



# **WOMEN AND WORK IN JORDAN**

## **CASE STUDY OF TOURISM AND ICT SECTORS**

WORKING PAPER

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## ABSTRACT

Despite economic growth, Jordan is still a poor country. Since it lacks natural resources, Jordan must rely on its human capital. The country has one of the highest literacy rates in the region for both men and women, and among young people literacy is almost universal. Adult women in Jordan are still less educated than men, but gender disparity in educational attainment is quickly disappearing among younger cohorts. Despite improving levels of educational attainment, Jordan is one of the Arab countries with the lowest employment rates for both men (58%) and women (11%). Employment rates rise with educational level, especially among women. Only 3% of women with less than secondary education and 49% of women with first degrees are employed. The female unemployment rate is 25%, and for young women is as high as 50%.

Tourism and ICT (information and communication technology) are expanding modern sectors with good potential to generate jobs. They require a skilled labour force, and benefit from donors who are sensitive to the issues of gender equality. Women employed in the tourism sector currently account for 10% of the sector's work force. The percentage of women employed in tourism has been growing in recent years, especially in the restaurant sector. In terms of numbers, the most female employees in the tourism sector work in the accommodation sector (in particular in four- and five-star hotels), restaurants and tourism services. Various data on women's employment in the ICT sector show a different picture, but it can be assumed that some 25% of employees are women. ICT is a popular education stream at secondary level; many women also study ICT at a higher level, and generally only a university degree grants entry to ICT careers. Hospitality studies and training are much less popular among women, as jobs in the tourism sector are considered inappropriate for women.

The growing educational attainment levels of women and the high rates of female unemployment and non-participation in the labour market have led to a serious waste of resources invested in women's education. This situation also shows the limitations of the rights of women to pursue their individual vision of personal fulfilment and to contribute to the financial well-being of their families. It also hampers the economic development of the country and of enterprises that lack staff with adequate skills and talents. Greater efforts should be made to facilitate the integration of women into the labour market and to encourage women to enter occupations and sectors where decent jobs have been created. This may also require them to be equipped with skills that will help their successful integration into the labour market. Ways should also be identified to ensure that new jobs and workplaces are more attractive and female-friendly, and that they offer men and women the same opportunities. Some data show that for young females the school-to-work transition tends to be particularly difficult. At the same time this is a crucial element of any comprehensive effort to promote women's employment, though it is still little researched.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There has been a great deal of research and many studies on the socioeconomic benefits of women's economic empowerment. Women's participation in economic activity brings benefits at both micro and macro levels. At macro level a positive correlation can be observed between female labour force participation rates and economic growth. At micro level, the labour force participation of women is beneficial for the welfare of the family (in areas such as income, health and children's education). Comparative studies examining the impact of female education on GDP (gross domestic product) and poverty reduction demonstrate positive effects (World Bank, 2004). Education and skills enhance the productivity of both women and men, and increase their opportunity for paid employment in the formal sector (ILO, 2008).

The Middle East and North African (MENA) region has the lowest female labour force participation rate in the world. Increases in the educational levels of women have not lead to a proportional increase in the female labour force participation rate (World Bank, 2004). There is a loss of human resources in the productive process at the macro level, and women's economic empowerment lags behind at the micro level (World Bank, 2004).

In accordance with the EU strategic guidelines for the promotion of gender equality<sup>1</sup> as a fundamental right, a common value, and a necessary condition for the achievement of the objectives of growth, employment and social cohesion, the ETF has since 2005 included a gender approach in its activities relating to education, training and employment. In 2006 the ETF conducted a study on gender mainstreaming policies in education, training and employment in Morocco, Jordan and Turkey. One of the key conclusions was that while participation rates in education for men and women are fairly similar, there seems to be great inequality regarding educational access, content, environment and curricula. Furthermore, inequalities in working conditions, career opportunities and pay still persist.

Against this background the ETF has undertaken a cross-national analysis of women's participation in the labour market in Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia. The aim is to better understand and capture the opportunities and barriers relating to women's access to the labour market. Given that (i) in order to be employed, women need skills for which there is a demand in the labour market; and (ii) youth unemployment in the Mediterranean region is primarily a first-entry problem (particularly for young females) (Amer, 2007; El Zanaty and Associates, 2007; Shono and Smith, unpublished), the research will focus on access to the labour market of young females (15–29 years old) in two potential growth sectors (ICT and tourism). A sector approach has been identified for this project since it can produce concrete industry-specific recommendations. Tourism and ICT have been selected as the most suitable sectors for this research because:

- they have good potential for generating employment;
- the provision of a skilled labour force is crucial for ensuring their growth and competitiveness;
- they are considered priority sectors for the respective governments;
- there are donors who are sensitive to gender equality issues.

The aim of this paper is to present a general picture of the country under investigation, including labour market and skills formation issues, the challenges of women's empowerment and recent developments in the ICT and tourism sectors. The report is based on desk research and interviews with ministry officials and experts from other organisations and NGOs.

This report will serve as a basis for further empirical research and eventually the formulation of policy recommendations to both national decision-makers and international donors. The empirical research will be conducted in 2009 in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia, and will consist of

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<sup>1</sup> Equality refers to the norms, values and attitude perceptions required to attain equal status between women and men without neutralising the biological differences.

employers' survey and focus group discussions with young women in transition from school to work. The country reports will also be used for cross-national comparison, identification and dissemination of best practices in 2010.

The report was drafted by ETF staff: Dr Agnieszka Majcher-Teleon and Olfa Ben Slimene, with contributions from Gérard Mayen.

## 1.1. General socioeconomic situation

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a constitutional monarchy whose constitution was adopted in 1952. It has a population of 5.72 million people. In recent years the Jordanian government has taken a number of steps to open up its economy, control public debt and boost foreign direct investment (FDI). In early 1990 the government began reforms to restructure economic activities and encouraged the privatisation of community services, joined the World Trade Organisation, and signed a free trade agreement with the USA and a partnership agreement with the EU. As a result of these reforms, the kingdom's GDP has grown (by 6% in 2007) and has reached the value of USD 15.83 billion. FDI amounted to USD 1.835 billion in 2007 compared with USD 815 million in 2000<sup>2</sup>. In 2008 Jordan ranked 101 (out of 181 countries) in terms of being investment friendly and 47 (out of 181) with regard to being corruption free. The proportion of GDP accounted for by manufacturing is rising and reached 18% in 2006, while agriculture's share fell to 3%. Trade, restaurants and hotels account for some 10% of GDP, and transportation, storage and communication account for 16%; there has been only a slight change since 1992 (DOS, 2007).

Although industry and foreign investments are growing, Jordan is still a poor country. Its GNI (gross national income) per capita of only USD 2,850 is one of the lowest in the Middle East, and Jordan must rely on foreign help and bank loans. Its external debt in 2006 reached 54.5% of GDP<sup>3</sup>. Rapid increases in population have created serious shortages of food, water, housing and jobs, and exert substantial pressure on the education system and social infrastructure. The percentage of the population below the national poverty line is 14%<sup>4</sup>.

## 1.2. Demography and educational attainments

Jordan has a relatively high population growth rate (3.2% in 2007) and a young population structure. In 2004 the proportion of the population who were younger than 15 years old was 37%, while those aged over 60 accounted for 5.2% of the total (DOS, 2007). Fertility rates have fallen over the past 30 years, though they remain high (3.7 children per woman); this reflects the preference for larger families, with women reporting a mean ideal family size of 3.9 children. There is no difference between rural and urban areas. However, the fertility rate is higher among Beduins<sup>5</sup> (DOS, 2007).

Women represent 48.5% of the population. In the age group 15–19, 5.2% of girls are already married; for those aged 20–24 years the proportion is 30%, and for the cohort aged 25–29 years it is 66%. Only 18% of women aged 40 and over remain single, and this proportion decreases further with age. While most women marry between the ages of 20 and 29, the majority of men marry between 29 and 39 years (DOS, 2008a). Childbearing starts relatively late (median age of 24), and teenage pregnancies are rare compared with other countries in the region (Cherry et al., 2001). The average ages for marriage and childbearing are higher for more educated women (DOS, 2007).

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<sup>2</sup> World Bank indicators.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank indicators.

<sup>4</sup> UNDP data for 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Beduins are one of the peoples in Jordan distinguished by their distinctive lifestyle and culture. Traditionally nomadic, some have now started to settle down and only a minority are currently true nomads, with the majority trying to combine different lifestyles. They occupy the deserts in the East and South of Jordan. They constitute a tiny proportion of the Jordanian population, but tribalism and tribal culture remains one of the pillars of Jordanian society and politics.

Mortality has been declining fast in Jordan, especially among infants (from 82‰ in 1976 to 19‰ in 2007). As a result, life expectancy in 2007 had increased to 72 years for males and 74 years for females (DOS, 2007).

Given its lack of substantial natural resources, the country is reliant on its human capital. Jordan has made significant progress in reducing illiteracy and the school drop-out rate by constantly improving its education system. Jordan has one of the highest literacy rates in the region for both men and women, and literacy among young people is almost universal. One-third of men (and some 40% of women) have formal qualifications at pre-secondary level or lower, and one-third of men (22% of women) have some tertiary education. Adult women in Jordan remain less educated than men, though gender disparity in educational attainment is quickly disappearing among younger cohorts.

**Table 1: Educational attainment levels of the adult population 2002/03 (%)**

	Men	Women
No education	4.7	18.1
Incomplete primary	6.3	6.6
Primary	17.4	14.9
Lower secondary	28.2	24.8
Upper secondary	15.9	14.4
Tertiary (type B)	10.2	13.5
Tertiary (type A)	17.4	7.6

*Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, World Education Indicators 2006*

### 1.3. Labour market participation

Jordan is one of the Arab countries with the lowest employment rates for both men and women (58% for men and only 11% for women) (DOS, 2008a). The employment rate rises with educational level, especially among women. Only 3% of women with less than secondary education and 49% of women with a first degree are employed. Half of the female active labour force has at least a first degree, compared with only 19% of men. Women with less education are more likely to remain inactive. For men the employment rates are highest for better-educated men (up to 81% of those with some tertiary education) but they also remain relatively high for men with secondary education or lower (Table 2). However, the majority of women face problems in accessing the labour market, albeit for different reasons, and their unemployment rate is 25%, compared with 10% for men.

