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UNWTO
World Tourism Organization

Regional Report on Women in Tourism in the Middle East

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With the kind support of

The Ministry of Tourism of Saudi Arabia



Note on the COVID-19 pandemic

After a decade of continuous growth, a sharp decline in international tourism numbers has been witnessed during 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This report, published in 2020, examines the situation of women in tourism in the Middle East prior to the COVID-19 pandemic using data up to 2019.

As UNWTO continues to work with the tourism sector on recovery measures, the lessons learned from this report and its sister publication the Global Report on Women in Tourism – Second Edition, will be crucial in mitigating the negative effects of the pandemic which have been disproportionately felt by women in the sector.

Further information on the work of UNWTO and the COVID-19 pandemic can be found at www.unwto.org.

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Regional Report on Women in Tourism in the Middle East

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Foreword

The landmark *Regional Report on Women in Tourism in the Middle East* maps the participation of women in the tourism sector across the region prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Compiled with the generous support of the Ministry of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, it forms part of a wider-ranging analysis of women's empowerment in the Kingdom under the G20 2020 Saudi Arabian presidency and within the broader Saudi Vision 2030.

This report presents a detailed picture of the achievements made and the challenges faced by Middle Eastern women in tourism. It also provides a thorough assessment of tourism's contribution towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 – achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls.

The five main areas of focus – employment, entrepreneurship, leadership, education and community – mirror those identified in the second edition of the *Global Report on Women in Tourism* as being key to women's empowerment. The present report complements previous studies carried out at a global level, delving deeper into issues which are specific to the region, offering comparative analysis and detailing a unique and tailored set of recommendations for actors in the Middle East.

The report uses a mixed-methods approach, combining an extensive literature review and qualitative research with available sex-disaggregated data to identify prevailing trends and patterns which are neatly illustrated in an intricate mosaic of case-studies from across the region.

Above all, the *Regional Report on Women in Tourism in the Middle East* is intended to provide a substantive benchmark, aimed at informing further work in the region and equipping stakeholders with the tools they need to empower Middle Eastern women in tourism and bring us closer to a world where gender equality is a reality for all.

Zurab Pololikashvili
Secretary-General, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)



From case study 5.1: Maram Kokandi, general manager of a Radisson hotel in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Executive summary



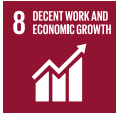












Tourism is a significant economic pillar in many Middle East countries, with nearly 61 million international tourist arrivals in 2019¹ and over USD 80 billion in international tourism receipts.² Through its potential to generate productive employment and decent work, especially for women and youth, tourism is viewed as a key sector for supporting the economic transformation and inclusive development goals of many countries in the region.

The *Regional Report on Women in Tourism in the Middle East* (Regional Report), the first study of its kind at UNWTO, looks at both the key factors and constraints to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in tourism and makes recommendations intended to enhance the contribution of tourism to those goals as embodied in Sustainable Development Goal 5. The geographic scope of the Regional Report includes the 13 member states and 1 Observer in the Middle East that fall under UNWTO's regional grouping: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Yemen and the State of Palestine.

By expanding the data collection and analysis to the Middle East region, the Regional Report complements the findings of the *Global Report on Women in Tourism – Second Edition* (2019). The Regional Report adopts the same conceptual and research framework and explores the same five thematic areas, considered central to exploring women's roles and gender inequalities in the sector, in relation to their goals:

1 World Tourism Organization (2020c), *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer and Statistical Annex*, volume 18 (5), UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/wtobarometereng>.

2 Ibid.

Thematic area	Thematic goal	Related SDG
 Employment	Tourism promotes decent work for women	 
 Entrepreneurship	Women's tourism businesses lead to women's economic empowerment	 
 Education and training	Tourism education and training promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the sector	 
 Leadership	Women are leaders in the tourism sector and are represented and influential in decision-making spaces; and	 
 Community	Tourism empowers women to work for collectively for justice and gender equality	 

Building on the quantitative analysis and literature review conducted for the UNWTO *Baseline Study on Women in Tourism in the Middle East*, the Regional Report carried out 29 key informant interviews with stakeholders in seven countries (see annex 3) using a series of questions developed to assess the extent to which tourism contributes to the thematic goals.

The systematic collection and reporting of sex-disaggregated data on the five thematic areas is an urgent priority. The acute lack of sex-disaggregated data for the tourism sector in the Middle East on every measure underscores a critical need to improve the collection of comparable tourism data and gender statistics across the region. In their stead, the report has relied on proxy and indicative measures; as well as representative quantitative data sets to present the wider context of women's employment, entrepreneurship, education and leadership in the region.

Countries that have collected and reported tourism data disaggregated by sex to UNWTO, Middle East

Egypt
Jordan
Saudi Arabia

Countries piloting the UNWTO Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism initiative (2020), Middle East

Egypt
Oman
Saudi Arabia

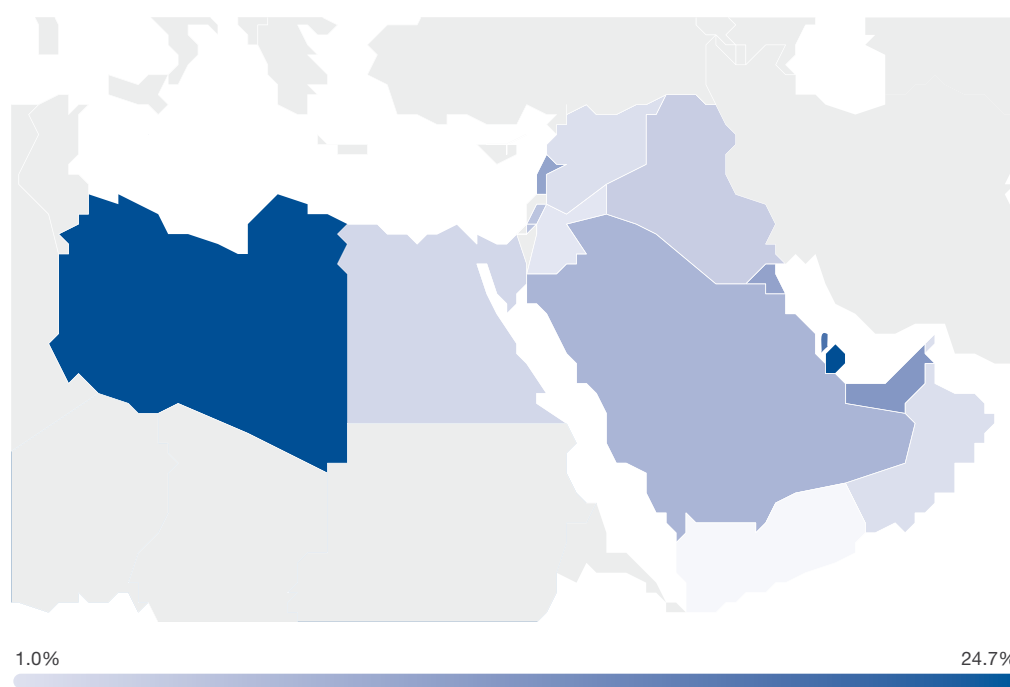
UNWTO is developing the Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST) framework which looks to increase the amount of gender disaggregated tourism data that member states collect and is being piloted in several countries ahead of presentation to the UN Statistical Commission for consideration as an official standard. Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Oman from the Middle East region are currently represented on the MST Working Group of Experts.

Adoption of the Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST) framework can set a foundation for collecting better data on women in tourism, including data on employment, entrepreneurship and tourism education. Sex-disaggregated data is particularly critical for developing evidence-based policies and programmes to strengthen the contribution of the tourism sector to the achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment (SDG 5), as well as other relevant gender targets in other tourism-related SDG goal areas.

The key findings of the Regional Report are:

Women make up just over 8% of the regional tourism labour force³ in the Middle East, although they constitute between 16–17% of workers in the broader economy.⁴

Figure ES.1 **Employees in tourism that are women, 2018 (%)**



Source: International Labour Organization ILOSTAT (2019b), figures detailed in table 2.1.

3 As detailed in chapter 1.1.3, 2018 ILO employment data on ‘accommodation and food service activities’ has been used as a proxy for tourism employment.

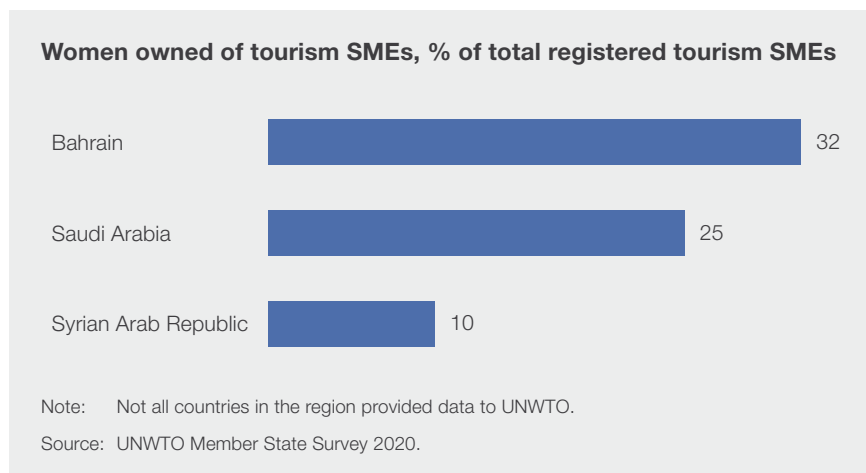
4 International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT (2019b), *Employment by sex and economic activity – ILO modelled estimates, November 2019*, ILO, Geneva (online), available at: <https://ilostat.ilo.org> (24-09-2020).

This proportion stands in marked contrast to the global proportion of women in tourism of 54%.⁵ Whereas tourism is a sector comprised of a higher proportion of women than men around the world, in the Middle East it is a significantly male-dominated one.

A number of reasons account for women's low proportion in tourism employment. Some are sector specific; while others are sociocultural, legal and institutional barriers that, as a whole, impede women's labour force participation in the region, which is one of the lowest globally. It should be noted that there are marked differences between the ways different groups of women interact with the tourism sector as explored further in the thematic chapters of this report. To varying degrees in each country, women's employment in tourism is constrained by the sector's poor image, working conditions, low pay and weak career prospects. Sociocultural and gender norms together with discriminatory laws on women's mobility, restrictions on working hours and occupations also undercut women's economic participation. Aware that women's labour force participation is vital for national economic growth and sustainable development, many countries have implemented legislative reforms to address gaps in labour laws to ensure that working environments are conducive to women's participation.

As tourism is a growing and evolving sector in some countries, the sector may be able to offer greater opportunities for women's entrepreneurship than the broader economy in the near to medium term, if the right policies, incentives and measures are in place to support women's entrepreneurship.

Women in the Middle East do not make up the majority of the self-employed workforce in the broader economy as they do globally. In terms of female entrepreneurship, the region has comparatively lower rates than other world regions. At the same time, women's entrepreneurship – especially in many of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries – appears to be growing at a rapid rate.



Policy and gender-related barriers limit the ability of women to start and grow a business in many countries. Chief among them is access to credit. Access to non-financial services and support has also proven critical to women's entrepreneurial success.

Across the region, there have been a range of positive actions and initiatives from governments, donors, civil society as well as public-private partnerships.

New initiatives to strengthen the ecosystems of support for women's financial inclusion and entrepreneurship hold promise and potential for emerging women entrepreneurs in tourism. It is crucial that policy, program and institutional linkages are made to connect women entrepreneurs in tourism to these vital sources of support and to supply-chains.

5 World Tourism Organization (2019a), Global Report on Women in Tourism – Second Edition, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284420384>, p. 31.

Closer collaboration between tourism education and training institutions and the private sector can better support women’s school-to-work transition and create a pipeline of female workers with the technical and soft skills training needed to keep pace with market needs.

Women’s educational achievements in the Middle East have not translated into overall gains in labour force participation overall, even though women outnumber men in tertiary education in the majority of countries in the region. While regional data on the share of women’s enrollment in and graduation from tourism education programmes remains sparse, research conducted for this report strongly indicates that women’s transition to tourism employment is similarly impeded.

While variation exists across the region, the principal constraints stem from a lack of important soft skills, personal contacts and professional networks as well as discriminatory recruitment practices in the private sector. Additionally, women may be deterred from seeking employment in tourism because of negatively held social and professional views of the sector.

Through partnerships with the tourism private sector, tourism education and training programmes can ensure the relevance and closer alignment of curricula with the evolving needs of the tourism sector, including a focus on skills for the future; provide enhanced access to work placements and mentorship opportunities for women; and raise the profile of work and career opportunities in tourism by way of improving the sector’s image.

Integrating gender equality objectives in tourism national policies and strategies that are aligned with the overarching national policy frameworks and objectives for gender equality are vital for addressing the gender gaps in tourism.

Few tourism strategies in the region adequately incorporate gender equality outcomes or mainstream gender in the policy, budget and institutional framework. It is important to recognize that though policies might appear to be unbiased, men and women have different needs and priorities and therefore require different solutions.



Progress on gender equality and women’s empowerment is best achieved through integrated, coherent and coordinated policies and actions which relies on a range of partnerships with other public sector actors, the private sector and civil society. Crucially, women’s agency and voice must be at the center of all efforts so that policies better respond to their concerns and experiences.

Given the political will and strengthened policy frameworks on gender equality and women’s empowerment in the region, there is ample opportunity for leveraging tourism’s potential for advancing women’s economic empowerment with partners.

Targeted government policies and private sector initiatives are critical for redressing imbalances in women's representation, leadership and decision-making in tourism.

21% of tourism ministers are women in the Middle East

23% of tourism ministers are women worldwide

Source: UNWTO data 2019.

Although there are more women in the Middle East moving into middle and senior management positions in tourism, they are still far outnumbered by men. This is a global reality across all world regions. Leadership development and mentoring programmes are essential for increasing women's leadership and representation in the public and private sector and creating role models enabling other women to come forward.

Women can be empowered economically, politically, psychologically and socially through tourism when links are made with community and civil society organizations.

There has been a growth of alternative tourism models in the region in an effort to diversify tourism offerings and to generate economic benefits for communities. These initiatives have provided women with important opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship and leadership. Women have been able to generate and increase household incomes, as well as to strengthen their status and decision-making in the household. Women's public roles have also been enhanced and redefined, and often have extended beyond the community. Tourism in this context has not only been a source of economic empowerment but one that has also empowered women socially, psychologically and politically. However, women's engagement in community tourism has not lessened the burden of unpaid care and domestic work, which across all contexts is viewed as a core responsibility of women, including by women themselves.

Legal and macroeconomic policies at national level that recognize and redistribute unpaid care work can facilitate women's access to decent work, entrepreneurship and leadership opportunities.



Community

4–6 times more

unpaid care and domestic work undertaken by women compared to men, Middle East

Source: United Nations Economic and Social Council for Western Asia (2020) and United Nations Statistics Division (2020).

