 28 trillion, or 26% to annual GDP in 2025.

When women work, their socioeconomic situation improves and so does the quality of their lives and that of their families – **economies win**. Future generations benefit as income generating women invest in the health and education of their children.

Both short and long term effects of women's economic activities are contributing to the general economic success of a country and to create more stable and just societies.

Project name	Economic Integration of Women in the MENA Region (EconoWin)
Commissioned by	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ)
Focus countries	Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia
Duration	May 2010 – April 2018

Our approach: Develop and implement innovative tools to mobilize women's potential

Together with partners from civil society, governmental institutions as well as companies, EconoWin improves female economic participation in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

Jointly with 30 partner organisations in the four countries, EconoWin is active in four areas:

- (1) ANA HUNNA – Promoting the role of women in economies
- (2) Gender Diversity Management (GDM)
- (3) Gender Sensitive Value Chains (GSVC)
- (4) Female Mentoring

1. ANA HUNNA promotes the importance of women's participation in the world of work

ANA HUNNA started with a film and media awareness raising campaign about the importance of women's contribution for the economy and society of a country. "Women are self-determined, active and powerful" – this motto emerged in a widespread movement all over the four countries and triggered a wide public discussion on the topic. The ANA HUNNA movement will emerge in sustainable structures in 2017.



Left picture: Dar Al-Omran, Partner Company implementing the Gender Diversity Management approach (2015)

Right picture: NatureTex, Sekem Egypt, Partner company enhancing working conditions and career advancement of women (2015)

2. Gender Diversity Management (GDM) applied in companies

Selected companies are supported in the design and implementation of their own Gender Diversity Management initiatives. Through the cooperation with business associations, the approach is further spread and becomes widely known in the private sector. The activity is implemented through the project of Employment Promotion of Women through Gender Diversity Management in the MENA region which is part of the Special Initiative on Stabilisation and Development in the Middle East and North Africa.

3. Gender Sensitive Value Chain (GSVC) fosters economic empowerment of women in rural areas

Improving the economic position and livelihoods of women in rural areas is the goal of EconoWin's Gender Sensitive Value Chain approach. Jointly with OXFAM, the approach was developed in 2012 to identify women's roles in the production process, the challenges they face and means to maximize their potentials to increase productivity and competitiveness.

4. Professional Orientation through Female Mentoring

The transition from university to adequate career opportunities for women is often hampered by socio-cultural barriers. Universities and companies are supported by the project in creating mentoring systems for women. Women with successful careers act as mentors for one year, staying in touch with a female student who is preparing for her own start in work.

Impact

- ANA HUNNA film and media campaign produced eight films which brought over 6000 spectators in 325 events to the discussion table opening channels for the social debate regarding the value of women's work.
- More than 700 women benefited from EconoWin's Gender Sensitive Value Chain projects. Through the diversification of products, access to new markets and increase of income, those women have increased the quality of their lives and their families.

- Three public universities were supported in implementing the mentoring program. More than 30 mentoring tandems participated in meetings, workshops and networking sessions. Many mentees stated that their transition into the job market was smooth due to the helpful advices of their mentors.
- 20 companies are implementing Gender Diversity projects to win, promote and retain female potential by offering e.g. flexible working hours, childcare and, quotas for the recruitment and career advancement of women.
- 13 companies from Europe and the MENA region will work closely in tandems to boost their practical knowledge of Gender Diversity Management.

women and work – facts & figures

- Women in Jordan are paid on average 41 per cent less than men in the private sector and about 28 per cent less in the public sector. **(ILO 2013)**
- Women in the Arab world outnumber men in pursuing university degrees, particularly in Tunisia. Yet, three out of four Arab women remain outside of the labour force. **(Worldbank 2013)**
- 48% of young women with Bachelor degrees and 40% of young women with higher university of professional degrees are unemployed in Egypt. **(EFE 2015)**
- 0.1% of women holding decision-making positions in private companies in the trade, industry and services fields in Morocco. **(CES Maroc 2014)**

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