**Table 2: Labour market status of Jordanian population aged 15+ by gender and educational level (%)**

Educational level	Men			Women		
	Employed	Inactive	Unemployment rate	Employed	Inactive	Unemployment rate
Illiterate	23.7	74.5	7.4	1.4	98.5	6.8
Less than secondary	57.2	36.0	10.6	3.4	95.2	27.7
Secondary	46.0	49.4	9.1	6.1	92.1	22.8
Intermediate diploma	81.0	14.3	5.4	27.0	64.2	24.5
Bachelor's degree and above	77.9	14.3	9.1	48.6	34.2	26.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>58.4</b>	<b>35.4</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>85.0</b>	<b>25.4</b>

*Note: Figures do not add in rows or in columns*

*Source: DOS, 2008, Employment and Unemployment Survey*

The unemployment rate is especially high for young men aged 15–24 (up to 29%), and for young women (up to 50%) (Table 3). The figures also reveal that women between the ages of 20 and 39 years old are most likely to be active. Women who are younger than 25 years old are more likely to be unemployed and this suggests particular problems with school-to-work transition. Females in the age group 25–39 are most likely to be employed. At older ages their labour market activity drops, but this is partially due to the fact that older women are more likely to be less educated, and because of the weight of traditions among older cohorts. Moreover, the activity rate is twice as high for unmarried or never married women (20.5%) than for those who are or have ever been married (11.8%). Labour market activity for men peaks between the ages of 25 and 49, and male unemployment is highest in the age group 15–19, when less-educated men make the school-to-work transition.

**Table 3: Labour market status of Jordanian population aged 15+ by gender and age group (%)**

Age group	Men			Women		
	Employed	Inactive	Unemployment rate	Employed	Inactive	Unemployment rate
15–19	15.6	78.2	28.4	0.5	99.0	50.6
20–24	55.0	33.6	17.1	11.4	77.4	49.4
25–29	82.6	7.6	10.7	20.2	70.4	31.9
30–39	89.1	5.9	5.3	19.8	76.9	14.5
40–49	81.2	13.7	5.9	13.8	85.0	7.9
50–59	60.7	36.6	4.2	5.1	94.8	1.2

*Note: Figures do not add in rows or in columns*

*Source: DOS, 2008, Employment and Unemployment Survey*

The majority of the working population is concentrated in the private service sector. The overwhelming majority of enterprises are small: 94% have four workers or fewer and employ some 40% of the total workforce (DOS, 2006). Furthermore, the informal sector is relatively large and is increasing, although there is no concrete data available (Hourani et al., 2006).

The increasing size of the more educated section of the labour force does not solve the unemployment problem. This is because there are mismatches between the needs of the labour market and the provision of skills, with most jobs being created at the highest and lowest ends of the occupational spectrum, whereas mid-level occupations have seen little or

negative growth. Furthermore, employers prefer non-Jordanian workers (both men and women)<sup>6</sup>, mainly because they cost less, offer higher productivity and behave differently to Jordanian workers, who have high expectations, particularly regarding wages. For instance, the Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZs)<sup>7</sup> have not helped to reduce unemployment because they have led to the creation of mainly low-paid jobs that are deemed unattractive by Jordanian men and that are consequently occupied by foreign workers. However, the garment manufacturing industry in the QIZs has been able to provide jobs for a considerable number of unmarried women from low-income households who have no previous work experience (USAID, 2007, p. 16). At the end of 2003, women represented 64% of all persons employed in these comparatively recently established zones. These women helped to provide their families with financial support. Moreover, as well as having an impact on the stereotypical role of women within the family, this employment also gave them greater freedom of movement outside the home (CEDAW, 2006, p. 52). The Jordanian Ministry of Labour (MoL) has also promoted women's employment in QIZs by providing free transport to work, subsidising the cost of food in QIZs, and paying for accommodation near factories<sup>8</sup>.

The public sector remains the largest employer, with half of all employed women and a third of all employed men working in it. However, the public sector is now shrinking. In 2003 only 3.1% of all applicants for government jobs were appointed. The number of female applicants is significantly higher than the number of male applicants, while there is almost gender parity among those finally appointed. This suggests that preference is given to men among applicants from all fields of education (ETF, 2005, pp. 37–38).

The public sector attracts educated workers, mainly because of the job security and prestige it offers, as well as its less demanding work routines, such as shorter working hours. The public sector is especially appealing to women, and seems to fit better their work preferences and family constraints. The working hours in the public sector are fixed and relatively short, while the average salary is higher than in the private sector (DOS, 2008b). Statistics confirm that 44% of all employed women work between 15 and 36 hours per week and another 43% between 37 and 50 hours. At the same time, 72% of men work between 37 and 70 hours per week. In addition, 81% of female absences are as a result of holidays, compared to only 27% of male absences suggesting that men do not have equal access to leave provisions or do not need or want to take holidays as often as women (DOS, 2008a). The private sector does not currently offer a competitive working environment, comparable social security benefits or high salaries. The strong preference for scarce jobs in the public sector hinders the integration of women into the labour market, despite the increased levels of education among Jordanian women and the greater inclination on the part of well-educated women to look for employment rather than to remain inactive.

#### **1.4. Employment – legal and institutional framework**

For many decades in Jordan employment in the public sector was the norm. The modern private sector is a relatively recent phenomenon. As a result, labour legislation does not fully address current realities, and the institutions responsible for designing and implementing employment policy need to enhance their capacity further (for example, the public employment services). The MoL has so far played only a marginal role in the labour market. This is because of the lack of emphasis given to employment policies in its mandate and its lack of institutional capacity. The ministry is currently undergoing restructuring, and an employment strategy prepared with ILO support together with a new law for social security are being finalised. The MoL has established a gender unit that addresses gender issues and

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<sup>6</sup> These workers come mainly from countries such as Egypt, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Bangladesh.

<sup>7</sup> QIZs are areas that have been accorded a special status designated by the governments of Jordan and the USA. Products manufactured in these zones can be exported to the USA without payment of duty or excise taxes, and with no requirement for any reciprocal benefits. In addition, there are no quotas on products manufactured in Jordan and exported to the USA. As a result of these and other facilities offered by the government of Jordan, investors are able to save between 15% and 35% on the cost of production (information from the website of the Jordan Investment Board).

<sup>8</sup> Interviews at the Ministry of Labour, October 2008.

contributes to ministry policies relating to the inclusion of women in the labour market. But there has so far been little coordination between the different ministries whose policies directly affect the labour market.

Jobs in public sector are mediated by the Civil Service Bureau, which reports directly to the Prime Minister. Public recruitment has traditionally been based on qualifications assessed on paper in a process of open competition. There are also public employment services affiliated to the MoL (currently a network of 22 labour offices). However, they remain inefficient, loaded with outdated procedures and lacking IT support (ETF, 2006, p. 44). Moreover, there is no incentive to use them since no unemployment benefit scheme currently exists. It is expected that the new law that is being prepared to restructure the social security system will provide new options. The amendments of the Labour Code in 2002 allowed private employment offices to operate. Most of these concentrate on the recruitment of foreign workers (mostly domestic workers) and Jordanian workers abroad.

Workers have the right to form unions, which must be registered in order to be legal. The labour union movement in Jordan consists of the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions, which was formed in 1954 and comprises 17 trade unions. Unions are allowed to undertake collective bargaining, but they are not allowed to organise strikes or demonstrate without a permit. Labour disputes are mediated by the MoL. The labour unions tend to be more active and successful in large enterprises and industries and weaker in sectors that are based on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Hourani, 2001). The tourism and ICT sectors as defined in this research are not well unionised, with the exception of the air transport subsector. There are also 31 professional trade associations.

### ***Labour laws***

The 1996 Labour Code applies to all employees in the formal sector with the exception of domestic, agricultural and unpaid workers. In 2008 the 1996 Labour Law was modified and a tripartite consultative committee created. The protection of employees against dismissal for economic and technical reasons had been improved in 2002 by detailed regulation. Temporary contracts are allowed. Normal working hours are eight per day, and must not exceed 48 hours over a maximum of six days in any one week, excluding meal and rest breaks. These rules do not normally apply to managerial and supervisory staff. All workers are entitled to take leave with full pay for a period of 14 days each year. Annual leave is extended to 21 days for those who have worked for the same employer for five consecutive years. All workers are also entitled to 14 days of paid sick leave a year, which may be extended for a further 14 days. A reinforced and trained body of inspectors has been established within the MoL to monitor the implementation of the Labour Code.

The employment of civil servants is governed by the Civil Service Statute amended in 2007. It grants civil servants a number of conditions that are more advantageous than those in the private sector. For example, the normal working day is seven hours, and working hours must not exceed 35 per week. Civil servants are entitled to 21–30 days of annual leave depending on their grade, as well as seven days of paid sick leave with extensions possible. Civil servants are also entitled to various allowances and pay increases.

### ***Gender issues in labour laws***

When it comes to the legal provisions with regard to gender, some legal regulations reinforce the notion of women's work as being of secondary character and diminish the incentives for married women to work. For example, female employees in the public sector are not entitled to receive family allowance if the fathers of their children are alive and fit for work<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, a deceased wife's pension can not be transferred to her husband unless he is unfit for work and does not have any other source of income<sup>10</sup>.

There are also several regulations that have an ambiguous impact on women's status in the labour market. Women are normally prohibited from working during the night, between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. (except in instances specified by the Minister of Labour), and some jobs may also

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<sup>9</sup> Article 25 of the 2007 Civil Service Statute.

<sup>10</sup> Article 41 of the 2001 Social Security Law No 19.

be prohibited for them<sup>11</sup>. The exceptions to these rules relate to employment at hotels, coffee shops, places of entertainment, theatres and cinemas; at airports, airline companies and tourist offices; at hospitals, sanatoria and clinics; in jobs relating to the transport of people; and in the IT sector and related occupations.

In line with international standards the Jordanian Labour Code protects pregnant women from being dismissed (though only from the sixth month of pregnancy onwards and during maternity leave)<sup>12</sup> and grants 70 days' paid maternity leave<sup>13</sup> (female civil servants are granted 90 days' paid maternity leave). Another article grants married employees unpaid leave for up to two years to accompany their spouse to another location<sup>14</sup>. Women working in enterprises employing ten or more workers are also allowed to take one year of unpaid leave to raise a child, and to shorten their working day by one hour to nurse the baby<sup>15</sup>. To make work more attractive to women with children, the labour laws include an obligation to provide day-care facilities at the workplace<sup>16</sup>. However, the regulations place an especially high burden on the private sector. For example, employers are required to provide maternity leave allowances and provide childcare facilities at their own expense. This discourages enterprises, especially small and medium ones, from employing women (Al-Manar, undated, p. 21). It is only recently that the Maternity Fund, which is based on social security payments, has been introduced. Another proposal currently being discussed is to abolish the requirement to establish childcare facilities for each private sector employer employing at least 20 married women and replace it with a requirement to set up childcare facilities for employers with 20 or more workers regardless of their sex<sup>17</sup>.