Insufficient policy attention has been given to the disproportionate burden of women's unpaid care work. Women in the Middle East perform between four and six times more unpaid care and domestic work than men, a larger gap than in any other world region. The challenge of reconciling family-work responsibilities cut across all thematic areas and is a root cause behind

the low proportion of women in employment, entrepreneurship and leadership. Women's entry into the world of work has not been supported by a redistribution or more equal sharing of gender roles within the home or family.⁶ Unpaid care and domestic work significantly determines whether women enter or stay in employment, the quality of jobs they perform, start a business, advance in their careers or achieve leadership positions.⁷

6 Said-Foqahaa, N. (2011), 'Arab Women: Duality of Deprivation in Decision-making under Patriarchal Authority', *Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World*, volume 9, p. 249.

7 International Labour Organization (2018), *Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work*, ILO, Geneva (online), available at: www.ilo.org (24-09-2020).



From case study 6.1: Woman from Deir El Ahmar preparing traditional cuisine for tourists, Lebanon

Recommendations

The most evident and overarching recommendation to emerge from the research is the urgent need to increase tourism data collection that is disaggregated by sex. UNWTO strongly recommends that member states provide adequate capacity building and funding initiatives to facilitate the implementation of the existing IRTS and TSA statistical standards⁸ which would increase the production and reporting of sex-disaggregated tourism data. In addition, member states in the region are encouraged to join the MST consultation process and consider piloting the framework as the foundation for better data on women in tourism.

The key recommendations presented here are intended to inform regional and national policymakers, as well as other tourism actors on effective strategies and interventions for engaging women more equitably in tourism. The full list of detailed recommendations is available in chapter 7.2.

8 There are currently two international United Nations adopted standards for measuring tourism, both advanced by UNWTO: the International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008 (IRTS 2008) and the *Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework 2008* (TSA: RMF 2008). Each of these recommends statistics on employment in the tourism industries to be disaggregated by sex. For further information see chapter 7.

United Nations (2010), *International Recommendations on Tourism Statistics 2008*, UN, New York (online), available at: www.e-unwto.org/doi/epdf/10.18111/9789211615210.

United Nations; Commission of the European Communities, Eurostat; World Tourism Organization and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010), *Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework 2008*, UN, New York (online), available at: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/epdf/10.18111/9789211615203>.

- Implement core ILO Conventions on gender equality in the world of work, namely:
 - No. 100 on equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value;
 - No. 111 on discrimination in respect of employment and occupation;
 - No. 156 on equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women workers, in particular workers with family responsibilities; and
 - No. 183 on the revision of the maternity protection convention.
- Enhance access to financial and non-financial services; markets; business incubators, networks and technologies for women entrepreneurs.
- Make work placements an integral part of tourism education and training to give young women opportunities to gain practical experience.
- Implement entrepreneurship education and training programmes to enhance women's entrepreneurial capacities and linkages to tourism supply chains.
- Promote tourism as an attractive sector for women and raise awareness of the diversity of jobs and careers available through national public education and media campaigns.
- Integrate gender equality perspectives in national tourism strategies with clear objectives and adequate budgets.
- Promote initiatives to support women's career progression to senior positions, through mentoring and leadership development programmes.
- Ensure women's meaningful participation and decision-making in programme planning, implementation and M&E at national and local levels.
- Regularly collect and report data that is disaggregated by sex on employment in the tourism sector and, where possible, formal and informal tourism employment, gender pay gaps, entrepreneurship, education and training, leadership and decision-making, time use and work-life balance.

Chapter 1: Introduction

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From case study 2.1: Female mountain guide from Lebanon Mountain Trail Association

1.1 Background and approach

1.1.1 Rationale

Tourism has the potential to play a catalytic role in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Tourism can alleviate poverty (SDG 1); contribute to quality education and lifelong learning (SDG 4); bring about economic growth (SDG 8); make cities sustainable and build resilient societies and economies (SDG11); preserve natural and culture heritage (SDG 12), conserve and sustainable use the oceans, seas and maritime resources for sustainable development (SDG 14) and promote cultural understanding and peaceful societies (SDG 16). It can also contribute to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (SDG 5), including gender related targets in other goal areas.

Tourism has long been viewed as an engine of women's economic empowerment. It, more than other sectors, can provide more opportunities for women's participation in the labour force, women's entrepreneurship and women's leadership than other sectors of the economy.¹

The *Regional Report on Women in Tourism in the Middle East* (Regional Report) builds on the initial *Baseline Study on Women in Tourism in the Middle East*, published in 2020, in reviewing the situation of women in tourism and examines the ways in which tourism can be leveraged to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Regional Report is a complementary report to the *Global Report on Women in Tourism – Second Edition* (Global Report II)². In order enable and facilitate comparisons with the findings, the Regional Report applies the same conceptual framework and considers the same five thematic areas central for exploring women's roles and gender inequalities in the tourism sector.³ These are: employment; entrepreneurship; education and training; leadership, policy and decision-making; and community and civil society.

1.1.2 Research objectives

The Regional Report explores **three overarching research questions**:⁴

1. What are the key factors that contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment in the tourism sector?
2. What are the key challenges to gender equality and women's empowerment in the tourism sector?
3. What concrete measures can be put in place to mitigate gender inequality in the tourism sector and harness its potential to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment, as envisaged in the SDGs, particularly SGG 5 (Gender equality)?

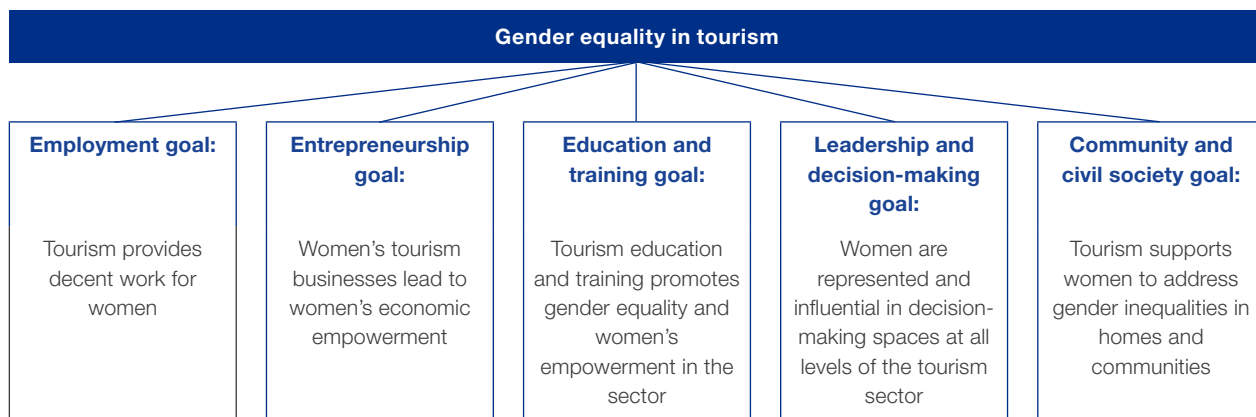
1 World Tourism Organization (2019a).

2 The *Global Report on Women in Tourism – Second Edition* was produced with the kind support of Amadeus, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GMBH, UN Women and the World Bank.

3 World Tourism Organization (2019a), p. 22.

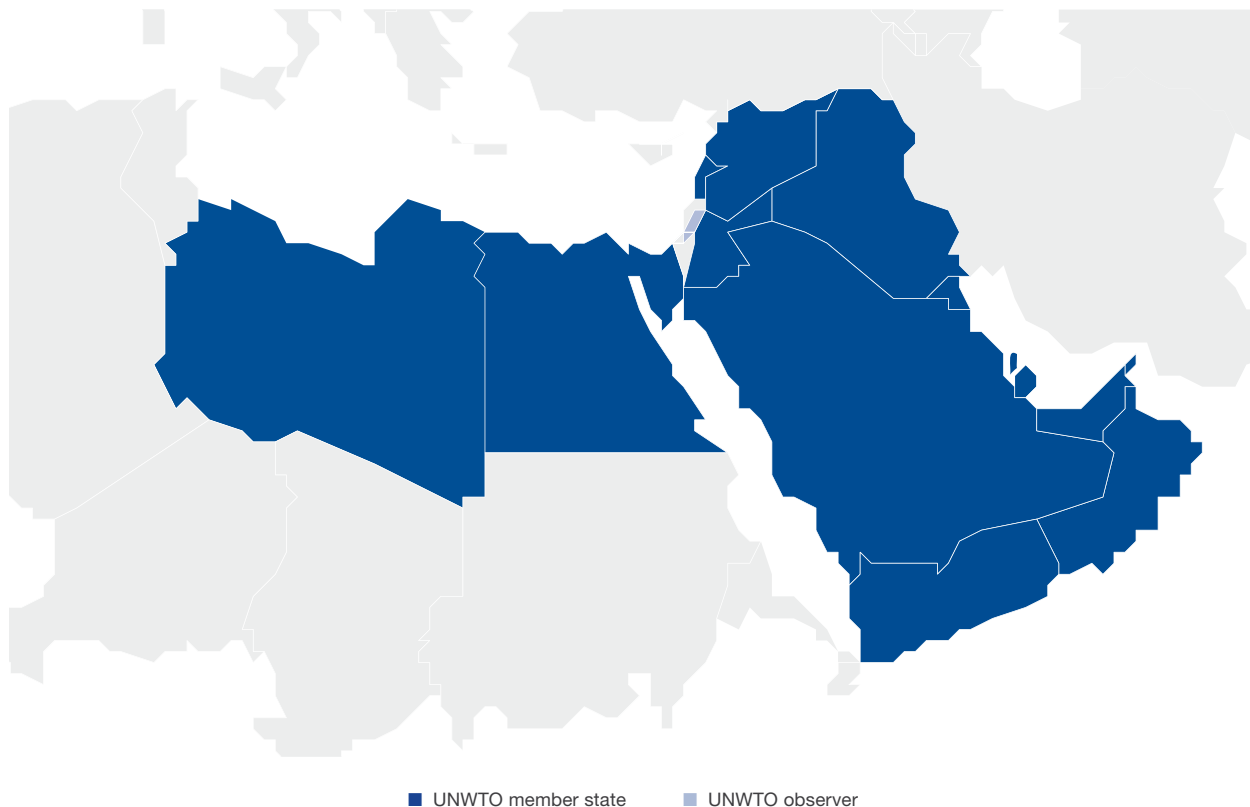
4 Ibid.

Figure 1.1 **Thematic goals of the Regional Report on Women in Tourism in the Middle East**



The geographic scope of the Regional Report includes the 13 member states and 1 Observer in the Middle East that fall under UNWTO's regional grouping, which include Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Yemen and the State of Palestine. It features available, reliable and comparable sex-disaggregated data for all countries in the region, while drawing attention to critical data deficits in the sector that need to be addressed in order to bridge the gender gaps in tourism.

Countries included in the Regional Report on Women in Tourism in the Middle East



Note: The countries included are consistent with the UNWTO Regional Grouping of the Middle East.

1.1.3 Methodology

To respond to the key research questions above, the Regional Report relied on a mixed methods approach – quantitative and qualitative data collection methods – to assess the performance of the sector vis-à-vis the established thematic goals and in relation to relevant and applicable good practice criteria developed to describe what gender equality would look like in each thematic area as detailed in annex 1.

Quantitative methods

The UNWTO statistical database, which compiles official statistics directly reported by countries, has partial, sex-disaggregated data on employment in the tourism industries over the 2014–2018 period for Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. On self-employment in tourism, there is even less data, with only Egypt and Saudi Arabia reporting figures for the years 2014–2015 and 2014–2016 respectively.

Box 1.1

Data disaggregated by sex

The term sex-disaggregated data is used to refer to data that is cross-classified by sex, presenting information in a binary manner, separately for men and women, boys and girls. Sex-disaggregated data reflect roles, real situations, general conditions of women and men, girls and boys in every aspect of society. For instance, the literacy rate, education levels, business ownership, employment, wage differences, dependents, house and land ownership, loans and credit, debts, etc. When data is not disaggregated by sex, it is more difficult to identify real and potential inequalities. Sex-disaggregated data is necessary for effective gender analysis. More recently, organizations have begun to use the term “gender-disaggregated data”, to reflect less binary approaches to gender relations. In practice both terms are being used interchangeably, but while there is currently little systematic data collection disaggregated by binary sex there is even less of non-binary gender categories. This report uses the term “sex-disaggregated data”.

Due to the limited availability of sex-disaggregated data in the tourism sector across many of the 14 countries in the Middle East, the Regional Report drew on other statistical databases that compile data which does not encompass all of the tourism industries⁵ or are not tourism specific but could be considered proxies for tourism.

These databases include:

- **ILOSTAT database:**⁶ ILOSTAT provides sex-disaggregated modelled estimates on the number and percentage of women and men employed at a national level in ‘accommodation and food service activities’, in the services sector and the broader economy. Due to the lack of sex-disaggregated data available for the tourism sector as a whole, the Global Report II tested the

5 The term *tourism industries* includes those industries that typically produce characteristic tourism products and activities. The *tourism industries*, as a collective, are equivalent to the more colloquial term ‘tourism sector’. Tourism industries include: accommodation for visitors; food and beverage serving activities; railway passenger transport; road passenger transport; water passenger transport; air passenger transport; transport equipment rental; travel agencies and other reservation services activities; cultural activities; sports and recreational activities; Retail trade of country-specific tourism characteristic goods; and other country-specific tourism characteristic activities.

6 International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT (2019b).

suitability of the ‘accommodation and food service activities’ category as a proxy for the tourism sector, finding that it can be used as a proxy; therefore, the Regional Report will maintain the use of this proxy.

- **World Bank Gender Statistics Databank:**⁷ The DataBank contains data on key gender topics related to demographics, education, health, labour force and political participation. It draws on ILO modelled estimates for many indicators.
- **World Bank Women, Business and the Law:**⁸ A dataset that measures gender inequality in the law by identifying barriers to women’s economic participation and opportunities for law reform.

The Regional Report also uses data gathered from two surveys it disseminated. The first, UNWTO *Survey on Women’s Involvement in Tourism in the Middle East*, shared with national ministries of tourism in each of the 14 countries, sought to collect additional data on women’s participation in the tourism labour force and in positions of leadership. Seven countries responded.⁹

The second survey developed jointly with the UNWTO Academy, *Survey on Women in Tourism Education and Training*, sought to gather sex-disaggregated data on the rates of women’s enrollment in and graduation from the UNWTO TedQual network members¹⁰ in the region and to understand the support provided to women’s school-to-work transition. Four institutions responded.¹¹

To maintain consistency with the Global Report II and allow for comparative analysis, this report uses 2018 as the reference year.

The Regional Report uses all available data to its full potential.

Qualitative methods

Following the establishment of broad goals for each thematic area detailed in the executive summary, good practice criteria were developed (annex 1) drawing on those included in the Global Report II. These criteria respond to the question, ‘What would gender equality in this thematic area look like?’.

Three countries¹² were selected as a primary focus for qualitative research and a further four countries¹³ as a secondary focus, based on a set of country selection criteria which aim to prioritize

7 World Bank (2018), World Bank Gender Statistics Databank [electronic], World Bank, Washington, D.C.

8 World Bank (2020c), *Women, Business and the Law Data for 1971–2020*, World Bank, Washington, D.C. (online), available at: www.wbl.worldbank.org (24-09-2020).

9 These countries include Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic.

10 The UNWTO.TedQual network includes 93 educational and training centres around the world that have at least one of their programmes awarded with the UNWTO.TedQual certification.