## 1.5. Empowering women in Jordan – the challenges

### *Participation in the labour market*

The proportion of women working outside the home has increased very slowly over recent decades. The female labour market activity rate was 12% in 1985, while figures indicate that by 2007 this had reached 15%<sup>18</sup> (DOS, 2008a). Over the years the media have encouraged a more liberal attitude to women working. Women's employment has also gained greater legitimacy as a result of various activities led by the female members of the royal family and royal NGOs. However, ambiguous legislation, lack of infrastructure, stereotypes and prejudices still hinder women from participating fully in the labour market. It is also worth noting that no data exist to allow female activity in the informal sector to be evaluated.

Many poor and lower-class women work out of economic necessity, but a substantial number of working women come from middle-class families. Women's access to education has increased, and this has led to higher aspirations on the part of women to work outside the home. Regardless of educational level, a substantial proportion of women still wish to work in order to be financially independent and for the sake of their personal development (El Kharouf, 2000, p. 101).

Differences in attitude towards women's employment were frequently based on the character and conditions of the work. There appeared to be least resistance to women working in skilled, high-level and mid-level occupations such as teaching, nursing and secretarial work. Hence, women are more likely to work as professionals (48.8% of all employed women), and technicians and associate professionals (24.0%). They constitute 54.6% of all employees in the education sector, 45.5% in health and social work, and 28.9% in banking. Data on doctors and dentists who were registered with professional associations reveals that women

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<sup>11</sup> Article 69 of the 1996 Labour Code.

<sup>12</sup> Article 27 of the 1996 Labour Code.

<sup>13</sup> Article 70 of the 1996 Labour Code.

<sup>14</sup> Article 68 of the 1996 Labour Code.

<sup>15</sup> Article 71 of the 1996 Labour Code.

<sup>16</sup> Article 71 of the 1996 Labour Code. The provision applies to enterprises employing 20 or more married women, as long as at least ten children are less than four years old.

<sup>17</sup> Interview at the Ministry of Labour in June 2009.

<sup>18</sup> This refers to both employed and unemployed women (see Table 2).

constitute 32.2% of dentists and 13.9% of doctors (DOS, 2008b). At the same time, women are represented least in agriculture, construction, transport, trade and production (DOS, 2008a). Cultural constraints also clearly militate against women working in areas of low prestige, in jobs requiring travel and unsocial working hours or contact/proximity with strangers, these often being in areas with the most critical labour shortages, such as tourism at the present time. The attitudes of parents and husbands towards women's education and employment also play a vital role, and young girls and women make their decisions under their influence (El Kharouf, 2000, p. 122).

Organisational cultures are also often discriminatory and hinder gender equality within institutions and businesses. For instance, women are paid less than men, especially in public sector professional work (JOD 1.6 per hour for women vs. JOD 2.1 per hour for men) but also in private sector professional jobs (JOD 1.1 per hour for women vs. JOD 2.0 per hour for men) (DOS, 2008b). The gender gap is widest in the most senior occupations and does not exist in elementary occupations, though this might be because of the low salaries in these occupations in general. The 'reservation wage' is also higher for women than for men (USAID, 2007. p. 15). Furthermore, although sexual harassment is rarely mentioned officially, some research suggests that sexual harassment and intimidation of women by their male colleagues and superiors is quite common (Al Manar, undated, p. 35)<sup>19</sup>.

Finally, while women's employment and the contribution they make to the family income have accorded them more of a voice in family matters, the traditional division of labour between men and women within the family has remained relatively unchanged. Women's work at home has often been taken up by other women rather than shared between men and women. Women earning lower incomes have relied on their extended network of female relatives to help with childcare and housework, while upper- and middle-income women hire maids (usually foreigners from the Philippines, Sri Lanka or Egypt) to look after their homes and children. It should be emphasised that the infrastructure allowing women to reconcile the demands of work and family is underdeveloped. The number of kindergartens under the Ministry of Education (MoE) remains very low, and those that do exist accommodate only five-year-olds for a pre-school year. Under the law, a firm that employs 20 married women is required to provide childcare facilities for its female workers. However, enforcement of this requirement is based on complaints from the workers concerned, and consequently there are no hard data on the extent to which those firms are complying with the law. Some statistics do indicate that the number of childcare facilities has increased in recent years: there are now 825 such facilities in private firms that employ women, or in private agencies or associations (CEDAW, 2006).

### ***Gender mainstreaming***

There are continuing efforts in Jordan on the part of official bodies such as the Jordanian National Commission for Women and the National Council on Family Affairs, as well as various NGOs, to amend laws and regulations and abolish customs and practices that constitute discrimination against women in both the private and public spheres<sup>20</sup>. Most of the bodies involved are focusing on existing laws and the formulation of proposals for amendments to them, and on campaigns aimed at securing support for such amendments. Jordan signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on 3 January 1980, and ratified it on 1 July 1992.

Article 6 of the Constitution claims that: 'Jordanians shall be equal before the law. There shall be no discrimination among them as regards their rights and duties on the grounds of race, language or religion.' None of the Constitution's articles contain any discriminatory provisions except Article 23, which deals with the right of all Jordanians to work and the need to enact legislation governing the protection of workers, including legislation relating to the protection of women and minors (CEDAW, 2006).

In reality, gender equality is not enshrined in all laws in Jordan, and Jordan retains a number of reservations regarding various paragraphs of the CEDAW. This is because most of the laws regulating marriage and family issues are based on Shari'a, and Islamic law follows the

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<sup>19</sup> This was also confirmed by gender experts of NCHRD during the meeting in October 2008.

<sup>20</sup> See Annex 1 for a list of women's organisations in Jordan.

logic of complementary gender roles rather than granting men and women the same rights. Hence, in laws regulating the private sphere women and men are treated differently (with regard to such issues as marriage, divorce, custody and inheritance), while in the public sphere they enjoy the same rights (with regard to employment, participation in political life, and rights in criminal courts). However, the different treatment of men and women in the private sphere has implications for female participation in the public sphere. In accordance with Shari'a, the freedom to choose a residence and domicile (governed by the Personal Status Act) provides that a woman must live in the domicile of her husband and accompany him if he changes his domicile. Similarly, a married woman must have her husband's permission to perform work outside the home without losing her rights. Thus, a wife who works outside the home is entitled to maintenance provided that the work is lawful and her husband consents, either explicitly or implicitly, to her working, and having given such consent he may withdraw it only for a valid reason. Of course an employer can not refuse to employ or promote women on the basis of her gender, as this would violate the non-discrimination principle enshrined in the Labour Code.

Having granted unequal rights to men and women, both Islamic law and Jordanian legislation give a woman the right to stipulate in her marriage contract that her husband should grant her permission to work and that he should not change her place of residence. However, most women are unaware of this right. They may also be subject to social and family pressures that inhibit them from exercising it.

With regard to laws that are not based on Shari'a, many amendments are being introduced in order to redress gender inequality. A number of amendments have been made to the Civil Status Act, allowing, for instance, a married woman to become the head of the family in the event of the death or disappearance of her husband, or his loss or renunciation of Jordanian nationality. The principle of the equality of all citizens in the field of employment is enshrined in the laws in force in Jordan: the Civil Code, the Labour Code and the Civil Service Regulations.

With the exception of penalties prescribed under the Penal Code and the Labour Code, Jordanian law in general makes no provision for penalties or sanctions for those who discriminate against women. However, a woman who considers that she has been subjected to discrimination may have recourse to the competent courts in the same way as a man would do. Similarly, women have the right to appeal to the Supreme Labour Tribunal regarding administrative decisions in such matters as appointments to posts in public institutions, yearly increments, promotions, layoffs, disciplinary measures, disputes over pay and benefits, and pension entitlements.

### ***Participation in politics, civil society and positions of power***

In addition to inequalities in the private sphere and in the labour market, another important issue is the participation of women in political life and civil society. As discussed above, granting women equal rights does not immediately result in equal outcomes. Women in Jordan still remain widely excluded from the political scene and positions of power and influence. Female political participation is low, though there has been some slow progress: the number of women occupying parliamentary seats in the upper house in 2007 was seven (it was one in 1989) while the number of men in 2007 was 48. In the same year, there were seven women in the lower house (the figure was 0 in 1989) compared with 103 men (DOS, 2008b). According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice, data on employees in the Judicial and Diplomatic Corps for selected years reveal that female participation in both the Judicial and the Diplomatic Corps has become more significant over the years, but remains at relatively low levels (5.3% for the Judicial Corps and 16.5% for the Diplomatic Corps in 2007). In March 2009 the Minister of Justice announced that 40% of judges will be women in future years (there was only one female judge in 2008). Statistics for 2007 on the distribution of members in civil society associations and political parties show that women constituted only 7.5% of members of political parties, 20% of civil society organisations and 23% of professional associations (USAID, 2007, p. 19).

## 1.6. Overview of the education system

Education in Jordan is free and obligatory from grades one to ten, and thereafter is free for a further two years. Literacy training is free to all Jordanian residents.

Jordan has placed particular emphasis on education. Despite strained resources, the Jordanian MoE has developed a highly advanced national curriculum. The ministry is now making it mandatory for students to be computer literate and to be able to apply their computer studies to their regular studies, especially in scientific and mathematical courses. The MoE has engaged in structural reform through the ERfKE1 (Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy) and ERfKE2 projects. The objective of ERfKE1 (2003–08), which cost USD 380 million and was supported by ten development partners, is to transform the education system at the early childhood, basic and secondary levels in order to produce graduates with the skills required for the knowledge economy. The ERfKE2 project will cover the period 2009–13, and will involve a shift from a centralised programme delivery model to a school- and community-centered one.

Jordan invests heavily in its education system: 4.2% of GDP for primary and secondary education in 2004 (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2006). The country has achieved almost universal enrolment in basic education. The gross enrolment rate in secondary education is 87.4% (2005) and at tertiary level 39.9% (2005). The level of spending is comparable to many OECD countries, and higher than many other medium-income countries such as Chile, Brazil and Argentina (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2006). Because of the high number of young people in Jordan, per capita spending is lower than in richer countries, but is still higher than many other countries with a similar level of wealth. Pupil–teacher ratios across primary and secondary education resemble those in OECD countries rather than those in other medium-income countries (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2006).

There are two main categories of schools in Jordan, public and private, with public schools in a slight majority. Over 70% of Jordanians attend public schools (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2006). The private sector is heavily taxed. Although this removes a burden from the government of the kingdom, it makes private school fees relatively high, ranging from USD 1,000 to USD 7,000 per year. These levels of private education fees are extremely high when compared to the average family income. However, it should be noted that Jordanians as a community are highly committed to giving their children a decent education, which places a high burden on family budgeting.

Few data are available to allow conclusions to be drawn about the quality of education. No data on drop-out rates are available. Students' achievements in international tests such as PISA 2006 place Jordan well below the OECD average and close to, for example, Turkey, but ahead of many Latin American countries (OECD, 2007, p. 22). TIMSS (Trends in International Math and Science Study) results show a similar picture of MENA countries lagging behind East Asia, but also behind Latin America (World Bank, 2008, p. 17). This might be linked to the prevalence of traditional pedagogy in the Arab world in general, with its strong emphasis on rote memorisation and little development of critical thinking and problem-solving capacities, despite the reforms that have been introduced (World Bank, 2008, pp. 88–89). It should, however, be noted that Jordan has achieved better results than other MENA countries.