11 The UNWTO TedQual network members which responded are: Ammon Applied University College of Hospitality and Tourism (Jordan), the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts (Jordan), the Higher Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (Saudi Arabia) and Yarmouk University (Jordan).

12 Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

13 Bahrain, Lebanon, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

Global Report on Women in Tourism, Second Edition



The second edition of the *Global Report on Women in Tourism*, published in 2019 in collaboration with UN Women, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), World Bank Group and Amadeus, provides an assessment of tourism around the world's contribution towards United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 – to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women.

The *Regional Report on Women in Tourism in the Middle East* is a complementary report to the Global Report II that uses the same methodological framework, offers a more in-depth regional focus, comparative analysis of the specific challenges and opportunities Middle Eastern women face compared to women in other regions and a targeted set of recommendations.

Source: World Tourism Organization (2019a), *Global Report on Women in Tourism, Second Edition*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284420384>.

countries reporting sex-disaggregated data to UNWTO and ensure that the report focuses on countries where tourism is a large or growing sector (annex 2).

These good practice and country selection criteria informed the selection of case studies featured in the Regional Report and were used to guide the interview process during which 29 key informant interviews were finally conducted with stakeholders in seven countries.

The Regional Report also draws on an extensive review of the available academic literature on gender equality and tourism, as well as the reports and publications of concerned governments, international and regional organizations, such as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission on Western Asia (ESCWA), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations (UN), the World Bank/International Finance Corporation, as well as the work of NGOs, women's organizations and private sector (see bibliography).

1.1.4 Limitations

One of the study's main limitations is the lack of available, national sex-disaggregated data on tourism in many of the thematic areas. The Regional Report therefore fully utilizes the available quantitative information to provide a wider context for understanding the qualitative findings. The lack of sex-disaggregated data in tourism is not specific to the region, however, it should be viewed as an imperative for improving the production of gender data in the tourism sector in the Middle East.

While the Regional Report benefitted from having an in-country UNWTO researcher in Lebanon, much of the primary data collection was conducted remotely due to travel and quarantine restrictions imposed by the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. With remote data collection, there is a higher risk of obtaining insufficient data (quantity and quality) than what is normally the case due to the challenges of validation. It also affected the ability of the primary research to adopt a participatory approach as was used in the Global Report II.

1.2 Regional context

1.2.1 Role of tourism in the Middle East

The Middle East is home to vast natural, cultural, heritage, religious and business tourism assets. While the tourism industry in the region suffered in the aftermath of the Arab Spring upheavals in 2010, recent years (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) were showing signs of a buoyant recovery. In 2019, international tourist arrivals to the Middle East numbered 61.4 million.¹⁴

Tourism is a significant economic pillar in many Middle East countries, with the region recording over USD 80 billion in international tourist receipts in 2019.¹⁵ Tourism has long been an important economic sector and an important source of revenue for countries such as Egypt and Jordan. For the oil economies of the Gulf Cooperation Council, tourism, in the last twenty years, has become one of the lead sectors in national development and economic diversification strategies and plans. Many countries have embarked on a path of economic transformation and more inclusive development to address over-reliance on oil, low productivity sectors, an inefficient public sector, an overdependence on migrant labour, as well as a swelling population of unemployed women and youth.¹⁶ Tourism is key to many of these efforts, including through its potential to generate productive employment and decent work, as evidenced by tourism's centrality in the strategic long-term vision of Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.¹⁷

1.2.2 Regional situation of women and gender equality

All countries in the region have signalled their commitment to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. They have all ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)¹⁸ and are signatories to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Both instruments, normative bedrocks for gender equality and women's empowerment, seek to remove all obstacles to women's participation in all spheres of public and private life so that women have an equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making.

Further, all countries have endorsed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, whose focus on achieving gender equality is comprehensive and multi-dimensional in scope, not only through the stand-alone Sustainable Development Goal

14 Bahrain, Lebanon, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

15 Ibid.

16 According to the Arab Sustainable Development Report, the proportion of migrant workers as a proportion of the total workforce in the Middle East is 40%, ten-fold the global average of 4.2%. See: Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia (2020b), *Arab Sustainable Development Report*, ESCWA, Beirut (online), available at: www.unescwa.org (24-09-2020), p. 107.

17 Government of Sharjah (2018), *Sharjah Tourism Vision 2021*, Sharjah Commerce & Tourism Development Authority, Sharjah. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2017), *Vision 2030*, Council of Economic and Development Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, available at: <https://vision2030.gov.sa> (24-09-2020). Sultanate of Oman (2016), *Oman Tourism Strategy 2040*, Ministry of Tourism of the Sultanate of Oman, Muscat.

18 All countries in the Middle East have ratified CEDAW but with reservations on articles that relate to women's equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and/or related to married women's right to equal acquisition, administration and disposition of property. These reservations have negative implications for women's economic empowerment in the region as it affects women's equal access to resources.

5 (on gender equality and women's empowerment), which addresses the root causes of gender inequality, but through the gender related targets across other goal areas.

These international human rights agreements and development frameworks have helped to mobilize and build commitment on gender equality and women's empowerment as a development priority in national contexts across the region. In the twenty-five years since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Middle Eastern countries have made significant progress in closing the gender gap in health and education, but still lag on advancing women's economic and political rights.¹⁹ The pace of progress has differed among countries, with some, such as the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) making more robust strides in introducing more women into the labour force and in positions of leadership in the public, private and civil society sectors.

Overall, however, and in the aggregate, the Middle East continues to fall behind other world regions in terms of women's agency and participation in economic, political and public life, as will be further discussed in chapters 3, 6 and 7. A web of inter-connected factors continue to constrain women's economic and political participation in the region. These include discriminatory legal regulatory frameworks, social and cultural norms as well as gender stereotyping, unrecognized and unpaid care and domestic work, limited access to relevant training, limited access to and control over resources (i.e. land, property, finance) and the inability of labour markets to generate decent jobs.²⁰

Tourism can empower women, if planned and managed effectively

In other world regions tourism has provided better opportunities for integrating women into the workforce, spurred women's entrepreneurship, and enhanced women's leadership at all levels more than other sectors of the economy.^a According to the World Bank, tourism can serve as a powerful and effective development tool to close the above gender gaps.^b

a) World Tourism Organization (2019a).

b) Twining-Ward, L. et al. (2017), *Twenty Reasons Sustainable Tourism Counts for Development*, World Bank, Washington, D.C. (online), available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/24-09-2020>, p. 5.

19 For more information, see: Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia (2020a), *Arab Report on the Periodic Review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after 25 Years*, ESCWA, Beirut (online), available at: www.unescwa.org (24-09-2020).

World Economic Forum (2020), *Global Gender Gap Report 2020*, World Economic Forum, Geneva.

20 United Nations Women (2020), *Arab States, What We Do, Economic Empowerment* (online), UN Women, New York.

Chapter 2: Employment



Woman working as a security guard at Mövenpick Hotel, Aqaba, Jordan



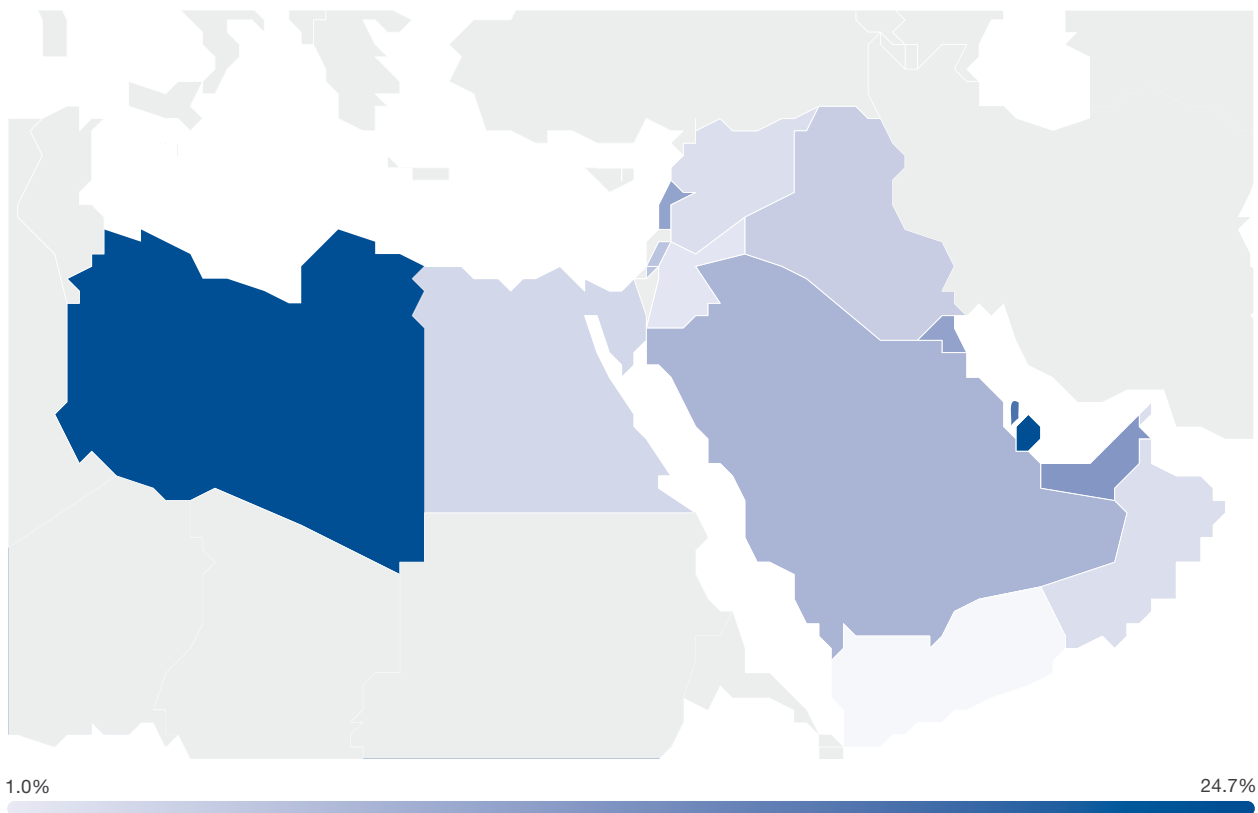
Employment

This chapter looks at the regional share of women's employment in tourism in relation to the global share of women's employment in tourism, as well as in relation to women's labour force participation rates in the broader economy across the region. It also draws on the available research on women's experiences in the hospitality sector to consider issues such as working conditions, occupational segregation, and the gender pay gap. Finally, it discusses the social, structural and legal barriers behind women's low labour force participation in tourism and highlights good practice initiatives to promote women's employment in tourism, including creating more inclusive workplace environments.

Key messages:

- Whereas women make up the majority of the tourism labour force globally (54%), in the Middle East it is significantly male-dominated. Women make up less than 9% of the tourism labour force in the Middle East.
- Sector-specific factors that inhibit women's employment in tourism include working conditions, low pay and few opportunities for career advancement. Other factors include sociocultural norms and gender stereotypes that influence what jobs are appropriate for women; family-work conciliation, an absence of facilitative government and workplace policies, as well as discriminatory laws that shape and impede women's labour force participation.
- Women's employment is concentrated in the hospitality sector where they can be found across different skills levels and professional categories. Low skilled jobs are often filled by migrant workers. Like other world regions, women in the Middle East are under-represented in leadership and decision-making roles.
- In three of the five countries where data is available, women earn more than men in tourism than in the broader economy. However, mean wages in tourism for both women and men are lower than those in broader economy.
- Comprehensive approaches are needed to address barriers to women's employment in tourism, promote inclusive work environments and decent work for women.

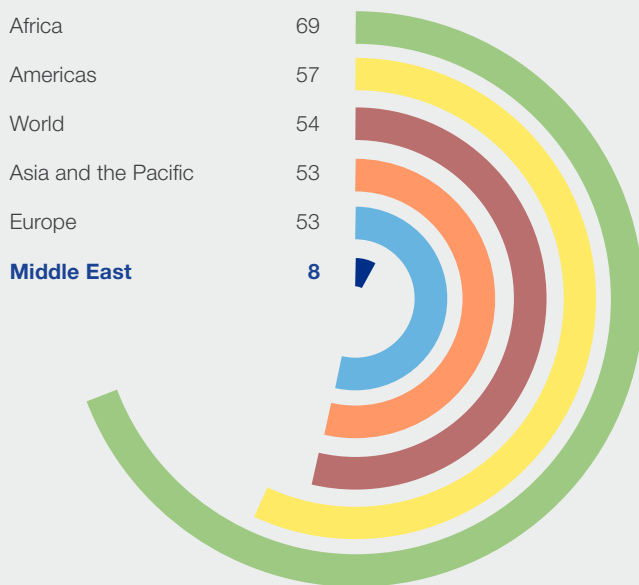
Employees in tourism that are women, 2018 (%)^a



a) As detailed in chapter 1.3, ILO employment data on 'accommodation and food service activities' has been used as a proxy for tourism employment.

Source: International Labour Organization ILOSTAT (2019b), figures detailed in table 2.1.

Employees in tourism that are women by world region, 2018 (%)^a



a) As detailed in chapter 1.3, ILO employment data on 'accommodation and food service activities' has been used as a proxy for tourism employment. World regions are defined according to UNWTO regional groupings.

Source: International Labour Organization ILOSTAT (2019b).

The tourism sector has long been credited with generating millions of direct and indirect jobs, serving as a critical source of employment and a pathway to inclusive development. As a labour-intensive sector, it offers a range of full-time, part-time, casual and informal employment opportunities, low barriers to entry and greater flexibility than many other types of work. It holds vast potential to boost women's employment in a region where unemployment and underemployment levels are high, particularly among women and youth populations, including young women, and where demographic growth is outpacing the economy's ability to keep pace with job creation. Women's employment in tourism can significantly improve not only their own lives but also those of their families and communities.¹

2.1 Statistical overview

While the region has made significant progress in narrowing, if not eliminating the gender gaps in health and education, the Middle East is characterized by the lowest economic participation rates for women globally.² In 2018, women constituted 16.4% of the labour force in the broader economy in the Middle East, ranging from as low as 6.75% in Yemen to as high as 31.5% in Libya.³ Men's labour force participation rate, by way of comparison, was 83.6% in the region (see figure 2.1). Women's unemployment rates are exceptionally high and underscore the persistent disconnect between the relevance of their education and needs of the labour market. According to Gallup survey data, 63.2% of women in the Arab States indicated a preference for working, underscoring the significant barriers they face in finding and taking up paid employment.⁴ A 2015 study covering a number of Arab countries calculated a potential gain of USD 2.7 trillion and a 47% boost in GDP by 2025 if women had access to the same economic opportunities as men.⁵

1 Pritchard, A. (2014), 'Gender and Feminist Perspectives in Tourism Research', in: Lew, A et al. (eds.), *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Tourism*, First Edition, John Wiley & Sons Ltd., New Jersey, p. 316.

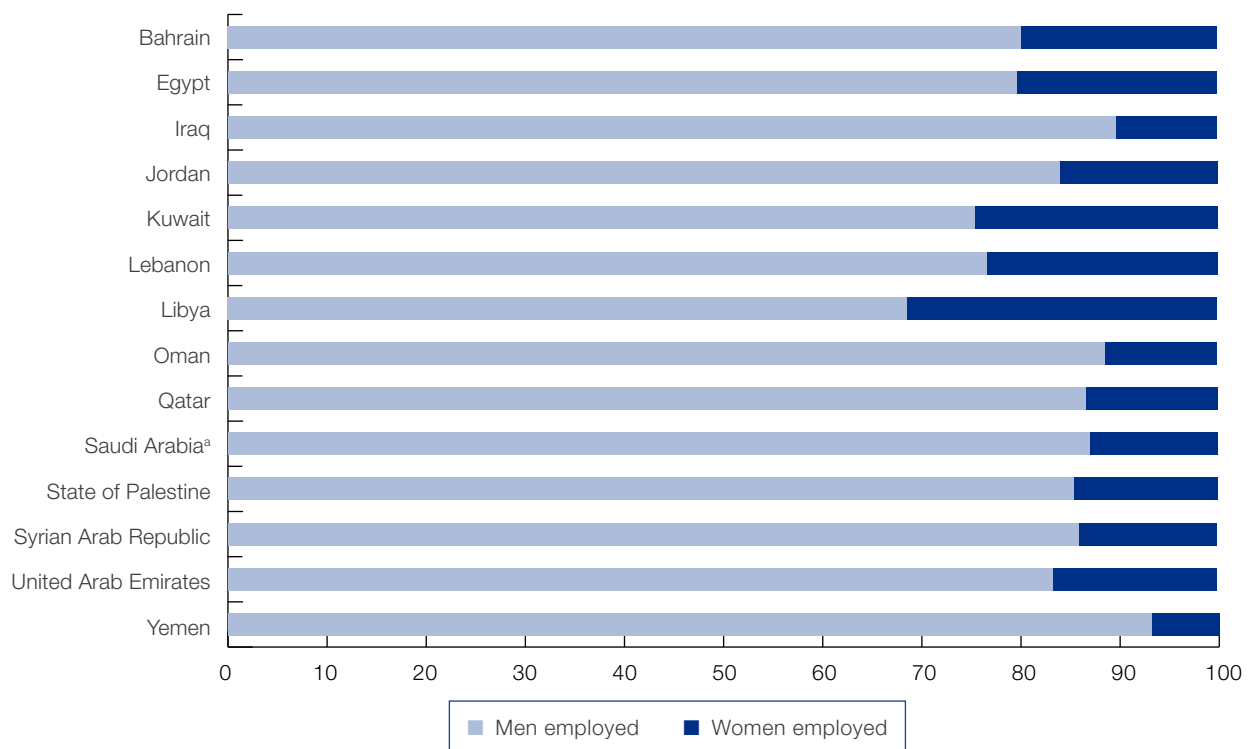
2 For more information, see: Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia (2020a). World Economic Forum (2020).

3 International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT (2019b).

4 International Labour Organization (2019a), *A quantum leap for gender equality: For a better future of work for all*, ILO, Geneva (online), available at: www.ilo.org (24-09-2020), p. 22.

5 McKinsey Global Institute (2015), *The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women's Equality Can Add \$12 Trillion to Global Growth*, McKinsey and Company, New York.

Figure 2.1 **Total labour force disaggregated by sex, 2018 (%)**



a) Data differs from that of the General Authority of Statistics of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which indicates that women constitute 35% of the labour force; while men make up 65%.

Sources: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, General Authority of Statistics (2020b), *The Saudi Woman: A Partner in Success*, A Special Report on the occasion of International Women's Day 2020, General Authority of Statistics, Riyadh.

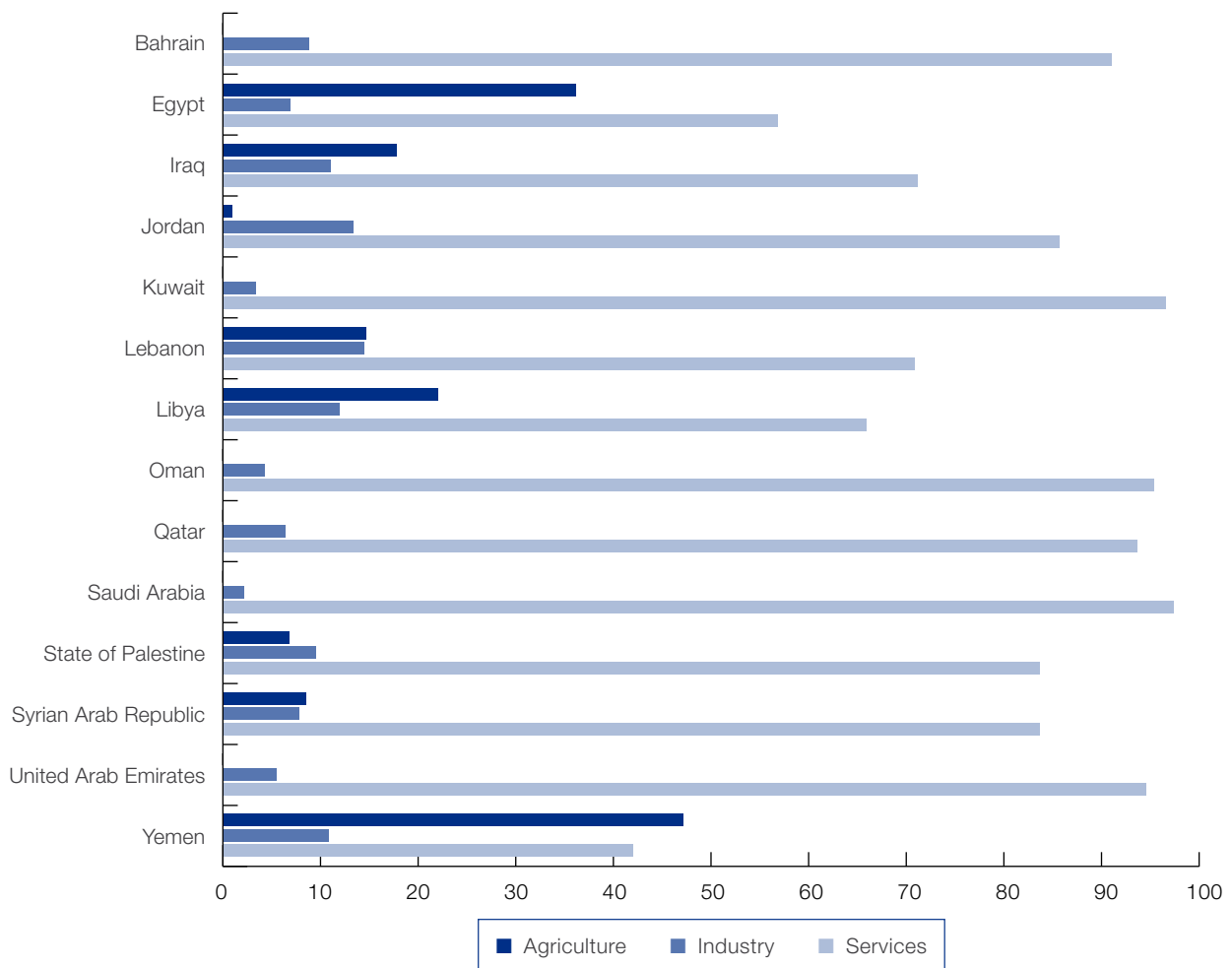
International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT (2019b).

When looking at women's employment across different sectors of the economy, much of it is concentrated in the services sector, as seen in figure 2.2. This includes female-dominated sectors such as education, health and social work, which is consistent with their gender and reproductive roles in the Middle East.⁶ Most women in the region prefer to work in the public sector for its higher wages, better benefits, longer-term security and in some countries for its segregated environment. In fact, one of the reasons that accounts for the relatively higher participation rates of women in Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Libya and the United Arab Emirates is the size and absorptive capacity of the public sector.⁷ Figure 2.2 also highlights that agriculture in Egypt and Yemen continues to be a significant mainstay of women's labour as well.

6 European Training Foundation (2010c), *Women and Work in Jordan: Tourism and ICT Sectors, A Case Study*, ETF, Turin (online), available at: www.etf.europa.eu (24-09-2020), p. 24.

7 Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia (2012), *Addressing Barriers to Women's Economic Participation in the Arab Region*, ESCWA, Beirut (online), available at: www.unescwa.org (24-09-2020), p. 6.

Figure 2.2 **Women's employment by sector, 2018 (%)**



Source: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT (2019b).

Employment in tourism falls under the services sector and is measured in this study using data on 'accommodation and food service activities' as a proxy. As table 2.1 illustrates, women make up less than 9% of the regional tourism labour force in the Middle East.⁸ Despite country variations, this share is significantly lower when compared to their broader inclusion in the labour market. Among the countries with the largest tourism sectors, Egypt and Jordan stand out as having particularly low female employment. Overall, the lowest rates can be found in Yemen, Jordan, followed by Oman and the Syrian Arab Republic. Ongoing conflicts in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen partially explain women's low employment rates in tourism. Qatar is the only outlier where tourism outperforms the broader economy for female labour inclusion by 11.2 percentage points. However, this statistic does not capture the share of national versus foreign women, including migrant workers, in tourism employment. According to ILO, foreign nationals make up the majority of the population in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.⁹

8 International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT (2019b).

9 International Labour Organization (2020e), *Regions and countries, Arab States, Areas of work, Labour Migration*, ILO, Geneva (online), available at: www.ilo.org (24-09-2020).

Table 2.1 **Share of female employees in tourism vs. broader economy, 2018 (%)**

Country	Employees in tourism that are women	Employees in the broader economy that are women	Differential (% points)
Bahrain	18.2	20.1	1.8
Egypt	4.8	20.5	15.7
Iraq	5.7	10.5	4.9
Jordan	2.9	16.2	13.3
Kuwait	11.3	24.7	13.3
Lebanon	11.2	23.4	12.3
Libya	24.4	31.5	7.1
Oman	3.7	11.6	7.9
Qatar	24.7	13.5	11.2
Saudi Arabia	8.1 ^a	19.8 ^a	4.2
State of Palestine	7.2	15.7	8.5
Syrian Arab Republic	3.8	14.3	10.5
United Arab Emirates	12.8	16.8	4.0
Yemen	1.0	6.8	5.8
Total	8.3	16.4	8.1

Notes: As detailed in chapter 1.1.3, ILO employment data on 'accommodation and food service activities' has been used as a proxy for tourism employment.

a) Data featured in the table for Saudi Arabia provided by the General Authority of Statistics of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. ILOSTAT indicates that women represented 8.9% of employment in the tourism sector and 13.1% in the broader economy.

Sources: International Labour Organization ILOSTAT (2019b).

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, General Authority of Statistics (2020b).

The low proportion of women in tourism employment in the Middle East stands in marked contrast to one of the key findings of the Global Report II where women comprise 54% of the tourism workforce globally.¹⁰

2.2 Key issues

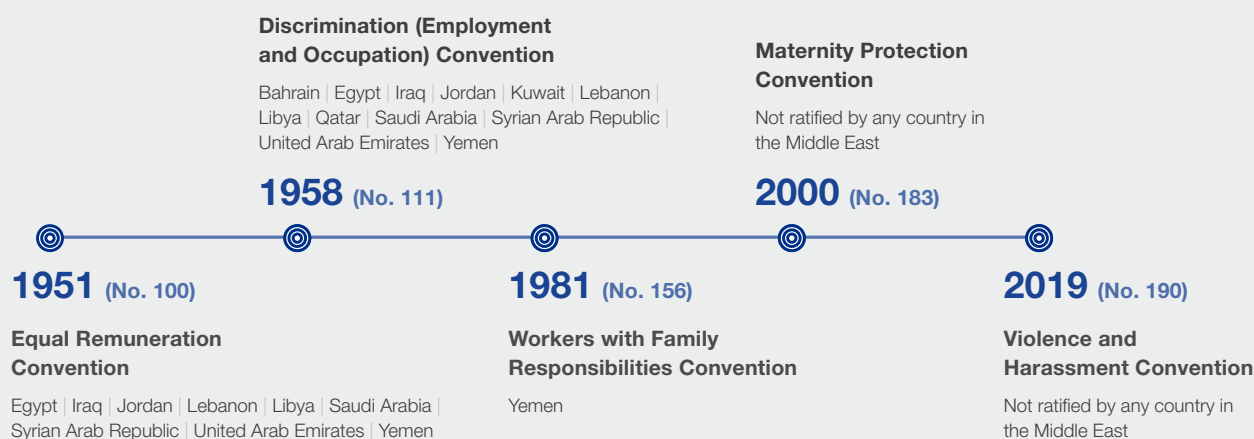
In addition to the lack of data on women's employment in tourism, there has been limited research undertaken on women's employment in tourism in the Middle East. Much of the available research has primarily focussed on women's experiences working in the hospitality subsector, primarily in hotels. The following discussion therefore draws on the literature as well as stakeholder interviews to highlight key issues.

In keeping with broad trends, the majority of the women employed in hospitality were under 30.¹¹ The age profile of the tourism workforce generally skews lower than for the economy as a whole.

¹⁰ World Tourism Organization (2019a), p. 30.

¹¹ European Training Foundation (2010a), *Women and Work: Access, Limitations and Potential in Tourism and ICT, Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia*, ETF, Turin (online), available at: www.etf.europa.eu (24-09-2020), p. 43.

Ratification of ILO Conventions related to Gender Equality in the Middle East



Source: International Labour Organization (2020d), *NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards*, ILO, Geneva (online), available at: www.ilo.org (01-12-2020).

Most tourism workers are younger than 35 years, and half of them are 25 or under.¹² In the Middle East, as women get married and start families, they tend to leave the labour market.

Hotels and other organized accommodation (3-star hotels and above) were the main employers of women in Egypt and Jordan.¹³ Saudi women tend to predominate in the food and beverage sector, where the majority of tourism jobs are.¹⁴ Similar to other world regions, working conditions in the tourism sector in the Middle East include long working hours, low pay and limited opportunities for career advancement. Surveyed women in Saudi Arabia found the long hours and low salaries a barrier to taking up employment in the hospitality sector.¹⁵

Tourism and hospitality have long been vertically and horizontally gender segregated. Globally, women tend to be overrepresented in lower skilled and lower paid occupations and are under-represented in decision-making roles.¹⁶ Occupational segregation reinforces prevailing norms

- 12 International Labour Organization (2017), *Tourism at a Glance: Fact Sheet*, ILO, Geneva (online), available at: www.ilo.org (24-09-2020).
- 13 European Training Foundation (2010b), *Women and Work in Egypt: Tourism and ICT Sectors, A Case Study*, ETF, Turin (online), available at: www.etf.europa.eu (24-09-2020).
European Training Foundation (2010c).
European Training Foundation (2010a).
- 14 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Tourism (2020), *Tourism Human Capital Development Strategy 2020 -2030 for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh.
- 15 Alismail, S. (2015), *Female Employment in Hotels in The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates: Barriers, Enablers and Experiences of Work*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, p. 118.
- 16 Hutchings, K. et al. (2020), 'Segregation of Women in Tourism Employment in APEC region', *Tourism Management Perspectives*, volume 34, pp. 1–15.
Pritchard, A. (2014).
Rinaldi, A. and Salerno, I. (2019), 'The tourism gender gap and its potential impact on the development of the emerging countries', *Quality & Quantity*, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-019-00881-x>.

and gender stereotypes, increasing women's vulnerability to job shortages and low wages.¹⁷ Occupational segregation also deprives women of female role models. In a study of women in tourism employment in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) region, the authors argue that nurturing female role models and promotion opportunities has the potential to redress women's segregation.¹⁸

The degree of occupational segregation of women in tourism employment appeared to vary in the Middle East. Women in the Middle East tend to work or look for a job in the formal labour market only after they have completed upper-secondary or post-secondary education, and in particular higher education.¹⁹ In Jordan, for example, a majority (62%) of women are employed in high-skill professional occupations across the economy.²⁰ This may have the paradoxical effect of excluding women who do not have an education from accessing formal employment in the tourism sector.²¹

Women working in tourism were found to be relatively well educated and worked across different occupational categories in Egypt²², Jordan²³ as well as in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which included both nationals and foreign nationals.²⁴ In Egypt, for example, the research found a relatively high percentage of women in managerial positions in tourism: Of the 100 tourism companies surveyed, women made up almost 24% of middle managers and 15% of high-level managers.²⁵ In Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, women were also found in top management positions.