### **Structure of the education system**

The education system in Jordan consists of a two-year cycle of pre-school education, ten years of compulsory basic education, and two years of secondary academic or vocational education, after which students sit for a General Certificate of Secondary Education Exam (*Tawjih*). Secondary education consists of two years of study for students aged 16–18 who have completed the basic cycle (ten years), and has two major tracks: comprehensive and technical vocational. Comprehensive secondary education (high schools) can either be academic or vocational; at the end of this stage, students sit for the general secondary examination (*Tawjih*) in the appropriate branch. The academic stream qualifies students for entrance to universities, whereas the vocational or technical track qualifies them for entrance to community colleges or universities, provided they pass the two additional subjects.

## **Technical and vocational education and training**

During the past two years, Jordan has made great efforts to develop the employment and technical and vocational education and training (E-TVET) sector. The new approach and the framework for the reform for the E-TVET sector were initiated by the National Agenda, a major policy framework guiding the reform process in Jordan launched in 2005. The National Agenda assigned a leadership role in E-TEVT sector to the MoL. The Employment and TVET Council, chaired by the MoL, is the sector's governing body. Stakeholders include the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), the MoE (which runs the vocational school system), Al-Balqa' Applied University (which provides technical education in community colleges), the Chambers of Industry and Trade, trade unions, employers' associations, the TVET fund and the National Centre for Human Resources Development (NCHRD). International agencies and donors include the World Bank, USAID, the EC, the ETF, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Vocational secondary education, which provides intensive vocational training and apprenticeships, and which leads to the award of a Certificate (not the *Tawjih*), is led by the MoE.

Vocational training is provided by the VTC. According to the occupational skill levels, these applied secondary programmes are as follows:

- Skilled Worker Level Training Programme. This apprenticeship programme is open to students who have successfully completed basic education (i.e. tenth grade) as a minimum requirement. The duration of the programme is between one and two years, depending on the complexity of the specialisation.
- Craft Level Training Programme. This is open to students who have successfully completed secondary education or the Skilled Worker Level as a minimum requirement (these programmes are not considered as higher education). The programme leads to the Craft Level Grade II Certificate. The duration of the programme is between one and two years depending on the complexity of the specialisation.

Training is usually conducted in both training centres and workplaces, as would be the case with the dual system or alternance training.

Technical training at tertiary non-university level is the responsibility of Al-Balqa' Applied University (BAU), which is a Jordanian public university. Tertiary non-university education was created in 1981 by converting and expanding the existing teacher colleges. These institutions are intended to offer specialised, career-oriented training, and to prepare their students for work in mid-level professions. Non-university and vocational studies are offered at community colleges, access to which is open to holders of all types of general secondary education certificates. The two- to three-year programme encompasses many fields, such as arts, sciences, management, business administration and engineering. At the end of the two- or three-year course, students sit for a comprehensive examination (*Al-Shamel*). Those who pass are awarded the Associate Certificate.

Currently only 13.3% of secondary students are enrolled in TVET (NCHRD, 2008). Most of the VET students at secondary level are enrolled in secondary vocational education under the MoE (70.3% in 2006). This may be interpreted as a preference on the part of VET participants to receive school-based training which may offer them the prospect of proceeding to higher education. Furthermore, the share of VET students in secondary education fluctuates as a result of the occasional shifts of different programmes between streams (for example, the shift of commercial education from the secondary vocational stream to the general secondary education stream in 2004 under the title Information Technology).

Participation in apprenticeship programmes (VTC) is increasing for both men and women, and the fact that these programmes account for only a small proportion of students reflects in part a lack of apprenticeship places being offered. The actual increase in their relative popularity since 2004 is linked to the VTC's opening of 12 small vocational training centres between 2004 and 2006 and the new programmes being offered. Exempting trainees from paying training fees has also helped to make these offers more attractive. It is not yet clear to what extent employers are interested in apprentices, as the number of apprentices is currently determined by the number of places made available by the government. However, it is clear

that current levels are below the numbers that employers could accommodate, since students continue to find apprenticeship places.

### **Higher education**

Access to higher education is open to those who hold the General Secondary Education Certificate. There are currently eight public universities and two newly licensed ones, as well as thirteen private universities and four newly licensed ones. All tertiary education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR). The ministry includes the Higher Education Council and the Accreditation Council. Both types of university offer the Bachelor's degree; Master's degrees and doctorates are confined to public universities, except in the case of the Amman Arab University for Graduate Studies, which is a private university specialising in offering Master's degrees and doctorates.

The MoHESR has been engaged in a number of activities over the past ten years aimed at a comprehensive assessment and reform of higher education in Jordan and its institutions. In June 2008 preparatory steps were taken to prepare a project known as the Higher Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy (HERfKE).

### **1.7 Gender issues in education**

Girls must attend school through to the tenth grade and are encouraged to finish secondary and even higher education. Women are more likely than men to be illiterate, and slightly less likely to complete basic education in the older age cohorts (especially girls from impoverished, lower-class communities), but the gender gap in education in Jordan has been almost closed.

The participation of women varies greatly between the three main types of TVET, with a clear increase in participation since 2001 in apprenticeships (Table 4). In 2006 women constituted 30% of all VTC students. More than 60% of technician education (community college) students are women, although there has been a dramatic fall in the female enrolment rate, probably as a result of the increased intake at Jordanian universities. Academic programmes are considered the most prestigious, so when more places are made available in university education, fewer students are interested in entering technician programmes at community college level.

**Table 4: TVET students in Jordan by TVET provider and gender (2000/01–2005/06)**

TVET providers	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
<b>Vocational Training Corporation</b>						
Male	6,202	6,640	5,096	4,226	4,241	4,524
Female	415	645	507	461	728	1,754
Total	6,617	7,285	5,603	4,687	4,969	6,278
<b>Ministry of Education</b>						
Male	16,815	18,502	17,811	16,169	13,842	13,944
Female	14,656	16,022	15,561	13,140	10,778	10,906
Total	31,471	34,524	33,372	29,309	24,620	24,850
<b>Al-Balqa' Applied University</b>						
Male	8,774	9,945	9,848	9,359	9,649	10,011
Female	18,970	19,232	17,119	14,561	15,141	15,732
Total	27,744	29,177	26,967	23,920	24,790	25,743
<b>Total TVET</b>						
Male	31,791	34,637	32,755	29,754	27,732	28,479
Female	34,041	35,899	33,187	28,162	26,647	28,392
Total	65,832	70,536	65,942	57,916	54,379	56,871

Source: NCHRD, *Analysis of Quantitative TVET Indicators in Jordan 2001–06, 2009*

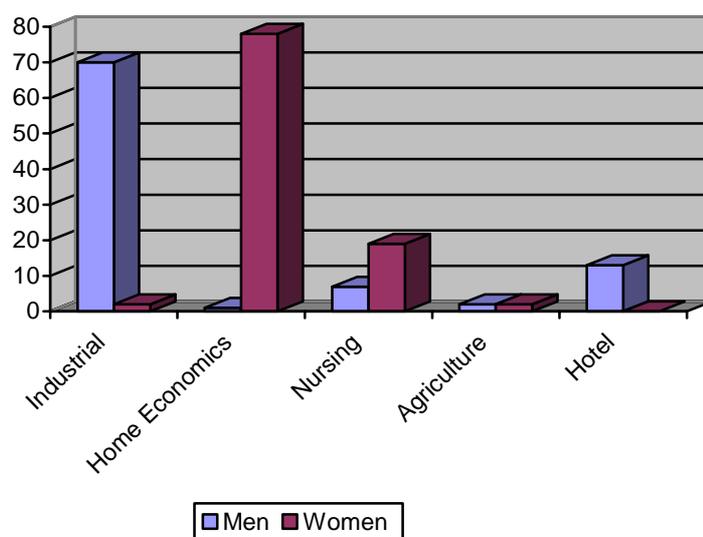
Overall the female participation rate in VTC programmes increased from 6.3% in 2001 to 26.6% in 2006. The increase in the proportion of female students is attributed to the expansion of female vocational training centres and the offer of new programmes that are attractive to female students, such as information technology, personal services and secretarial work. Higher female participation rates in VTC programmes can thus be expected if more programmes are introduced that cater to the interests of women. The choice of studies varies from year to year, and there are often wide variations in gender participation rates as the programmes on offer change. This highlights the great importance that must be attached to the issue of which fields of training are being offered.

Furthermore, more women are becoming interested in higher education, though they still constitute less than half of those awarded degrees in higher education (BA and MA, 45%) and advanced research programmes (29%) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2006). However, they are awarded 66% of tertiary non-university degrees (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2006). More than half of the 20,000 students at the largest Jordanian university, the University of Jordan in Amman, are women.

Women are more likely to enter public universities and less likely to enter private universities than men. This may be because of the high costs of private higher education, since families might be more likely to invest in boys' education on the grounds that they are more likely to find employment after graduation.

Data also reveal that subject choices in secondary and higher education continue to follow gender lines. At the secondary level women are more likely than men to choose home economics or nursing. They are slightly less likely to follow scientific studies or IT in academic streams, and do not take up industrial or hotel courses in vocational streams (Fig. 1).

**Figure 1: Distribution of men and women in vocational education streams in 2006 (%)**



Source: NCHRD Analysis of Quantitative TVET Indicators in Jordan 2001–06, 2009 based on MoE data

In 2006, the latest year for which data are available, the most popular fields of study at apprenticeship level (VTC) were as follows:

- male students: electrical, general mechanical, information technology and automotive studies;
- female students: information technology, personal services and secretarial.

No women took the hotel programme. Such programmes have recently been improved with the implementation of a Siyaha project at the VTC and then at the MoE. For women's technician education these were in administrative and finance, education, paramedical and engineering studies.

At the higher education level women constitute the majority of enrolled students in subjects such as education and teaching, social sciences, humanities and religious studies, while men are in the majority in scientific and technical areas such as mathematics and computer science, engineering and medicine.

Finally, in addition to the fact that men and women tend to choose different study fields, a phenomenon that has been observed in most countries of the world, education in Jordan tends to be provided separately for boys and girls, especially at primary and secondary levels. There are boys-only and girls-only schools and programmes, reflecting the cultural sensitivity about mixing genders. Although this helps to attract and retain girls in schools, it may affect the ability of both men and women to develop the skills necessary to handle various situations in the workplace<sup>21</sup>.

Gender stereotyping in school textbooks and in teachers' attitudes is also a problem (USAID, 2007, pp. 17–18). Despite recent efforts by the MoE (i.e. the revision of textbooks from the perspective of gender equality), the potential of textbooks to promote women into decision-making roles and new occupations has not been fully exploited.

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<sup>21</sup> Educational institutions prepare young people to learn skills but also provide settings in which young people develop relationships with others who will become their friends and work associates later in life. Whether women and men are educated together or separately has some consequence for their adult roles and relationships (Fuchs Epstein and Gambs, 2001).

## 1.8. School-to-work transition

School-to-work transition poses a serious challenge for young Jordanians, especially women, as indicated by the unemployment and inactivity rates for young women. Most unemployed women were still looking for their first job, while the great majority of men had worked previously. Women who try to enter the labour market upon graduation are usually well educated and are seeking scarce government jobs. This also affects the way they search for a job. Men are more likely to visit establishments and workplaces in person, and ask relatives and friends to assist them, especially in the private sector. Women are more likely to use newspapers and television adverts, and to apply to the Civil Service Bureau (ETF, 2005, p. 9).

A significant proportion of the inactive population are people who would accept a suitable job if it was offered, but become discouraged after a long period of unsuccessful job search. Furthermore, the education that young people receive does not match their skill needs, and as a result there is little appreciation of formal qualifications by employers, and slow progress towards professionalisation in many sectors. Career guidance services are relatively new to Jordan, and guidance and counselling services are underdeveloped. Some career guidance has been introduced in basic education. Counselling centres have also been established in 20 public and private universities. Career guidance as part of the employment services is almost non-existent (ETF, 2007, pp. 64–65). On the other hand, proper career guidance and counselling has proved very useful when it is used to target young women for economic and social empowerment or to target young people in general to take up training and job opportunities in unpopular sectors where there are skills shortages and emerging career opportunities, such as tourism. It should be noted here that one of the problems sometimes mentioned by employers is inadequate work ethics and a lack of soft skills. Young people may not be used to attending the workplace on a regular basis, or notifying the employer of absences, or of their plans to leave their employment. They also lack the skills required to deal confidently with their co-workers and supervisors, or to solve conflicts<sup>22</sup>.

The existing research does not provide sufficient insight into the determinants of successful school-to-work transition and how it can be achieved, especially with regard to women and VET graduates<sup>23</sup>. It is also vital to understand the dynamics behind young women's decisions whether to join the labour market upon graduation and where and how to seek a job, and also the problems associated with job search and integration into the workplace. Such an understanding would help in the development of solutions to facilitate transition. It is worth noting that unsuccessful transition to the workplace, or failed integration, results in educated and skilled women dropping out of the labour market altogether.

## 2. WOMEN AND TOURISM

### 2.1. Recent developments in the tourism sector

Tourism is one of the most dynamic economic sectors in Jordan and has been identified by the government as one of the priority sectors to be developed. Tourism receipts have surged by 12% year-on-year to JOD 1,639 million in 2007, according to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA). The number of arrivals has increased from 4,700 000 in 2002 to 6,300,000 in 2007, and employment in the sector has risen from around 23,000 people in 2004 to 34,500 in 2007. The National Tourism Strategy (2004–10) set a target of JOD 1.3 billion in sector revenues for 2010 (this has already been reached) and an increase in employment to over 91,000. In order to meet these goals the National Tourism Strategy and the authorities are employing a variety of means.

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with the Izdihar project manager, October 2008.

<sup>23</sup> The recent study on school-to-work transition conducted by NCHRD focuses only on the role of different 'employability' skills in successful transitions and targets only university graduates. The findings confirm that basic skills, language skills and affective skills (such as responsibility and interpersonal skills) enable successful school-to-work transition (Al-Manar, 2006).

- Improved marketing and public relation strategies have been implemented, aimed at increasing the length of stay and attracting visitors from other Arab states, Europe, America and the Pacific region. They include a plan to overcome the fears of foreigners about visiting the country (i.e. distinguishing Jordan from other politically unstable Middle Eastern destinations), and initiatives to enhance the public understanding of tourism.
- Steps have been taken to develop and expand the quality products and services, diversify products, introduce new events and entertainment, and promote lesser known destinations.
- Investment in human resources has been increased (expanding employment opportunities, supporting tourism-related SMEs, developing high-quality education and training).
- Institutional and regulatory frameworks have been improved (upgrading public services, facilitating access, air travel and visas, and promoting public–private partnerships).

A new Tourism Law has recently been developed in order to promote public–private partnerships, facilitate increased investments and help to improve the standards and quality of products and services. The law supports a number of changes, including the development of a clear legislative framework to delineate and monitor tourism resources in the kingdom; enhance the role of MoTA in formulating and institutionalising strategic planning for development; and leading the sector and expanding and protecting the pool of human resources. The law also calls for the enhancement and activation of the role of the private sector in the management and growth of resources and the establishment of a modern system to regulate the main professions in attaining best practice standards in services.

Bylaws relating to three tourism industry professions have also been developed. This began with the establishment of an approach and framework based on principles to regulate tourism professions. An agreement was reached to license tour operators, hotels and tour guides. Bylaws to regulate hotels, tour agents, operators and tour guides were then developed through an intensive consultation process, and are based on international best practice adapted for the Jordanian context (USAID, 2008).

MoTA is the main body responsible for the tourism sector in Jordan. Its main responsibilities cover tourism product development, planning, certification and quality control, and legislation. The Jordan Tourism Board is another public body that has responsibility for the internal and external marketing of tourism. There are also numerous tourism business associations, some of which were created recently in order to facilitate the development of the tourism sector. The main organisations are the Jordan Hotel Association, the Jordan Restaurant Association, the Jordan Inbound Tour Operators Association and the Jordan Tour Guide Association. These associations represent the businesses in dealings with the government and other stakeholders, develop and maintain the relevant standards of service, and support training and career development frameworks for employees in the respective subsector (see also Annex 2).

## **2.2. Education for the tourism sector**

Education and training in hotels and tourism is offered at various levels, in both public and private establishments (Table 5). However, it should be noted that less than half the personnel in the tourism sector have formal training, and the general awareness of the role and the supply of formal education and training is low across the industry. The challenge is greater because the modern tourism sector offers jobs in working environments that are very different to those which many young people – especially those from more traditional and lower-income families and communities – are accustomed to, for instance in terms of different eating habits and utensils.

Amman is the main location for the education and training institutions, with universities, eight colleges and the Jordan International School for Hotel and Tourism Studies (high school) located there. Irbid has two universities and two colleges. The southern region has two new universities offering tourism-related programmes, Hussein Bin Talal University and Aqaba University.

High schools under the MoE produce the highest number of graduates (around 1,000 per year), with the VTC second (around 800 per year) and universities third (around 600). Almost all women in tourism education are concentrated in universities (and in tourism studies rather than hospitality or hotel studies). A small female minority is enrolled in community colleges and vocational training centres, and there are currently no women in tourism education in high schools.

**Table 5: Number of institutions offering education and training in hotel and tourism studies**

<b>Type of institutions</b>	<b>2006</b>
Universities	11
Community colleges	10
Vocational training centres (specialising in hotels and tourism)	16
High schools (specialising in hospitality)	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>

### **2.3 Employment in tourism subsectors**

The tourism sector consists of several subsectors:

- accommodation (hotels),
- restaurants,
- tourist attractions (archaeological sites, museums, galleries),
- tourism services (travel agencies, tour operators, tour guides, souvenir outlets),
- tourist transport (car rental, coach and airline companies),
- tourism administration (MoTA and information and visitor centres).

Because of the different categorisations and methodologies used, the dynamic nature of the sector and the difficulties of collecting reliable data, the number of enterprises and employees differ depending on the source of the data (DOS, USAID unpublished survey 2006, MoTA). According to the latter source, employment in the tourism sector had reached 38,000 in 2008. There were 352 hotels, 501 travel agencies, 776 tourist restaurants, 294 tourist outlets and 342 car rental offices (Table 6).

**Table 6: Tourism subsectors in Jordan by number of employees (2003–08) and number of companies (2008/09)**

Subsectors	Number of employees						Number of companies 2008/09
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	
Hotels	10,499	10,708	12,884	13,450	13,193	13,994	481
Travel agencies	2,621	2,826	2,774	2,903	3,408	3,680	586
Tourist restaurants	6,367	6,719	9,950	10,720	13,472	15,498	776
Tourist shops	296	310	385	530	637	732	294
Tourist transport	499	483	620	758	814	881	7
Car rental offices	928	952	1,357	1,289	1,417	1,758	342
Diving centres	0	28	32	43	45	45	9
Water sports facilities	0	89	97	111	120	120	3
Total tourism employment	22,110	23,544	29,384	31,063	34,455	38,294	x

*Note: Data are incomplete and the columns do not add up*

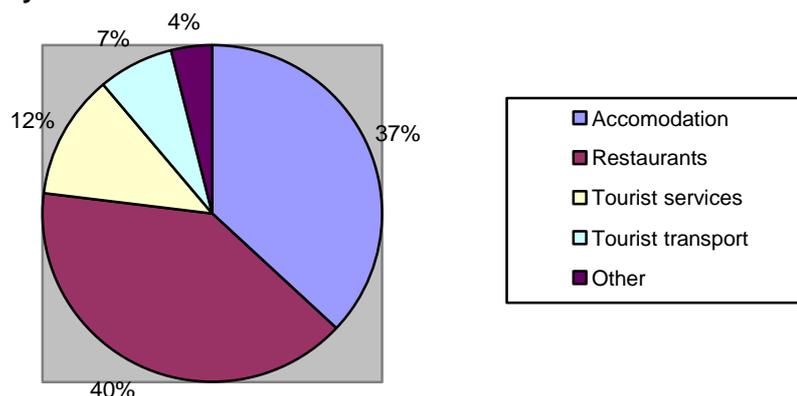
*Source: Jordan Center for Social Research calculations based on MoTA data*

According to the Statistical Office, in 2006 there were 517 hotels, camp sites and other short-stay accommodation providers, and 6,131 restaurants, bars and cafeterias (with only some of them being tourist restaurants, bars and cafeterias) (DOS, 2006). The USAID unpublished study reported that in 2006 there were:

- 198 hotels (one to five stars),
- 310 apartment hotels, unclassified hotels and hostels,
- 560 tourist restaurants,
- 104 tourist attractions (such as archaeological sites and museums),
- 1,952 travel agencies, tour operators and souvenir outlets,
- 348 tourist transport operations (car rental, coach and airline companies),
- 25 tourism administration entities (including MoTA and visitor centres).

The largest number of employees was concentrated in the accommodation subsector (40%), with 34% in restaurants, 14% in tourist services, 8% in tourist transport, 2.5% in tourism administration and 1.4% in tourist attractions (Fig. 2).