Nevertheless, men still far outnumber women in decision-making positions. In some countries, foreign labour – both men and women – tend to fill management and more senior positions. Interviews conducted for this report in Oman suggested that Omani women were not only competing with Omani men but also with the expatriate labour force, especially for employment in international hotel chains.

This is beginning to change across the region as governments “nationalize” their workforces to address the high levels of women's and youth's unemployment. Albeit few in number, Arab women in Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Oman have been hired into General Manager positions with international hotel chains, such as Movenpick Hotel and Resorts and the Radisson Hotel Group. In addition, Oman and Saudi Arabia are investing in national leadership and training programmes aimed at

17 Hutchings, K. et al. (2020), p. 10.

18 Ibid., p. 12.

19 European Training Foundation (2010b), p. 25.

20 See: International Labour Organization (n.d.), *Decent Work Programme: The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (2018–2022)*, ILO, Geneva, p. 8.

21 Ibid., p. 49

22 According to the surveyed tourism companies, in Egypt, 48% of the women held a university degree, 43% had received a vocational education; 8% had completed general secondary education. Only 2% had a primary education or less. In Jordan, 34% of women had earned university education; 25% completed a vocational education; and 35% had secondary general education. For more information, see:

European Training Foundation (2010b).

European Training Foundation (2010c).

23 European Training Foundation (2010a), p. 44.

24 Alismail, S. (2015), p. 216. Given the relatively small sample size (n=375 women), this finding is not representative and therefore not generalizable.

25 European Training Foundation (2010b), pp. 29–30.

increasing the proportion of women (and in the case of Oman, men too) in executive and senior leadership positions in the public and private sector.

Few Arab women were found in non-professional jobs, such as in room service or as cleaners. In some countries, such jobs are not only poorly paid, but are considered inappropriate.²⁶ These low-skilled jobs are often filled by migrant workers. The Middle East region is particularly dependent on migrant labour, especially in sectors such as hospitality and construction, or as domestic workers.²⁷ In 2019, according to the United Nations Department of Economic Affairs, there were 35 million international migrants in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, and Jordan and Lebanon; 31% of whom were women.²⁸ The majority of these workers are from Asia, Africa, notably East Africa, and Egypt. Migrants in these countries are governed by the “kafala” sponsorship system which favors the rights of the employer over that of workers, leaving migrants vulnerable to abuse and exploitation in the workplace, including lower wages, unfair working and poor living conditions.²⁹

Gender inequalities become more pronounced when they intersect with issues such as race, ethnicity and migration that disadvantage women in vulnerable situations. In order for the region to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, access to decent work opportunities must be ensured for women in vulnerable situations such as those in marginalized racial or ethnic groups, migrant workers, women in remote areas and women with disabilities.

Employment in tourism in the Middle East is strongly associated with working in the hospitality sector; and in some countries, that is where the majority of the tourism labour force is employed. Even the research literature itself on gender equality and tourism in the Middle East has a more prevalent focus on the hospitality sector. Stakeholders argued that there was a need for governments to create and promote more diverse job opportunities for both men and women by broadening tourism offerings. This can also expand public awareness about the different jobs the sector has to offer.

Snapshot 2.1 **Saudi Tour Guides Association, Saudi Arabia**

The Saudi Tour Guides Association, as the first specialized professional association on tour guidance, develops national standards for the profession to ensure quality; builds the capacity and upgrades the professional level of tour guides; and undertakes research in order to improve the working environment for male and female tour guides on ongoing basis.

Since 2018, when Saudi women were able to become licensed tour guides, the Saudi Tour Guides Association has been committed to increasing their numbers and building their capacities in the profession. It has trained four women to conduct Training of Trainers courses as well as partnered with the Princess Noura Bint Abdul Rahman University, the largest women’s university in the world, to support tour guides acquire essential language skills for the job. The Association is also looking to create links with regional and international networks of women tour guides to facilitate the sharing of experiences and knowledge.

In addition, the Saudi Tour Guides Association values women’s greater involvement in decision-making. Three women have recently been elected to the board. This will help to ensure that discussions and decisions better reflect the priorities and issues of Saudi women tour guides and support their professional development needs and growth.

Source: Interview with Mr. Sattam Al Balawi, Saudi Tour Guide Association, 25 October 2020.

26 European Training Foundation (2010c), p. 5.

27 International Labour Organization (2020e).

28 Ibid.

29 Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia (2020b), p. 110.

Tour guidance in the region has traditionally been and in some countries remains a male-dominated field, much like other world regions. Egypt might be the exception as tour guidance was initially an area where women prevailed.³⁰ As part of Saudi Arabia's efforts to increase women's employment, including in the tourism workforce, Saudi women are now able to become licensed tour guides.

There is little sex-disaggregated data and research on women and tour guidance in the Middle East, but in interviews, some stakeholders raised the issue that the occupation remains constrained by sociocultural and gender norms, as well as seasonal income, as case study 2.1 illustrates.

Case study 2.1 **Jacky Khairallah, Local guide, Lebanon Mountain Trail**



Jacky Khairallah is a local guide on the Lebanon Mountain Trail, a 292-mile-long hiking trail linking Lebanon's high mountain villages. To become certified, Ms. Khairallah attended a ten-day training session held by the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association that specifically focused on imparting information on the trails and side trails of her village, Mtein. As a local guide, she introduces visitors to Mtein's way of life, its dialect, stories, myths and truths as well as its local fauna, flora and other cultural treasures. For Ms. Khairallah, being a local guide has allowed her to connect with other nature enthusiasts from around the world. It has also given her the confidence to lead and to take up a more active role in her community.

Her journey has also come with challenges. Finding a balance between guiding and her family responsibilities, especially as a mother of four children, has been one. Like many women in the Middle East, unpaid care and domestic work remains women's primary responsibility, even when she takes up a job. Times when she was unable to leave her children at home, Ms. Khairallah would bring them to her training sessions. And when she started to guide and spent long hours, sometimes days, away from home, she still made sure to complete the housework and prepare all the meals beforehand. Low pay was another issue, however for Ms. Khairallah, it was outweighed by her sense of personal fulfillment and passion for her work and the environment.

Source: Interview with Ms. Jackie Khairallah, Mtein, Lebanon, 16 October 2020.

See also: www.lebanontrail.org.

While the research literature did not measure the gender wage gap, it did suggest that women in Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates generally earned less than men for work of equal value.³¹ The available data, as shown in table 2.2, paints another picture, however. In three of the five countries – Jordan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia – women earn considerably more than men in tourism than in the broader economy. Only in Egypt, the gender wage gap is greater in tourism than in the broader economy.

In the Middle East, employment in tourism is comparatively lower paid for both men and women than mean wages across the broader economy. In the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, in particular, the tourism sector competes with salaries in the public and private sectors, especially with oil and gas. Not only are these jobs better remunerated, working conditions are less onerous and have set hours.

30 Interview with Dr. Manal Kelig, Co-founder, Great Wonders of Egypt Travel Company, 22 October 2020.

31 European Training Foundation (2010a), p. 54.

Alismail, S. (2015), p. 67.

Table 2.2 **Gender pay gap in tourism in countries with available data, 2014–2018 (%)**

Country	Women's earnings as percentage of men's earnings		Difference
	Broader economy	Accommodation and food services	
Egypt	84.0	74.8	-9.1
Jordan	90.3	111.7	21.4
Qatar	86.2	139.6	53.4
Saudi Arabia	93.6	126.1	32.5
United Arab Emirates	70.1	95.3	25.2

Note: As detailed in chapter 1.1.3, ILO employment data on 'accommodation and food service activities' has been used as a proxy for tourism employment.

Source: International Labour Organization ILOSTAT (2019b).

There are a number of factors that explain the low proportion of women's employment in tourism in the Middle East. To varying degrees in each country, women's employment in tourism is constrained by the sector's poor image, working conditions, relatively lower pay and weak career prospects. The qualitative research undertaken for this report however indicated that social perceptions and views are changing.

Women's choice of employment is also influenced by having a job in the same area of residency.³² In tourism, working locations may be far from residential areas with implications for time and travel costs for women. In Egypt for example, because touristic sites are far from population centers, women might be required to live away from home, which is discouraged, especially for women living in more conservative areas.³³

Sociocultural norms and gender stereotypes that define what jobs or careers are acceptable, also narrow women's employment options, contributing to women's overall low participation rates in the tourism sector.³⁴ Family members play a very large role in either encouraging or discouraging women to pursue a particular educational or career path. In some Arab countries, social systems of male guardianship require women to defer to males in the family on life choices and engagement in public activities.³⁵ The influence of such norms varies among countries, as well as within countries, particularly between urban and rural and more remote areas, with rural / remote areas being more conservative.

In addition, there is also a raft of discriminatory laws across the Middle East that shape and impede women's labour force participation. As table 2.3 highlights, there are laws that still restrict women's mobility in eleven countries, with the exception of Lebanon, Libya and Saudi Arabia; from working at night (in nine of the fourteen countries); and from working in certain professions (in seven of the fourteen countries).³⁶

32 Ismail, A. et al. (2017), *Global Entrepreneurship Monitoring Middle East and North Africa Report 2017*, Global Entrepreneurship Research Association, London, p. 45.

33 Interview with Vice Minister, Egypt Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism and Executive Director, National Council on Women, Egypt.

34 Alismail, S. (2015), p. 67

35 Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia (2020b), p. 77.

36 World Bank (2020c).

Table 2.3 Legal framework for women in the Middle East, 2020

Theme	Sub-question	Bahrain	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Kuwait	Lebanon	Libya	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	State of Palestine	Syrian Arab Republic	United Arab Emirates	Yemen
Mobility	Can a woman travel outside her home in the same way as a man?						■	■			■				
Workplace	Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender?	■	■	■			■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■
	Is there legislation on sexual harassment in employment?	■	■	■					■		■			■	
Pay	Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?			■	■			■			■				
	Can women work the same night hours as men? ^a						■	■		■	■			■	
	Are women able to work in the same industries as men? ^b			■				■	■	■	■			■	■
Parenthood	Is paid maternity leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers?			■				■					■		
	Does the government administer 100% of maternity leave benefits?				■										
	Is there paid paternity leave available to fathers?	■			■						■				
	Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?	■	■				■	■			■		■	■	

Yes
 No

a) Table differs from that in *Women, Business and the Law 2020*. Saudi Labour Law, Article 150, that limited the time women could work at night was abolished by Royal Decree on 26/08/20.

b) Table differs from that in *Women, Business and the Law 2020*. Saudi Labour Law, Article 149, that prohibited women from working in dangerous industries was abolished by Royal Decree on 26/08/20.

Source: World Bank (2020c), *Women, Business and the Law 2020*, World Bank, Washington, D.C.

Only Iraq, Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic provide women with the minimum, ILO-recommended 14 weeks of maternity leave. Moreover, in all countries but Jordan, the onus of administering and paying for maternity leave falls on employers. This creates a disincentive for private sector employers to recruit or hire women. Further, as shown in the table 2.3, in seven countries, employers are not legally prevented from dismissing pregnant workers.

Sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as on public transport is another major issue that women face³⁷ and which significantly discourages women's participation in the labour market. The absence of other facilitative infrastructure, such as the lack of affordable childcare and/or safe transport, present additional barriers.

Family-work conciliation is a significant challenge for the majority of women and one that was repeatedly cited in the literature and in stakeholder interviews. Women's entry into the world of work has not been supported by a redistribution or more equal sharing of gender roles within the home or family.³⁸ In the Middle East, the burden of unpaid care and domestic work falls heavily on women and girls, including working women.³⁹ Unpaid care and domestic work significantly determines whether women enter or stay in employment, the quality of jobs they perform, advance in their careers or achieve leadership positions.⁴⁰ Employers may discriminate against women because they are generally seen as less committed to their work because of the sociocultural prioritization and value given to their roles as wives and mothers.

Many governments, however, have introduced or amended legislation to eliminate gender-based discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the workplace. As shown in table 2.3, eleven countries have laws that prohibit gender-based discrimination in employment, and more than half have criminalized sexual harassment in workplace. Enforcement of such legislation is associated with a reduction in gender inequality and discrimination in the labour market.⁴¹

Iraq, Jordan, Libya and Saudi Arabia have also put in place equal pay legislation. Similar to other regions, monitoring and enforcing their implementation presents a challenge. For example, research on women and tourism in Egypt found that around 57% of tourism companies continue to specify the gender of their preferred candidates in job vacancies even though legislation prohibits it.⁴²

Box 2.1 **Definition of decent work**

Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

Source: International Labour Organization (2020c), *Decent Work*, ILO, Geneva (online), available at: www.ilo.org (14-12-2020).

Fostering equitable and inclusive national and workplace policies and environments are instrumental for ensuring equal opportunities to decent work for men and women. The

37 European Training Foundation (2010a), p.11.

38 Said-Foqahaa, N. (2011), p. 249.

39 Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia (2020b), p. 77.

40 International Labour Organization (2018), p. xxvii.

41 Malta, V. et al (2019), *Informality and Gender Gaps Going Hand in Hand*, IMF Working Paper 19/112, International Monetary Fund, Washington, D.C.

42 European Training Foundation (2010b), p. 34.

following examples highlight two initiatives – one government, the other a public-private partnership the other a public-private partnership THAT EMPLOY THE comprehensive approaches comprehensive approaches to address barriers to women’s employment, promote inclusive work environments and decent work for women as case study 2.2 and snapshot 2.2 illustrate.

Case study 2.2 Strategic Initiatives to Increase Women’s Economic Participation, Saudi Arabia

Empowering Saudi women across all sectors and harnessing their talents and energies for national development and economic growth is a cornerstone of achieving Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030. By 2030, Saudi Arabia aims to boost women’s participation in the labour force to 30%. To achieve this goal, Saudi Arabia has spearheaded a number of initiatives to create an enabling environment for women’s economic inclusion. It has set out to:

1. Ensure women’s voice in policy and decision-making by supporting and increasing women’s leadership in the civil service as well as in positions of middle and senior management;
2. In parallel to employees’ on-the job training, provide training that is aligned to labour market requirements and targeted to unemployed women.;Provide safe, high quality and affordable transport services to and from the workplace (Wussool programme);

3. Provide affordable childcare services for working women (Qurrah programme); and
4. Raise awareness of the importance of women’s participation in the labour market through media and public education campaigns highlighting role models and success stories.