**Figure 2: Employment in different tourism subsectors**



Source: Jordan Center for Social Research calculations based on MoTA data

The majority of tourism establishments (in most of the subsectors) are located in Amman, followed by the south of the country (where some of the major tourist attractions are, including Petra and Red Sea).

The majority of jobs in the tourism sector require some training, and only 5% of the current workforce is unskilled (according to the USAID unpublished report, 2006). However, only around 42% of staff have formal education and training, and the percentage is even lower for the accommodation sector. Around 50% receive on-the-job training, while around 30% do not receive any form of training. This indicates the current low level of professionalisation in the tourism sector. However, taking into account the developments in the sector that are aimed at increasing the quality and standardisation of services, the importance of skills and proper education and training is evident.

With regard to the age profile, around 10% of those employed are young people below the age of 24, the proportion being higher in tourist transport services and restaurants, and lower in the accommodation sector and tourist attractions. The majority of employees fall into the age category 25–40 years (USAID, 2006).

There are wide variations in wage levels for different jobs. The majority of low-level jobs have wages of JOD 100–120 per month i.e. around the level of the minimum wage (USAID, 2006). However, managers' salaries, especially in the better hotels, can be very high. Most mid-level jobs are paid at around the level of the average salary (JOD 200–300).

The majority of establishments in the accommodation sector are those such as unclassified hotels and camp sites, which do not come into the scope of this research as they are outside the major developments in the tourism sector and employ relatively few people. According to DOS statistics, the vast majority of hotel establishments (including all types of short-stay accommodation providers) are micro enterprises employing no more than four people. According to Jordan Hotel Association statistics, the majority of all classified hotels in Jordan are in Amman (over 60%), followed by the south of the country (25%) (Table 7). There are plans for a number of new tourism projects to be developed and completed in the next few years in Amman, Aqaba and around the Dead Sea, adding some 10,000 hotel bedrooms and 7,600 additional jobs.

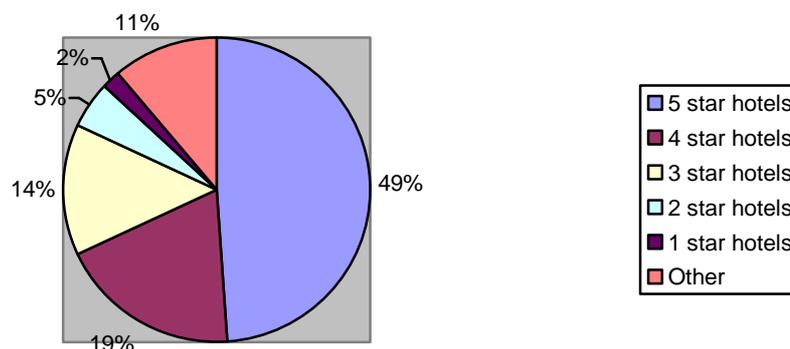
**Table 7: Number of classified hotels by location (2009)**

	5-star	4-star	3-star	2-star	1-star	Total
Amman	12	17	36	38	30	133
Dead Sea	4	1	0	0	0	5
Petra	6	2	7	2	8	25
Aqaba	2	2	6	9	9	28
Madaba	0	1	1	1	4	7
Irbid	0	0	1	0	4	5
Karak	0	0	0	2	1	3
Zarqa	0	0	0	1	1	2
Ajloun	0	0	0	2	0	2
Hemmeh	0	0	0	1	0	1
Jarash	0	0	0	2	0	2
Azraq	0	0	0	1	0	1
Al-Humar	0	0	0	0	1	1
Al-Reweshid	0	0	0	0	1	1
Al-Fuhaes	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	24	23	51	59	60	217

Source: Jordan Hotel Association

No administrative data are available on the size distribution of the classified hotels. However, USAID survey data suggest that four- and five-star hotels employ the majority of all staff working in the accommodation subsector (and in the tourism sector as a whole) (Fig. 3). One- and two-star hotels, although numerous, tend to be small-sized enterprises.

**Figure 3: The proportion of employees per hotel category**



Source: USAID unpublished report, 2006

It should be noted that the Siyaha project has improved the way hotel standards are measured to ensure that establishments are in line with international standards and that customers get what they pay for. The previous system focused on structural elements of a hotel rather than the services offered. In order to be recognised as a hotel, an establishment must now meet minimum basic standards of quality to ensure that the basic requirements of guests are met. This means that greater importance is attached to the skills and professional conduct of staff. These developments primarily concern classified hotels. According to the 2006 USAID survey, most of the hotels were looking for staff and faced difficulties in filling vacancies.

Statistics collected by the Statistical Office do not distinguish between restaurants and cafeterias serving mainly tourists and those serving all types of customer. According to these statistics, in 2006 there were some 6,131 restaurants, bars and cafeterias, located mainly in Amman. The majority of these were small enterprises: 87% employed between one and four people. According to MoTA statistics, in 2008 there were 776 restaurants, pubs, cafeterias, night clubs and fast food outlets targeting tourists, employing around 15,000 people and located mainly in Amman.

MoTA statistics show that in 2008, tourism services and transport employed around 7,000 people. The average number of employees per enterprise is very small. Many of the companies, for example car rental firms, are family businesses. This subsector offers some potential for entrepreneurship on the part of women, both as enterprise owners and as subcontractors (the latter mainly in the production of handicrafts, working from home or in women-only venues). Such NGO-driven or community-development initiatives tend to attract low-skilled women in poorer areas. The majority of them prefer to work as employees or subcontractors and receive a fixed price for their handicrafts. However, marketing the products and looking for new markets becomes an issue. Another option pursued by women is to participate in family-based business, such as offering catering or accommodation.

The tourism administration subsector consists mainly of the MoTA, Tourism Business Boards and visitor centres. It is a public sector, appealing to many higher education graduates, especially women, but with very limited potential for growth or the generation of new jobs.

The tourist attractions subsector mainly comprises museums, archaeological sites, art galleries and water-sport-related businesses (for example, diving centres and firms hiring glass-bottom boats). There were only around 110 enterprises in 2006, most employing less than ten or even less than five people, the majority being firms hiring glass-bottom boats. Tourist attractions employ a tiny percentage of all tourism employees, and around 15% of its employees are women (mainly in public sector establishments, which on average employ more employees than private sector units) (USAID, 2006).

#### **2.4. Women's employment in tourism**

The tourism industry has been seen as an unacceptable employment option for women, as they are required to deal with many people from different places and countries, have working times that are not considered appropriate (for example, evening or night shifts), and be exposed to behaviour not always acceptable according to Islam or to local culture, such as drinking alcohol and eating pork. Even some young men have been reluctant to take up job opportunities in tourism as work in the sector was often regarded as not respectable, and was low paid.

The participation of women in the tourism sector is seen as being more acceptable if it relates to handicrafts and the production of items that can be sold. There are no institutionalised laws or policies that protect the producers.

The female participation rate in the tourism sector is slightly more than 10%, with the highest proportion being in travel agencies and tourist shops, followed by hotels and restaurants (Table 8). Government jobs in the tourism administration subsector are also very attractive for women (not shown in the table). The percentage of women employed in tourism has increased in recent years, especially in the restaurant sector. In terms of numbers, most of the females employed in the tourism sector work in accommodation (in particular in four- and five-star hotels), restaurants and tourism services.

**Table 8: Number of employees in tourism activities and percentage of women (2002–08)**

	2002		2005		2008	
	Total	Women (%)	Total	Women (%)	Total	Women (%)
Hotels	10,324	6.4	12,884	7.5	13,994	8.2
Tourist restaurants	5,674	4.9	9,950	8.9	15,498	10.0
Travel agencies	2,511	25.5	2,774	26.0	3,680	26.7
Car rental offices	1,036	0	1,357	2.2	1,758	1.5
Tourist shops	347	5.2	385	9.4	732	21.3
Tourist guides	570	2.8	672	3.4	873	4.5
Horse guides	386	0	613	0	713	0
Tourist transport	445	2.5	620	2.9	881	2.6
Diving centres	0		32	12.5	45	20.0
Water sports	0		97	1.0	120	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,293</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>29,384</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>38,294</b>	<b>10.3</b>

*Note: Data are incomplete and the columns do not add up*

*Source: Calculations from MoTA and the Jordan Center for Social Research*

However, the data suggest that women are still less attracted to work in the areas where the most jobs are, that is, the accommodation and restaurant subsectors. Furthermore, women have some preferences within each subsector. In the accommodation sector they prefer to work in large, up-market hotels rather than in small establishments with fewer or no stars. In the tourism services sector there are more women working in travel agencies, and most of the tour operators and travel agents are small owner-managed or family-run operations.

### **3. WOMEN AND ICT**

#### **3.1. Recent developments in the ICT sector**

ICT is one of the most important wealth-creating assets for any country, and is key to its global competitiveness. Jordan has already taken steps to upgrade its physical ICT infrastructure, deregulate the sector and increase accessibility for all members of society. In addition, the government has identified the ICT sector as an engine of growth and as a priority sector because of its major growth prospects in terms of creating employment and attracting investment, and its export potential.

In 2007 the total domestic revenue from the sector amounted to USD 686 million, an increase of almost 20% on the previous year (Int@j, 2007, p. 3). Most of the revenue is generated through the telecommunication services sector (both domestic and export revenues), the financial investment and brokerage sector (especially export revenues), and the government/e-government sector (especially domestic revenues). FDI (cumulative) was USD 109 million in 2007. However, employment growth in the sector was low (only 3.0%), the number of people employed increasing from 10,712 in 2006 to 11,034 in 2007. The government is working to address this problem by developing ICT training and working to increase the overall penetration of ICT in Jordanian society under the new ICT National Strategy 2007–11. The new policy outlines a number of objectives that the country should aim to reach within the next three years, including almost doubling the size of the sector to USD 3 billion, developing 35,000 jobs and pushing internet penetration up to 50%.

The telecommunication sector in Jordan is considered one of the most liberal in the region. The communication infrastructure is also described as 'well-developed' in the context of the MENA region; in fact, in 2004 Jordan's network-readiness was ranked 44 out of 104 countries by the World Economic Forum. World-leading ICT companies, such as Microsoft and CISCO, have chosen Jordan as an attractive location for their service branches. International companies have close relationships and certification programmes with universities in Jordan.

**Table 9: Key indicators of the ICT sector**

Key indicators	2001	2007
ICT market revenues (USD million)	170	882
Domestic revenue (USD million)	130	686
Exports revenue (USD million)	40	196
Employment	8,000	11,034
FDI, cumulative (USD million)	60	109

Source: Int@j ICT Industry Statistics (2001–05), Int@j ICT Statistics 2007

However, the ICT statistics are prone to bias as there are no consistent classification systems for the ICT sector. Companies can be grouped around technologies, solutions, or business verticals. ICT products and services are also incorporated into other sectors and cut across a wide variety of economic activities. As a result, the ICT sector does not fit comfortably within the common industry classification definitions, except for the telecommunication sector. This also has a profound impact on data collection and analysis for the purposes of this research.

### 3.2. Overview of the ICT sector

The DOS establishment survey shows that in 2006 there were 13 telecommunication companies and 1,073 companies involved in computer and related activities. These were as follows:

- 45 software publishing companies,
- 135 software consultancy and supply companies,
- 295 maintenance and repair companies,
- 598 other companies (unclassified).

Int@j, the Information Technology Association of Jordan, currently has around 130 members, and claims that this reflects the true number of ICT enterprises when a better definition of the ICT sector is applied: Int@j has adopted the ISIC 4 (International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities) definition of the ICT sector. According to this definition, the ICT sector does not include computer retail shops, assembly shops, vocational training providers or internet cafes. BOP (Business Outsourcing Process) companies, such as call centres, also fall outside this definition.

According to the DOS survey the majority of enterprises in the telecommunication subsector have more than 20 employees. In the computer subsector the majority have between 1 and 4 employees, and only 70 companies employ more than 20 people (Table 10).

**Table 10: Distribution of enterprises in the telecommunication and computer subsectors by size**

	1–4	5–9	10–19	20–99	100–99	500 or more
Telecommunication	2	1	1	5	2	2
Computer and related activities	910	84	43	29	7	0

Source: DOS 2006 Establishments Survey

With regard to the geographical distribution, all 13 telecommunication companies are located in Amman. In the computer subsector, the majority are located in Amman, with substantial numbers in Irbid and Zarqa (north of Amman).

Int@j members' survey data reveal a different picture from the one captured by DOS statistics. Of the ICT companies surveyed (Agtash, 2008, p. 12):

- 2% employ 9 workers or fewer,
- 32% employ 10–25 people,
- 30% employ 26–50 people,
- 15% employ 51–100 people,
- 21% employ 101–500 people.

The same survey shows that:

- 62% of companies are nationally owned,
- 23% are internationally owned,
- 15% are owned by national and international shareholders.

In the primary business sector, the main focus of companies included in the sample is:

- programming (11%),
- database systems (8%),
- web development (8%).

Companies do not seem to have a secondary business focus (Agtash, 2008, p. 13).

### **3.3. Education for the ICT sector**

Despite the moves toward greater ICT accessibility in schools, the lack of training, financing and appropriate ICT tools and technologies continues to hold schools back from providing their students with the necessary ICT media and skills.

IT has become one of the most popular VET streams at secondary level, especially among women. Figures from the Cisco Networking Academy programme show that since January 2008 around 36% of its 1,200 newly enrolled students in Jordan were women. This brings the total number of participating students in Jordan to 6,000 in the 34 Cisco Networking Academies across the kingdom.

However, the skills acquired at secondary level do not open to doors to ICT careers, for which higher education is expected. The survey results show that the dominant educational level of employees (81%) in the ICT sector is university education (Agtash, 2008, p. 17). Their technical skills, however, are not considered satisfactory, and there seems to be a huge demand for skilled graduates. The skills gap may be aggravated by the relatively high turnover rate of employees with some work experience. For employees with two to four years of experience the turnover rate is 45% (compared with the average of 33%). Jordanian ICT companies seem to lose skilled and experienced staff to the Gulf ICT labour market, which offers higher salaries.

Student enrolment in ICT programmes in Jordanian universities is around 27,000 per year, with approximately 6,000 graduates per year, while the number of new jobs is estimated at 5,000 per year. Some of the graduates leave the country immediately for the Gulf states, and some (especially women) will find work in other sectors. As a result, the oversupply of graduates does not solve the skills gap (Agtash, 2008, pp. 26–27).

ICT programmes are offered at public and private universities, and at community colleges. The majority of ICT graduates during the period 2001–05 were in the field of computer science (37% in 2005, compared with 65% in 2001), followed by information systems (19% in 2005, compared with 14% in 2001), and newly introduced information technology (10%). Women are in a minority in most ICT fields, with only a few exceptions. Although the

participation of women is low in ICT education across most fields, it is extremely low in the fields of network management, software engineering, electronic and communication engineering, computer engineering, electronic engineering and communication engineering (Al-Jidara, 2008, p. 55). The number of women showing an interest in ICT fields (but not necessarily in computer engineering) is growing.

As a result of the lack of adequate skills, as perceived by employers, and the nature of the ICT business, further training is crucial. In order to develop their employees' skills, some companies provide on-the-job training (68%) and external short-term courses in Jordan or abroad (90%) (Agtash, 2008, p. 27).

### **3.4. Women's employment in ICT**

As one of the fastest growing sectors, the ICT industry should provide a unique opportunity for female employment and entrepreneurship. The character of the jobs – professional, relatively well-paid, potentially offering female-friendly working routines (such as teleworking) – should attract many women. A survey conducted by Int@j in 2007 of ICT companies in Jordan showed that women constituted 25% of the total number of employees in the sector (Int@j, 2007, p. 16). Another survey estimated that women represented 31% of employees in primary ICT business, and 21% of the ICT workforce as a whole (Agtash, 2008, p. 12).

There has been a marked increase since 2001 in the percentage of women in core ICT functions. More women are undertaking technical roles, away from the traditional ICT managerial and administrative functions (Al-Jidara, 2008, p. 34). However, the same report has highlighted the fact that there is still a gender-mainstreaming challenge in Jordan's ICT sector (p. 35). Some 30% of respondents indicated that they saw no advantages to hiring women in the ICT sector. Another 10% believed that it was generally important to maintain a gender balance in the workplace. Although only 4% of the employers surveyed believed that women were qualified and talented, many more claimed that women were accurate and loyal or had good client-handling and servicing skills. Women working in the ICT sector are thus valued for their favourable work ethics and soft skills, but not for their technical capabilities. In addition, experts also confirmed that women's positive work ethics contributed to their ability to participate in the ICT sector, suggesting that women tend to be more focused, patient, hardworking and detail-oriented, and more capable of interacting with clients. In findings that were similar to the survey results, experts regarded women's qualifications (indicators of their success and their academic achievement) as being less important. The disadvantages relating to women's employment in the ICT sector, as ranked by respondents in the employers' survey, include their inability to fulfil the demanding requirements of the ICT business (such as long working hours and the need to travel for business). Other disadvantages were directly related to perceptions that women are less capable of handling the technical and workload requirements of jobs in ICT (Al-Jidara, 2008, pp. 35–36).

As a result, although ICT attracts many more women than, for instance, the tourism sector, it could still absorb more women if the working environment, routines and conditions were improved and if more employers appreciated the advantages of having a more gender-balanced workforce. Furthermore, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that many young women who enter ICT careers in the private sector subsequently leave, which would suggest that they experience problems in integrating successfully into the workplace<sup>24</sup>.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

The empirical data show that Jordanian women are only slowly integrating into the labour market, despite their improving educational attainment levels. Better-educated women prefer to wait for scarcer and scarcer jobs in the public sector and hence remain unemployed. Women with fewer skills are less likely to enter the labour market altogether, for a variety of reasons: non-professional jobs are often considered inappropriate for women; the majority of employers in the private sector can not offer women attractive working conditions; women are

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<sup>24</sup> Interviews at the MoICT in March 2009.

expected to be primarily mothers and housewives, and little support is available, for example in the form of childcare facilities. Employers, especially those in the private sector, may also give preference to men when hiring and promoting staff, and labour laws still place additional burdens on private employers who employ women.

At the same time the private sector is growing, and workforce shortages and skill gaps are apparent in the labour market and emerging industries (in this case tourism and ICT). The tourism industry has expanded considerably in recent years and new jobs are being created all the time. Tourism tends to offer a wide range of jobs, from unskilled, low-paid jobs that are easy to enter, skilled, better-paid jobs with career opportunities, up to well-paid managerial positions. The major problems in attracting people to the tourism sector are the relatively low prestige of (manual) jobs among Jordanians, and the cultural differences that make some of the workplaces, such as hotels, an alien and very challenging environment.

The ICT sector has also been expanding, though jobs have been generated at a slower pace than expected. However, the sector has the potential to offer high-quality, relatively well-paid, mainly professional or technical jobs. The advantage of the ICT sector, especially in terms of the integration of women, is the wide variety of ICT subsectors, jobs and tasks requiring different sets of skills and predispositions. The character of the sector also enables different working routines to be used (such as teleworking and working from home). Furthermore, while the working environment and culture in the ICT sector can be female-unfriendly (for example, long working hours or working round the clock, male-dominated workplaces and sexist, competitive environments), as has been documented in research carried out in the West, in the Middle East there seems to be less gender stereotyping in the ICT sector. Moreover, women are very open towards ICT, as demonstrated by the statistics on their involvement in IT streams in secondary education and in various subfields of ICT studies. The education and training system is trying to catch up with the emerging demand for new and high-quality skills in both the tourism and ICT sectors, but mismatches still occur. Another issue is the need to equip VET graduates with skills that would facilitate their entry to alternative jobs.

Overall, the increasing educational attainment levels of women and the high rates of female non-participation in the labour market and female unemployment lead to a serious waste of the resources invested in women's education. The situation may also show the limitations of women's right to pursue their individual vision of personal fulfilment and their willingness to contribute to the financial well-being of their families. In addition, it hampers the economic development of the country and of enterprises that lack staff with adequate skills and talents. Greater efforts should be put into facilitating the integration of women into the labour market and encouraging women to enter occupations and sectors where decent jobs have been created. This may entail equipping them with skills that will help them to integrate successfully, identifying ways to make the new jobs and workplaces more attractive and female-friendly, and ensuring that men and women are offered the same opportunities.

The empirical data also show that for young women the school-to-work transition tends to be particularly difficult. At the same time this is a very crucial element of any comprehensive effort to promote women's employment, though it is still little researched. Research should be undertaken to identify the appropriate reforms and incentives that can be implemented or scaled-up in order to increase female labour market participation on both the supply and demand sides, and to facilitate young women's school-to-work transition.

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Women's organisations in Jordan

#### ***Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW)***

The JNCW was created by cabinet decision in 1992 as a semi-governmental institution in order to promote the advancement of women through the mainstreaming of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Initially, it was established to:

- design a national strategy to guide the development of women in Jordan;
- act as a link between the grass-roots and the country's decision-makers;
- create networks among the various parties involved in women's issues in the country;
- orchestrate their efforts and collaborate with them to implement developmental schemes.

In 1996, by cabinet decision, the JNCW mission was broadened to include the following additional tasks:

- identifying priorities, plans and programmes in the public and private sectors, and monitoring their implementation;
- reviewing legislation regarding women, and suggesting amendments;
- lobbying and advocacy;
- examining policies in government offices to determine their gender sensitivity;
- increasing the participation of women in the economy, politics and decision-making;
- formulating strategies to ensure the effectiveness and continuity of the development process.