Lessons learned

This case study highlights the importance of addressing gender equality and women’s empowerment through a comprehensive policy approach. By addressing barriers to women’s employment, including family-work conciliation and transport issues, Saudi Arabia has increased women’s labour force participation by almost five percentage points, from 17.7% in 2016 to 23.2% in 2019 and is on track to meet its target by 2030.

Sources: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, General Authority of Statistics (2020b), *The Saudi Woman: A Partner in Success, A Special Report on the occasion of International Women’s Day 2020*, General Authority of Statistics, Riyadh, OCEANX and Socrates (2020), *Report on Women in the Saudi Labour Market*, OCEANX, Riyadh.

Snapshot 2.2 Gender Equality Seal, Egypt

In May 2019, the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism, under the leadership of the first female Minister of Tourism, launched the Gender Equality Seal in the tourism sector, in partnership with the Egyptian Federation of Chambers of Tourism and the National Council of Women. Initially supported by the United Nations Development Programme, the Gender Equality Seal in Egypt is now being supported by the World Bank.

The Gender Equality Seal, a certification programme, seeks to close the gender gap in employment in tourism by increasing the number of women working in the sector and improving the working environment for women. Adhering to principles of diversity management, non-discrimination in staff recruitment and training, and zero-tolerance for violence and sexual harassment in the workplace, the Gender Equality Seal tackles the key areas of:

- Eliminating gender-based pay gaps;
- Increasing women’s roles in decision-making;
- Enhancing work-life balance;
- Enhancing women’s access to non-traditional jobs;
- Eradicating sexual harassment at work through awareness raising and communication campaigns; and
- Using inclusive, non-sexist communication.

Working with mega hotel chains and tourism companies, the programme will initiate a series of internal and external audits to diagnose gender equality gaps and challenges, and support the development of corporate action plans and timelines to address them. The certification process allows companies to review workplace policies and dynamics vis-à-vis gender equality and women's empowerment, and to evolve a more inclusive work environment, especially for women.

In March 2020, the Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism awarded the Gender Equality Seal to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (MSMEDA) in recognition of its critical support to women entrepreneurs and contributions to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Gender Equality Seal is an effective instrument for promoting gender equality in the workplace. Private companies in Latin America that have implemented the initiative, report numerous advantages, including greater staff performance and commitment and a positive public image as a leader in corporate responsibility.

Source: State Information Service (2019), *Tourism ministry announces steps to earn UNDP's Gender Equality Seal*, SIS Egypt, Cairo (online), available at: www.sis.gov.eg (24-09-2020).

National Council on Women, Egypt (n.d.), *'Gender Mainstreaming Efforts in Egypt'*, NCW, Cairo.

United Nations Development Programme (n.d.), *UNDP's Gender Equality Seal Certification Programme for Public and Private Enterprises: Latin American Companies Pioneering Gender Equality*, UNDP, New York.

The ratification and application of International Labour Organization Conventions, known as the "gender equality conventions", can further enable inclusive and safe workplace environments for women (see box 2.2). While several countries in the region have ratified ILO Conventions No. 100 and No. 111, only one (Yemen) has ratified ILO Convention No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities; none have signed onto the ILO Convention No. 183 on Maternity Protection, even though national labour laws in some countries do prohibit the dismissal of pregnant workers.

Box 2.2

International Labour Organization Gender Equality Conventions

The four International Labour Conventions of particular relevance to gender equality are the:

- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111);
- Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100);
- Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156); and
- Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183)

In 2019, the ILO adopted the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) which, for the first time in international law, includes the specific recognition of the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment. Together with its associated recommendation 206, Convention 190 sets out a framework for action to prevent, remedy and eliminate violence and harassment in the world of work, including gender-based violence and harassment.

Source: International Labour Organization (2020e).

International Labour Organization (2020d), *NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards*, ILO, Geneva (online), available at: www.ilo.org (01-12-2020).

International Labour Organization (2020b), 'Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206 at a glance', *Policy Brief No. 1*, ILO, Geneva.

2.3 Conclusion

The tourism sector in the Middle East is overwhelmingly male-dominated. Women make up just over 8% of the tourism labour force⁴³ in the Middle East, although they constitute between 16–17% of workers in the broader economy.⁴⁴ This stands in marked contrast to the global proportion of women in tourism where women constitute a majority (54%) of the tourism workforce compared to their share in the broader economy (39%).⁴⁵

While tourism can provide greater employment for women than the broader economy, women in the Middle East are not availing themselves of these opportunities. A number of reasons account for women's low proportion in tourism employment. Some are sector specific; while others are sociocultural, legal and institutional barriers that, as a whole, impede women's labour force participation in the region, which is one of the lowest globally. To varying degrees in each country, women's employment in tourism is constrained by the sector's poor image, working conditions, low pay and weak career prospects.

Sociocultural and gender norms together with discriminatory laws on women's mobility, restrictions on working hours and occupations also undercut women's economic participation. Moreover, women's employment has not been supported by facilitative government and workplace policies that has allowed them to balance or reconcile their family – work responsibilities. Aware that women's labour force participation is vital for national economic growth and sustainable development, many countries have implemented legislative reforms to address gaps in labour laws to ensure that working environments are conducive to women's participation.

The degree of occupational segregation in women's tourism employment in the Middle East varies slightly from the global pattern where women are over-represented in lower skilled and lower paid occupations. In the Middle East, women can be found across different skills levels and professional categories, including middle management. Moreover, the Middle East is a region which is highly dependent on migrant labour in sectors such as hospitality where low-skilled jobs are carried out by migrant workers. Like other world regions, however, women are under-represented in leadership and decision-making roles.

Like other world regions, women's employment in the Middle East is concentrated in the hospitality sector, particularly in hotels. In many countries tourism jobs are competing with the public sector, though those jobs are shrinking, especially for women, as well as more lucrative economic sectors, such as oil and gas. Greater efforts are needed to diversify or promote other occupational categories in tourism which would in turn help to change socially held views of tourism employment.

43 As detailed in chapter 1.1.3, ILO employment data on 'accommodation and food service activities' has been used as a proxy for tourism employment. Consistent with the UNWTO *Global Report on Women in Tourism – Second Edition*, the data reference year for the Regional Report is 2018.

44 International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT (2019b).

45 World Tourism Organization (2019a), p. 31.

A portrait of Fatima Alzoubi, a woman wearing a white hijab and a black dress with vibrant, colorful embroidery. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Chapter 3: Entrepreneurship

Fatima Alzoubi, founder of the “House of Hospitality” in the year 2000, Jordan

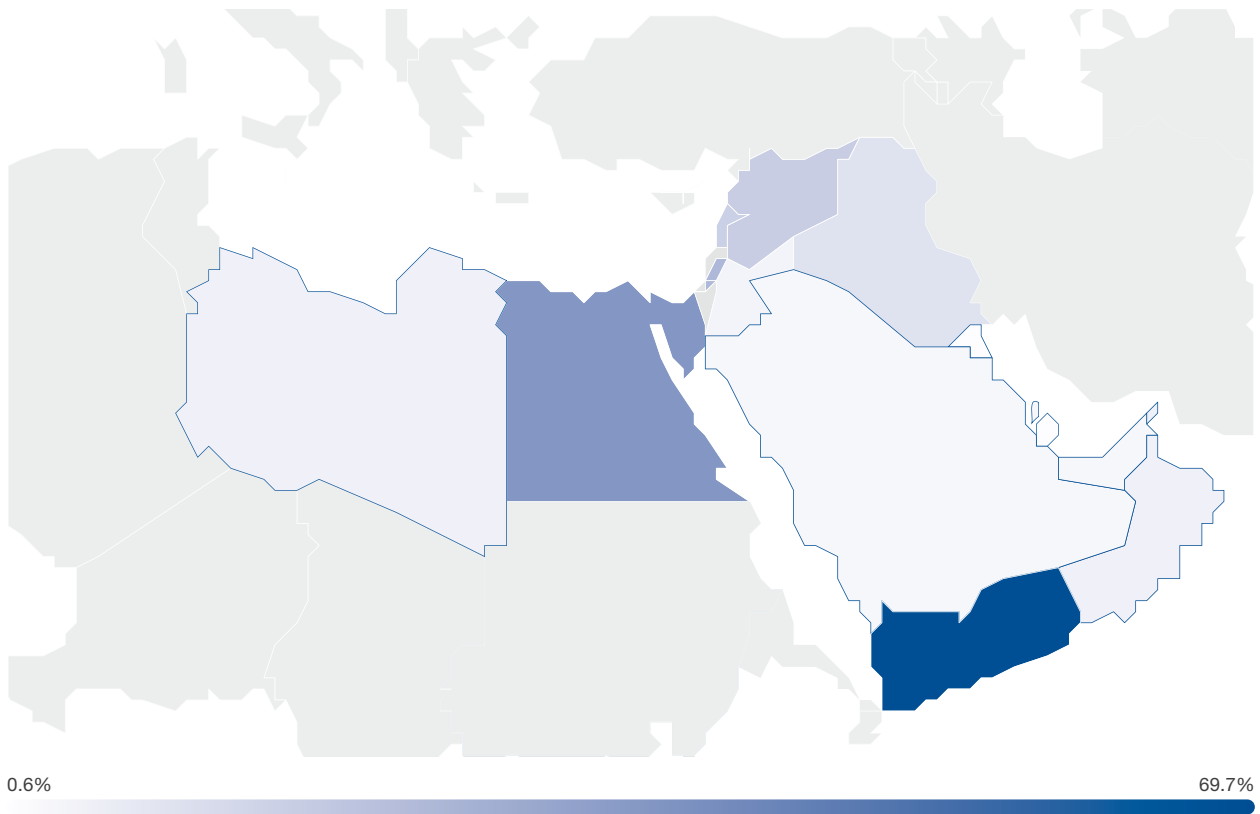


This chapter presents the available data on women's entrepreneurship in tourism and the broader economy. It then discusses, in the context of the available literature and primary research, some of the key opportunities and barriers experienced by women tourism entrepreneurs in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Oman. The chapter also looks at the broader entrepreneurial landscape for women in the region, including the legal and policy framework, and considers its implications for the tourism sector.

Key messages:

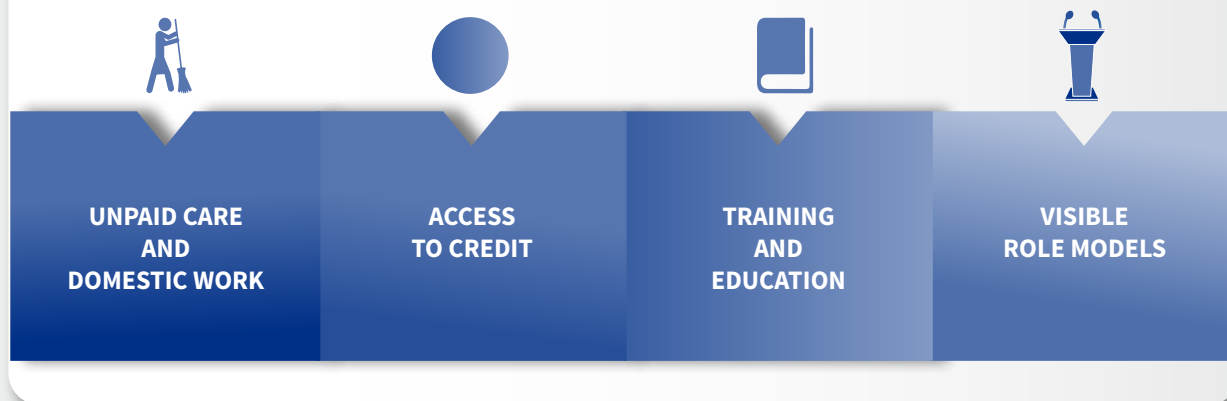
- Better data is needed on women's entrepreneurship in the Middle East, and in entrepreneurship in tourism particularly.
- As tourism is a growing sector in some countries, there is potential for the sector to offer greater opportunities for women's entrepreneurship than the broader economy in the near to medium term.
- Much of women's entrepreneurship in tourism is linked to stereotypical work, such as homestays and handicrafts; and are concentrated at the small-scale end of the spectrum, hiring few, if any, workers, and are often home-based.
- Addressing legal and other discriminatory barriers to women's access to credit and creating linkages with the wider and growing ecosystem of support for women's entrepreneurship in the region can provide vital support for women entrepreneurs to start and grow tourism businesses.

Self-employed women, 2018 (% of female employment)



Source: : International Labour Organization ILOSTAT (2019b), figures detailed in table 3.1.

KEY BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TOURISM



Entrepreneurship encompasses anything from survival-oriented, informal micro-enterprises to large-scale, highly profitable businesses with a significant workforce.¹ It serves as a significant source of women's employment, as well as livelihood. As entrepreneurs, women create jobs, usually for other women, support their families and communities and grow national economies.

In tourism, micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are the major job creators with around half of the tourism workforce in OECD countries working in enterprises with fewer than 10 people, and around three quarters working in enterprises employing less than 50 people.² Women's enterprises, particularly in developing countries, however, tend to be concentrated at the small-scale end of the spectrum, hiring few, if any, workers, often home-based and reporting low returns.³

The tourism sector, according to the *Global Report on Women in Tourism – Second Edition* (Global Report II), can offer greater opportunities for women's entrepreneurship than the broader economy.⁴ In a region characterized by high unemployment levels, especially within young women, entrepreneurship serves as an alternative source of employment that can tap into women's economic potential, creativity and innovation.

1 United Nations Economic and Social Council (2020), *Review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly: Report of the Secretary-General* (E/CN.6/2020/3), United Nations, New York, p. 26.

2 Stacey, J. (2015), *Supporting Quality Jobs in Tourism*, OECD Publishing, Paris, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5js4rv0g7szz-en>, p. 34.

3 Kabeer, N. (2018), *Gender, livelihood capabilities and women's economic empowerment: reviewing evidence over the life course*, Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence, London, p. 23.

4 World Tourism Organization (2019a), p. 51.

3.1 Statistical overview

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), around 12% of adult women in the Middle East are entrepreneurs compared with 31% of adult men.⁵

In the absence of sex-disaggregated data on women's entrepreneurship, self-employment statistics are used as an indicative measure. As table 3.1 illustrates, self-employment is only a relevant form of women's economic activity in a small number of countries in the Middle East: Yemen, Egypt, the State of Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon. This suggests that much of women's self-employment is necessity driven and undertaken to meet livelihood needs.

In the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the share of women in self-employment is low, even though the number of women entrepreneurs in these countries has been increasing. Women entrepreneurs in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates by comparison are largely opportunity-motivated and are driven by job dissatisfaction, the need for autonomous decision-making and financial independence.⁶ Many of these enterprises fall in consumer-oriented sectors.⁷ In Qatar and Saudi Arabia, there are an estimated eight women entrepreneurs for every ten men entrepreneurs.⁸ Women in the United Arab Emirates operate over 23,000 businesses valued at approximately USD 45–50 billion.⁹

Table 3.1 **Self-employed women in the Middle East, 2018 (% of total female employment)**

Country	Self-employed women	Country	Self-employed women
Bahrain	3.1	Oman	4.5
Egypt	36.1	Qatar	0.4
Iraq	9.3	Saudi Arabia	1.4
Jordan	3.4	State of Palestine	24.5
Kuwait	0.6	Syrian Arab Republic	16.3
Lebanon	15.9	United Arab Emirates	3.7
Libya	5.0	Yemen	69.7

Source: International Labour Organization ILOSTAT (2019b).