Princess Basma Bint Talal has been president of the JNCW since 2003. Members include top-ranking officials from the government and civil society, and representatives of NGOs and academic, research and professional institutions.

The JNCW has four permanent committees and also engages specialists in women's issues from the public and private sectors.

The Legal Committee consists of legal experts (both women and men). Since it was formed in 1993, it has reviewed the Labour Law, Retirement Law, Social Security Law, Landlords and Tenants Law, Personal Status Law, Nationality Law, Passport Law, Civil Status Law, Penal Law, Income Tax Law, Civil Service Regulations, and Health Insurance Regulations.

The Network of Focal Points in Government Institutions consists of policy-makers (women and men) in direct contact with ministries. This committee is in charge of monitoring the status of women in the public sector and determining the extent to which the Beijing Platform for Action and the National Strategy for Women are being implemented in the public sector.

The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Coordinating Committee consists of representatives of women's associations in Jordan and coordinates between them in order to avoid duplication, assesses their activities, and report new issues relating to women to the JNCW.

The Professional Women's Committee consists of prominent Jordanian professional women in the fields of education, health, economics and the media. It is in charge of improving the status of working women, raising awareness about rights at work, and establishing a mentoring system for new starters in the various sectors.

#### ***General Federation of Jordanian Women (GFJW)***

The GFJW is a national non-governmental organisation of women's associations and societies that works to enhance the political, economic and social status of women in Jordan. The federation's membership includes over 80 societies, committees and headquarters in each of the 12 governorates, mobilising women's efforts to play an effective role in political

decision-making. It offers educational opportunities and guidance in family welfare and health, advocates legislative reform favouring women and initiates income-generating activities in collaboration with other non-governmental organisations, including the Noor Al Hussein Foundation. The GFJW recently established a National Information Center for Women, which is the first of its kind in Jordan and the Arab world. The centre comprises a research unit, a comprehensive interactive library with audio-visual aids and access to the internet, as well as a consultation and information department. The latter will provide researchers, planners and women with information on national, regional and international organisations concerned with women's affairs.

### ***Jordanian National Forum for Women***

The Jordanian National Forum for Women is one of the largest women's forums in Jordan, and is also headed by Princess Basma Bint Talal. It was established after the Beijing Women's Conference in 1995. It is active in various fields, including parliamentary and municipal elections, campaigns such as the establishment of the Alimony Fund, and the organisation of training.

### ***Princess Basma Women's Resource Centre (PBWRC)***

The PBWRC was established after the Beijing Women's Conference, to act as a support mechanism for women's groups, linking grass-roots and policy-making bodies. The PBWRC, with nine employees, is currently compiling a database on research related to Jordanian women. It conducts training in gender and development as well as workshops and seminars. The centre is also writing a national research agenda on women's issues, and oversees a national information network. It publishes various studies and specialised research reports.

### ***Arab Women Organisation (AWO)***

AWO was founded in 1970 by a group of women activists. It is active at political as well as grass-roots level. Its major areas of activity are income-generating projects for impoverished women, providing services through a network of reproductive health and family planning clinics, and spreading awareness amongst women and young people of both sexes concerning the importance of protecting the environment.

### ***Jordanian Women's Union***

This is another NGO that aims to improve the status of Jordanian women and to promote their rights. It undertakes programmes on income generation and skills training courses for women.

### ***Sisterhood Is Global Institute – Jordan (SIGI/J)***

SIGI ([www.sigi-jordan.org/](http://www.sigi-jordan.org/)) is an international, non-governmental, non-profit-making organisation established in 1998. Its founders include lawyers, jurists and human rights activists working to support and promote women's rights through education, skills training and modern technology. Its programmes include the Human Rights Education Program, based on the Arabic version of the training manual 'Claiming our Rights'; the Combating Violence against Women and Girls Program, based on the Arabic version of the training manual 'Safe and Secure'; the Knowledge Partnership Program, which provides ICT training; and the Cultural Events Program, which highlights the experiences of women leaders.

### ***Business and Professional Women's Club (BPWC)***

This is a small-business counselling association that offers business advice and financial support for women entrepreneurs, as well as a legal consultative service office for women and an information and documentation centre for women's studies. The BPWC's pioneering programmes, which respond to the personal and professional needs of working women from all walks of life, include hot-lines, service centres for small businesses, free legal aid, and personal counselling and technical training for women. The club's activities are not restricted to women, as men actively participate in BPWC's programmes and events, particularly in seminars, lectures and training courses.

There are also many other organisations that are active in the field of women's rights and women's empowerment, including Human Rights Forum for Women's Rights, UNIFEM Western Asia Regional Office, Working Women's Club and Exploitation Of Women Arab WON Solidarity Association.

At governmental level there is a Women's Department at the Ministry Of Social Development, as well as units and teams dealing with gender issues in other ministries, especially the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour.

## **Annex 2: List of stakeholders in the tourism sector**

### ***Jordan Hotel Association (JHA)***

JHA is a non-profit-making association representing over 400 hotels (both classified and unclassified) throughout Jordan. The association was established in 1969 and seeks to promote cooperation and good relations among proprietors in the hospitality industry. It assists members to maintain high standards in their establishments in order to meet international standards, and is an important stakeholder in the tourism industry in Jordan. JHA is a member of the International Hotel & Restaurant Association (IH&RA) and The Arab Hotel & Tourism Association (AHTA), and is the main supporter of the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB) in its activities and projects. JHA is also the major shareholder of the Jordan Applied University College of Hospitality and Tourism Education (JAU), one of the hotel colleges in Jordan.

### ***Jordan Restaurant Association***

Jordan Restaurant Association represents over 550 classified members, including restaurants, fast food outlets, entertainment complexes, coffee shops, pubs, discos and night clubs (rated one–five stars). It is also a member of the International Hotel & Restaurant Association (IH&RA). Created in 2002 by MoTA, the association is supported by classified restaurant owners, and represents and serves Jordan's growing restaurant industry.

### ***Jordan Inbound Tour Operators Association (JITOA)***

JITOA was created in 2003 in recognition of the need to empower this important segment of the industry to play a role in the development of the Jordanian tourism sector, as recommended by the National Tourism Strategy 2004–10. It currently has some 60 members, including individuals and associate members.

### ***Jordan Tour Guides Association (JTGA)***

JTGA is a non-profit-making organisation. It is a mandatory association, established under the Tour Guides Regulations No 65 of 1998, in accordance with Article 14 of the Tourism Law No 20 of 1988. The association aims to organise the tourist guide profession in Jordan and to protect the rights of its members while keeping them updated on the latest information, for example on excavations and events, in the country and the Middle East region. During 2003 the association had around 500 active members, from a total of approximately 800 tourist guides who were qualified to practise the profession in Jordan. JTGA has been responsive to members' needs by providing a range of services, such as membership registration and licensing in cooperation with MoTA, training and health insurance.

## **Annex 3: Projects linking gender and tourism development**

### ***Jordan Tourism Development Project (SIYAHA)***

This project encompassed technical assistance, training and other services to help Jordan implement its National Tourism Strategy, which was designed to double tourism receipts by 2010. It promoted Jordan's competitiveness as an international tourism destination by establishing a strong institutional and regulatory framework that promotes private sector investment, stimulates tourism growth and preserves national tourism assets and the environment. The programme assisted private investors to develop new and comprehensive products and services across the tourism value chain. It also aimed to increase awareness among Jordanians of the importance of the tourism sector, and to position the industry as the employer of choice.

The project was implemented in the period 2005–08 with an estimated budget of USD 17,424,283. The project also aimed for the first time to reach women (offering training at VTC and practical training in hotels, and mediating employment). Initially the percentage of women participating was very high (40%), though it subsequently decreased (to around 20%

of the 700 students). The project design included awareness-raising campaigns such as bringing parents to the hotels to show them that they were respectable places to work. Women were also allowed to retain their traditional clothes and headscarves. In general, women were not willing to accept job offers at hotels following completion of the training. Some of them were placed in jobs in hospitals instead (in kitchens).

### ***Izdihar project***

Izdihar ('prosperity') project was funded by the EC and implemented by the Friedrich Neumann Foundation. Its objective was poverty alleviation through training and employment in the services sector. Around 100 women and 50 men received training (women mainly at local training centres and men on hotel premises). However, only a few women accepted job offers in hotels. The project also had some very interesting features. Firstly, training included a so-called empowerment component, i.e. awareness-raising about employees' rights and responsibilities, personal skills and conflict-resolution skills. Secondly, efforts were made to make families more comfortable with the idea of sending their daughters to work in hotels (visits to the hotel premises; a meeting with the Shari'a professor from Jordan University who explained the permissibility of working in hotels). Thirdly, constant feedback was offered to girls (and employers) during the training and the first few months of employment. For example, if a girl did not turn up for work, the employer could contact the foundation, who would try to find out what the problem was, try to convince the parents to send their daughter to work and instruct the girl in how she should behave towards the employer (including, where appropriate, communicating to the employer her willingness to leave her job). Special arrangements were negotiated with the hotels for trainees (good salaries – approximately JOD 120 – health insurance, career prospects)

## **Annex 4: Projects linking women and ICT**

### ***Achieving E-Quality in the ICT Sector (Phase II)***

1997 Cisco launched the Networking Academy programme to train young people in technical skills. In 2001 Cisco began a partnership with Unifem to create the 'Achieving E-Quality in the IT Sector' programme in North Africa and the Middle East. The programme provides scholarships and training to women in underserved communities. The goal is to increase the number of women contributing to a country's economic development. Since its inception, 1,620 students have participated in the programme, with 44% female enrolment and 1,057 programme graduates.

'E-Quality' is part of Cisco's global 'Gender Initiative'. This initiative is dedicated to achieving three fundamental goals:

- provide access to the internet: create strategies and solutions to increase internet access for women, such as donating networking equipment to global NGOs and non-profit-making organisations in support of sustainable programmes;
- build knowledge: increase access to knowledge and skills through technology-based delivery platforms such as the Networking Academy;
- create careers: connect Cisco volunteers and partners with community organisations to provide mentoring opportunities for girls and women, educate them about career opportunities in technology, and attract and retain women in the ICT industry.

In Jordan, the project has been implemented with the USAID support and has resulted in the graduation of 889 Cisco Certified Network Associates (CCNA). It also includes establishing an 'e-village' initiative in two villages in Northern Jordan to improve the chances of graduates from rural areas to be linked to the ICT job market. The project lasts for four years (2004–08).

## ACRONYMS

DOS	Department of Statistics
ERfKE	Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign direct investment
ICT	Information and communication technology
IT	Information technology
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
MoICT	Ministry of Information and Communication Technology
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MoTA	Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
VET	Vocational education and training
VTC	Vocational Training Corporation

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