In tourism, UNWTO collects sex-disaggregated data on self-employment in tourism as reported by member states. Egypt is the only country in the region that has reported this data and only for the years 2014 and 2015. Based on this data, the share of self-employed women in tourism is almost

5 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2014b), *Women's Economic Empowerment in Selected MENA Countries: The Impact of Legal Frameworks in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia*, OECD Publishing, Paris, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264279322-en>, p. 33.

6 El-Hamidi, F. (2015), 'Women Entrepreneurs in the MENA Region: Opportunities or Mirage', paper presented at the Economic Research Forum on Gender Equality in the MENA Region, Cairo.

7 Ismail, A. et al. (2017), p. 6.

8 Ismail, A. et al. (2017), p. 5.

9 McKinsey and Company (2020), *Women at work: Job opportunities set to double with the Fourth Industrial Revolution*, McKinsey and Company, New York (online), available at: www.mckinsey.com (24-09-2020), p. 10.

negligible to non-existent. In Egypt, the share of women in self-employment in tourism was 2% in 2014 and 1.5% in 2015, a small fraction of the 36.1% of self-employed women cited in table 3.1.¹⁰

As well, none of the seven countries that responded to the UNWTO member states' *Survey on Women's Involvement in the Tourism Sector in the Middle East* provided sex-disaggregated data on the number or proportion of female entrepreneurs in tourism. Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Syrian Arab Republic did however provide a percentage breakdown of male- and female-owned small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMEs). As indicated in table 3.2, male ownership of small and medium-sized enterprises far exceeds that of women in each country, highlighting gender-specific barriers that women entrepreneurs face. These constraints are further analysed in the following section.

Table 3.2 **Male-/female-owned registered tourism SMEs (%)**

Country	Male	Female
Bahrain	76.10	31.76
Saudi Arabia	75.17	24.82
Syrian Arab Republic	n/a	10.00

Source: UNWTO Member State Survey 2020.

3.2 Key issues

There are few studies that examine women's entrepreneurship in tourism in the Middle East. Recent scholarship by Arab researchers, however, is beginning to contribute a more nuanced understanding of the motivations, opportunities and barriers of women entrepreneurs in tourism.¹¹ The literature review found that women's entrepreneurial activity in tourism – such as in homestays, handicrafts and restaurants – is often linked to stereotypical/traditional work and builds on the existing gender division of labour. These activities often reinforce or exacerbate gender inequalities by increasing women's domestic responsibilities.¹² Moreover, women's entrepreneurship in "feminized", service-related and low-productive sectors can inadvertently reinforce informality and exacerbate women's vulnerability.¹³

Given their natural linkages, promoting handicrafts is one of the most common ways government and non-government organizations alike have supported women's entrepreneurship in tourism in the Middle East. Handicrafts has also been a way to promote the economic inclusion of women in vulnerable situations (see snapshot 3.1).

10 World Tourism Organization (2014–2018), 'Series 5.17: Employment – Number of full-time equivalent jobs by status in employment, self-employed, female', Compendium of Tourism Statistics dataset, UNWTO, Madrid (online), available at: www.e-unwto.org (24-09-2020).

11 Al Mazroei, L. (2017), *Questioning women's empowerment through tourism entrepreneurship opportunities: The case of Omani women*, Ph.D. thesis, Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh.

Haddad, R. (2014), *A critical analysis of the experiences of female business owners in the development and management of tourism-related micro and small handicraft businesses in an Islamic society: The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, Ph.D. thesis, Bournemouth University, Dorset.

12 Al Mazroei, L. (2017), pp. 30–32.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Snapshot 3.1 **Art of Heritage, Saudi Arabia**

Art of Heritage is a socially responsible organization committed to the preservation, conservation and promotion of Saudi cultural heritage. For many years, it operated as part of the Al Nahda Philanthropic Society for Women, one of Saudi Arabia's oldest charitable associations before becoming independent.

Art of Heritage trains and employs Saudi women to restore and reproduce a unique collection of authentic heritage garments, textiles, household artifacts and jewelry. Through its Yadawy programme, the organization trains Saudi women with disabilities as handicraft artisans, providing them with valuable skills and the opportunity to become productive members of society and economically independent.

Source: Interview with Somaya Badr, Art of Heritage, 22 October 2020.

After agriculture, handicrafts constitute the second largest sector of rural employment in many regions of the world.¹⁴ This is certainly the case in Egypt and Jordan, where the handicrafts sector provides significant income generating opportunities in the formal and informal sectors and contributes to rural economies. Importantly, it offers women the opportunity to start and manage a business that requires minimal start-up capital, has flexible work hours and allows them to work from home.

In Egypt, the Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism and the National Council of Women are working to brand women's products and to create market outlets for women's handicrafts in airports throughout Egypt and in museums in Cairo and other governorates. Given that more than 70% of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are owned by women, many of which provide direct and indirect services to the tourism sector, the Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism also works with the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (MSMEDA) and the Ministry of Trade and Industry to support the export of women's products.¹⁵ Jordan too has sought to enhance entrepreneurship opportunities for female artisans, including access to tourism markets. Snapshot 3.2 highlights how women can be empowered in the tourism value chain through gender-responsive national strategies.

The entrepreneurial landscape for women in the Middle East is diverse. In countries where access to jobs is limited, women are driven to entrepreneurship by necessity. These enterprises tend to predominate in sectors where entry barriers and start-up costs are relatively low,¹⁶ such as in agriculture, handicrafts and services, including hospitality and retail.¹⁷ Necessity-motivated entrepreneurs are usually constrained in their access to human capital, financial capital, technology and other resources, including training.¹⁸ This translates into enterprises with low profitability, poor pay, limited employment generation and growth potential. Moreover, many of these enterprises operate in the informal sector, which, while providing women the flexibility to better reconcile family and work obligations, also excludes them from labour law protections and social security.

14 United States Agency for International Development (2009), p. 49.

15 Interview with Vice Minister, Egypt Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism and the Executive Director, National Council on Women, 21 October 2020.

16 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2014b), p. 34.

17 Ibid., p. 35.

18 Ismail, A. et al. (2018), 'Inclusion in entrepreneurship, especially of women, youth and unemployed: Status and an agenda for research in the Middle East and North Africa', *World Review of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development*, volume 14 (4), p. 533.

The National Strategy for Tourism Handicraft Development in Jordan (2010 – 2015) was developed to revitalize the craft sector through tourism as a means to bring employment and livelihood opportunities to artisan communities and to enhance the access of handicrafts to the tourism market. Artisans constitute the second largest sector of rural employment in many regions of the world after agriculture. For women in rural and urban areas particularly, handicraft production offers distinct advantages as it requires minimal start-up capital, flexible work hours and allows women to work at home “while tending to their children and household responsibilities.

The Strategy placed special attention on women’s participation at all levels of the industry, including production and decision-making as well as on their empowerment as entrepreneurs, decision-makers and leaders throughout the handicraft value chain. Specifically:

1. It sought to introduce a legal framework that better supported home and village-based producers, disadvantaged communities, and women and to promote handicraft businesses by easing restrictions on establishing new enterprises;
2. It included women’s representation and membership on the national coordination mechanism it created alongside that of national handicraft producers and traders associations; cooperatives, community-based organizations and NGOs; universities and design centers as well as representatives of other government ministries. This also helped ensure that women were informed of sector developments as well as training and other business development opportunities; and
3. Lastly, it sought to improve access to finance by facilitating linkages between women handicraft producers and microfinance institutions.

Gender-responsive policies ensure that women contribute to finding shared solutions to common challenges and that policy decisions reflect their views and priorities.

Source: United States Agency for International Development (2009), *National Strategy for Tourism Handicraft Development in Jordan (2010–2015)*, USAID, Washington, D.C.

Women also lack role models, as well as access to business and financial networks in their communities to support their start-up and business development initiatives. Gender stereotyping not only shapes how financial institutions view women (i.e. as unreliable and less capable of handling loans) but also undermines women’s confidence in their abilities.

Across the region, women entrepreneurs continue to encounter a relatively common set of gender-specific barriers that limits their ability to start and grow their businesses. Chief among them is the access to credit. A study by the International Finance Corporation notes that the MENA region has the second-highest female micro-enterprise financing gap (29%) of USD 16 billion between the credit female entrepreneurs need and the financing they receive¹⁹. Women-led enterprises account for less than 10% of total bank loan portfolios in the Middle East and North Africa.²⁰ Women in rural areas are particularly excluded given that formal financial institutions rarely have an established presence there. Access to credit is also hampered by women’s limited asset ownership for collateral, a result of discriminatory inheritance and property rights. With few financial services and other assets available to them, women entrepreneurs often rely on their own personal funds or borrow funds from family and friends.

19 International Finance Corporation (2017a), *MSME Finance Gap: Assessment of the Shortfalls and Opportunities in Financing Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Emerging Markets*, IFC, Washington, D.C. (online), available at: www.ifc.org (01-12-2020), p. 39.

20 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2014a), *Women in Business 2014: Accelerating Business in the Middle East and North Africa*, OECD Publishing, Paris, DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264213944-en>, p. 19.



Seeing how local communities in Jordan derived few benefits from tourism, Muna Haddad was determined to develop an alternative model to mass tourism that was more responsible and sus-

tainable. She travelled to Asia to research the “trickle-down effect” of tourism on local economies, returned to Jordan and launched Baraka Destinations in 2012, a social enterprise in sustainable tourism development. As a proof of concept, Baraka Destinations sought to demonstrate how community-based tourism is not only good business but that it can also generate social and economic returns for all involved. Since then, it has revitalized secondary tourism destinations, engaged women in rural areas in the workforce and developed micro-enterprises that are creating thousands of jobs for marginalized communities.

In starting her business, Ms Haddad was able to build on her experience with the Jordan Tourism Board in addition to her knowledge and networks in tourism. Unable to access bank financing due to the lack of collateral, Ms Haddad relied on a combination of her own funds, small grants and revenue from her consulting work to grow her firm. When needed, she borrowed funds from family.

Registering her business was easy; doing business in Jordan is difficult. Keeping abreast of the frequent changes in the law and understanding their implications for Ms Haddad’s business has been a constant challenge. One of her best investments

has been to establish an advisory team to help navigate the difficult business environment.

Like many women entrepreneurs, Ms Haddad experienced gender-based and other challenges, especially working in a male-dominated business environment such as Jordan. She finds that decision-makers and policymakers still lack awareness and depth of understanding of gender equality. “Decision-making remains very male-dominated whether it is the boardroom or in ministries.” Women are engaged in a “tokenistic” sense. Ms Haddad felt strongly about not wanting space to be made for her because she is a woman but because she has ideas and the expertise to contribute. Ms Haddad has found that women in business have to constantly fight against “impostor syndrome”. Women are hindered by self-doubt and in their ability to be bigger and better.

Lessons learned

Ms Haddad’s experience demonstrates how women’s entrepreneurship often creates jobs and enhances the livelihoods of other women. It also reflects common challenges that women entrepreneurs face in the region. It highlights the importance of strengthening women’s access to finance by addressing discriminatory legal and policy barriers that impede the development and growth of women-led businesses. It also draws attention to the difficulties that women working in male dominated environments face when they challenge dominant gender stereotypes about women’s roles and abilities. Especially in such contexts, greater consideration to how men can be enlisted as partners and champions of change to transform mindsets and create more inclusive spaces for women to lead and participate are needed.

Sources: Interview with Muna Haddad, Founder and Managing Director of Baraka Destinations, 11 October 2020.

Women entrepreneurs found working within a male-dominated business environment difficult. For example, women entrepreneurs in Oman encountered resistance from male tour operators to share the market with women.²¹ They also lacked support for developing and building networks with other tourism actors and sectors and in marketing their services locally and internationally. Women also had to contend with gaining family acceptance for their entrepreneurial ideas, as well as dealing with negative community views, including from other women. This was certainly the case for cultural hosting enterprises that required women to interact with both male and female tourists.

21 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2014a), *Women in Business 2014: Accelerating Business in the Middle East and North Africa*, OECD Publishing, Paris, DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264213944-en>, p. 343.

The set of case studies (see case studies 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3) below share the experiences of three entrepreneurs in tourism who were interviewed as part of the primary research. They are women who transformed a gap they identified in the market into an opportunity, building on their experience and existing skills.

Case study 3.2 **Ward Sfeir, Business Owner, Ward Café Trottoir, Lebanon**

“I am an important member in the economic value chain of the village. I did take a risk when opening the café and I would do it again and again... We should have self-confidence and take risks to live.”

Ward Sfeir runs Ward Café Trottoir in Hadath El-Jebbeh, a hilltop town in the North Governorate of Lebanon, overlooking the Qadisha Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Hadath El-Jebbeh has many natural, cultural and tourism assets and is a town on the Lebanon Mountain Trail. Through her involvement in a USAID rural tourism project, Ms. Sfeir found that the village lacked a café that offered visitors/tourists a hospitality experience that showcased the culture and traditions of Hadath El-Jebbeh. Her years in tourism helped her to discern that tourists appreciated authentic places.

She set up her business, Ward Café Trottoir, in a storefront shop inherited from her grandparents. In starting and running her business, Ms Sfeir has had no external financial support or access to business development trainings. She has relied on the organizational and management skills gained from previous work and volunteer experiences, and crucially the network of contacts she has built over time. Like many women business owners, Ms Sfeir has continually re-invested her own funds to grow her enterprise.

In the beginning, Ms Sfeir encountered skepticism from the community but as the café grew and succeeded, Ms Sfeir has become a role model in Hadath El-Jebbeh, giving encouragement and confidence to new women-owned businesses to open.



Sources: Interview with Ward Sfeir, business owner, Ward Café Troittoir, 15 October 2020.

Promoting women's economic inclusion and participation is an important development and policy priority for many countries in the region. Addressing legislative and/or regulatory barriers to starting a business is critical. Saudi Arabia is the only country in the region which has a law prohibiting gender-based discrimination in access to credit.²² The ambiguity of resolving insolvency in some countries dampens women's (and men's) entrepreneurial initiative especially if bankruptcy and debt can result in imprisonment. It also acts as a disincentive for informal enterprises to formalize.²³ Many enterprises opt to remain in informality instead.

There have been a range of responses from different national and international actors, including public-private partnerships and the private sector to catalyze women's entrepreneurship, especially through the creation or strengthening of support ecosystems for women's financial inclusion and entrepreneurship (see snapshot 3.3 and case study 3.4).

22 World Bank (2020c), p. 11.

23 Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia (2019b), *Innovation & Entrepreneurship: Opportunities & Challenges for Arab Youth and Women*, ESCWA, Beirut (online), available at: www.unescwa.org (24-09-2020), p. 19.

Case study 3.3 **Badriya Siyabi, Founder, Sidab Women, Oman**

After a career in banking and time spent in the United States, Badriya Al Siyabi returned to her coastal fishing village and founded the Sidab Women's Sewing Group (Sewing Group), a not-for-profit organization in 2004. The Sewing Group was established to help women generate income and was modelled on the community centers that Badriya had visited in the United States of America and which she found positively impacted women's lives.

The Sidab Women's Sewing Group received initial start-up support from the Ministry of Social Development and through donations from multinational corporations and other local organizations was able to secure sewing machines and other equipment to set up their workshop. Women received organizational, business development, computer, communication and English language skills trainings to help them run the center more effectively. Women, most of whom were wives and mothers, were also given the flexibility to work at the center or at home, allowing them to better manage family work responsibilities. While women were able to build some measure of economic independence over time, their income remained low and unstable.

The Sidab Women's Sewing Group created products that showcased Omani traditional materials and designs. Its

popularity and business surged with the production of their signature, eco-friendly calico bags, finding an enthusiastic market in Oman's corporate sector and tourism industries. Later their products were sold in retail outlets in airports, local fairs and markets. Since then, the Sidab Women's Sewing Group has added a range of product items and developed a 'tourism and hospitality sector' to generate additional income by hosting small tour groups for Omani food and heritage. The Sidab women themselves also gained popular recognition through their participation in a number of national, regional and international exhibitions.

Lessons learned

The example of the Sidab Women's Sewing Group demonstrates how women's entrepreneurship in tourism can offer women suitable work opportunities in contexts where there are few. In addition, adequate access to business and market development training and support is needed to support women's enterprises to grow and to generate an adequate and stable income for women. While the Sidab women felt personally enriched by their work, their involvement in the sewing group doubled the burden of their unpaid care and domestic work.

Sources: Interview with Ms. Badriya Siyabi, Founder, Sidab Women Sewing Group, Oman, 23 October 2020.

Khan, G.M. (2013), 'Sidab Women's Sewing Group: an example of social entrepreneurship in the Arabian Gulf', *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, volume 18, number 1, pp. 47–56.

Al Mazroei, L. (2017), *Questioning women's empowerment through tourism entrepreneurship opportunities: The case of Omani women*, Ph.D. thesis, Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh.

Snapshot 3.3 **Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi), World Bank Group**

The Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi) was launched in 2017 at the G20 Leaders' Summit in Germany to unlock financing for women-led/-owned businesses in developing countries. Both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are amongst its founding contributors.

We-Fi supports women entrepreneurs through four development core pillars:

1. *Access to finance*: providing financial institutions with finance and capacity to expand women entrepreneurs' access to debt, equity, venture capital, and insurance.
2. *Access to training, mentoring, and networks*: building the capacity of women entrepreneurs, and connecting them to mentors and networks, so that they can take their businesses to the next level.

3. *Access to markets*: creating better linkages to domestic and global supply chains for women entrepreneurs, in partnership with the private sector and financial institutions.
4. *Improve the enabling environment*: working with public sector actors to improve the legal and regulatory constraints that women entrepreneurs face in running their businesses.

The initiative has allocated USD 300 million to programs that will benefit more than 130,000 women's small and medium enterprises and has mobilized more than USD 300 billion from the public and private sectors. Approximately 20% of funds were distributed in the Middle East and North Africa region.

Source: Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi) (n.d.), World Bank Group, Washington D.C. (online), available at: www.we-fi.org (24-09-2020).

Case study 3.4 **International Finance Corporation (IFC), Bank of Palestine**

The IFC Banking on Women programme, in partnership with the Bank of Palestine, launched the *Felestineya* Mini-MBA programme to boost the performance of women-owned firms and spur economic growth in the State of Palestine. The program combined access to tailored financial products with non-financial services to drive the growth of women-owned, small and medium-sized enterprises.

The programme consisted of short, practical trainings on business management topics, as well as critical leadership and communication skills; mentoring, coaching and networking; and blended learning techniques that used online solutions to address women's time and mobility constraints. A graduation ceremony capped off women's completion of the programme to celebrate their achievement.

Women graduates reported on increased self-confidence, an increase in business profitability and growth; as well as larger business networks. The program also succeeded in increasing women's access to finance.

Lessons learned

The *Felestineya* Mini-MBA programme demonstrates the importance of availing women-owned SMEs of *non-financial services*. Training, mentoring, networking, and other non-financial services can give entrepreneurs a vital leg up. For women-owned enterprises, the benefits of non-financial services can help them overcome systemic barriers that limit their access to finance and markets.

Equally if not more importantly, the programme helped to change the perceptions of the Bank's staff towards women entrepreneurs from one which failed to recognize woman's entrepreneurial capabilities to one which viewed women as good clients. In turn, this fostered greater trust in the bank by women entrepreneurs.

Sources: International Finance Corporation (n.d.), *Bank of Palestine Strengthens Women-Owned Businesses and the Economy*, IFC, Washington, D.C. (online), available at: www.ifc.org (24-09-2020).

Women's representation in chambers of commerce has increased to respond to the needs of women entrepreneurs.²⁴ Many chambers have set up women's business committees, as in the GCC countries, as well as in Egypt, Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan, the State of Palestine and Yemen. Moreover, a number of women-focussed incubator and accelerator programmes, as well as angel networks have emerged in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.²⁵ These incubators are invaluable platforms open to women entrepreneurs across all sectors and are critical platforms for accessing credit/capital, as well as mentoring and professional networking. Having women in such positions also helps to encourage greater participation of women's entrepreneurship.

Snapshot 3.4 **Riyadat, the Bahraini Women's Capacity Development Center, Bahrain**

A joint initiative of the Supreme Council for Women, the Bahrain Center to Develop Emerging Enterprise and the Bahrain Development Bank, Riyadat is the first business incubation center for women in Bahrain. It promotes and catalyzes women's leadership, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Over a period of three years, women-led small and medium-sized enterprises are provided access to financial, advisory and promotional assistance to support start-up ideas, develop their products and expand their businesses throughout their growth stages before graduating to the labour market. Women entrepreneurs are also provided with subsidized office space and access to facilities in a modern mall-like structure to facilitates greater exchange, learning and networking among the resident entrepreneurs.

Between 2014 and 2017, Riyadat achieved a 59% success rate out of 51 businesses that graduated from the incubation programme.

Source: Interview with Sally Sedky, Bahrain Tourism & Exhibitions Authority, 5 November 2020.

International Women's Entrepreneurial Challenge Foundation (2018), *News, Small business plans in Bahrain* (online), IWEC, New York.

24 International Labour Organization (2016b), *Women in business and management: gaining momentum in the Middle East and North Africa: regional report*, ILO, Beirut (online), available at: www.ilo.org (24-09-2020), p. 18.

25 McKinsey and Company (2020), p. 26.

Snapshot 3.5 **Berytech, Lebanon**

Launched in 2002 by St. Joseph University, Berytech, a not-for-profit organization, catalyzes the Lebanese startup ecosystem by boosting innovation, technology and entrepreneurship. Berytech supports entrepreneurs to create and develop their own start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises. Women constitute approximately 30% of the entrepreneurs that Berytech supports.

Among Berytech's five practice areas, one focuses on nurturing women 's entrepreneurship, particularly in the digital space. The programme works on two levels: it seeks to influence policies on women and the digital economy and to motivate women entrepreneurs to launch, grow and succeed in innovative ventures through competitions, cash grants as well as incubation, business support, networking and mentoring. In Lebanon, as elsewhere in the region, there is ample, untapped potential for linking technology and digital platforms to the tourism sector and where there is space for women entrepreneurs to engage and innovate.

Source: Interview with Ramy Boujawdeh and Joanna Abi Abdalla, Berytech, 23 October 2020.

3.3 Conclusion

Better collection and reporting of sex-disaggregated data on women's entrepreneurship in tourism is needed. At present, only one of the fourteen countries in the region are reporting self-employment data to UNWTO, greater participation by National Tourism Administrations and National Statistical Offices in the region would enhance efforts to collect and report on critical gender statistics.

Women in the Middle East do not make up the majority of the self-employed workforce in the broader economy as they do globally. In terms of female entrepreneurship, the region has comparatively lower rates than other world regions. At the same time, women's entrepreneurship – especially in many of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, appears to be growing at a rapid rate.

As tourism is a growing sector in some countries, there is potential for the sector to offer greater opportunities for women's entrepreneurship than the broader economy in the near to medium term as it does in other world regions.

Much of women's entrepreneurship in tourism appears to predominate in sectors in sectors where entry barriers and start-up costs are relatively low,²⁶ and are linked to women's traditional roles such as in agriculture, handicrafts and services, including hospitality. This translates into enterprises with low profitability, poor pay, limited employment generation and growth potential.

Policy and gender-related barriers limit the ability of women to start and grow a business in many countries. Chief among them is access to credit. Non-financial services such as training, mentoring and networking have been found to help women entrepreneurs overcome systemic barriers that limit their access to finance and markets. Yet, here as well, women entrepreneurs may lack access to training opportunities or not have the business and professional networks. Creating linkages with the wider and growing ecosystem of support for women's entrepreneurship in the region can provide much needed support for women entrepreneurs in tourism.

26 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2014b), p. 34.

Chapter 4: Education and training



Woman working as qualified chef in a Marriott hotel, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

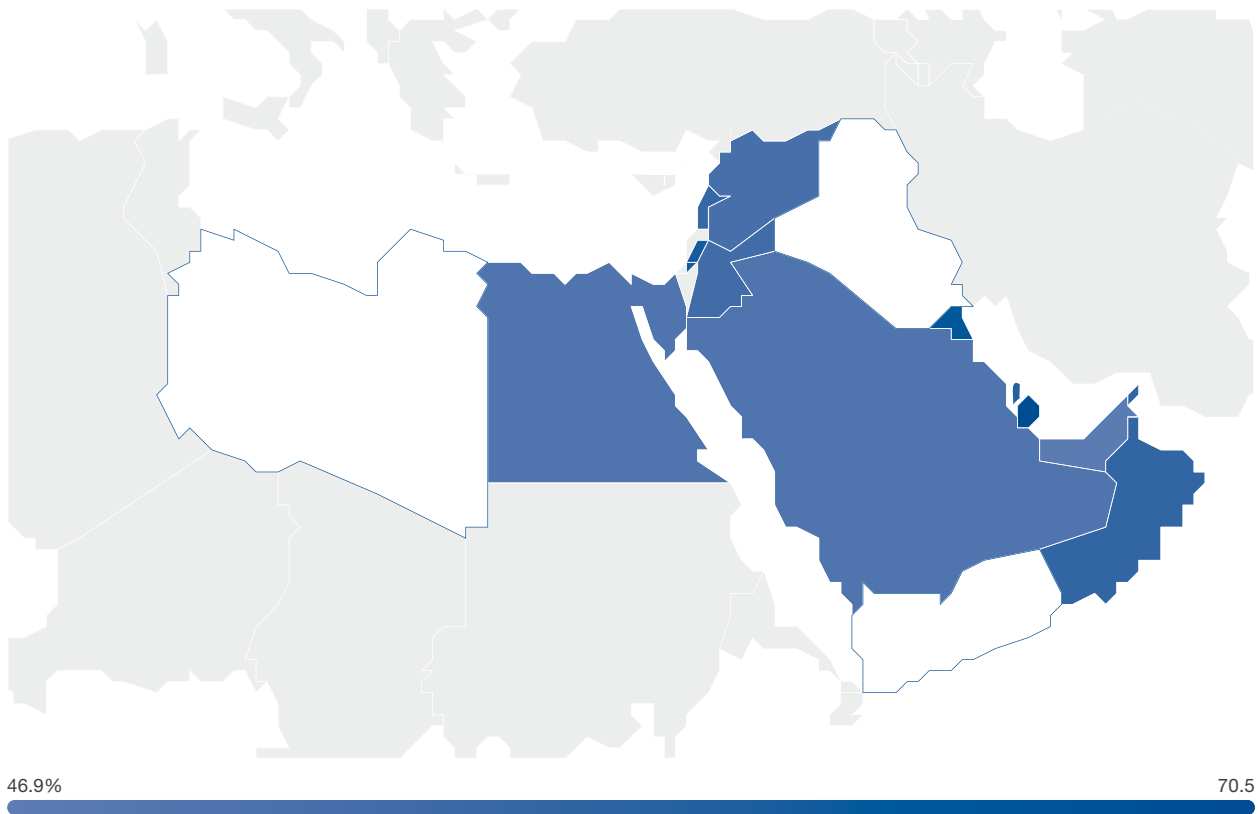


This chapter highlights the skills deficit in tourism and the education and training investments made by governments, donors and the private sector, sometimes in collaboration, to meet the sector's human capital needs. It also calls attention to women's unequal access to education and training and the existence of barriers for women to make the school-to-work transition which must be addressed if women are to have equal access to employment opportunities.

Key messages:

- Efforts that have targeted women, such as in Saudi Arabia, have succeeded in increasing women's enrollment in tourism education and training programmes.
- Ensuring that education and training respond to the knowledge and skills needed in the tourism sector, coupled with work placements and mentorship programmes, can facilitate women's school-to-work transition.
- Integrating entrepreneurship education into tourism education and training programmes can further spur and support women's entrepreneurship in tourism and diversify job opportunities in the sector for women.
- Gender equality trainings to tourism policy makers, employers, educators and students can help to ensure equality in access to trainings and career development and advancement opportunities for women and men.
- National public education and media campaigns are needed to improve the image of the tourism sector and to raise awareness of the diversity of tourism jobs and careers available.

% of gross enrollment ratio in tertiary education who are women, 2016–2019



Note: Countries displayed in white indicate there is no available data.

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2020), figures detailed in table 4.1.

For many countries in the region, tourism is an important sector for driving economic diversification and growth, more equitable regional development and generating millions of direct and indirect jobs to address high levels of under- and unemployment of women and youth. To meet current and future work force demands, many national tourism strategies acknowledge the shortage of skills in the sector and the need to invest in tourism-related education and training programmes at local schools and universities, to ensure that the supply of skills is sufficient in both quality and quantity.¹ Tourism education and training is vital for the growth of the sector.

4.1 Statistical overview

Many countries in the region have considerably narrowed the gender gaps in both primary and secondary education. In Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Qatar, the State of Palestine and the United Arab Emirates, women's enrollment rates in fact exceed that of men in secondary education.² Women also outnumber men in tertiary education in the majority of countries where data is available as detailed in table 4.1. Women's enrollment in Bahrain, Kuwait and the State of Palestine is almost twice that of men's and in Qatar particularly, the number of women in tertiary education outnumber men by more than two to one. It must be noted however that these figures do not account for women or men in tertiary education studying abroad. The majority of women tend to be concentrated in the arts, humanities and nursing, fields of study that are aligned with what is considered appropriate, while their representation in the natural sciences, engineering, computer sciences are lower.³

Table 4.1 Gross enrollment ratio in tertiary education disaggregated by sex, 2016–2019

Country	Women (%)	Men (%)	Year of data
Bahrain	59.0	41.0	2019
Egypt	49.8	50.2	2017
Iraq
Jordan	53.8	46.2	2018
Kuwait	63.7	36.3	2019
Lebanon	55.7	44.3	2019
Libya
Oman	57.2	42.8	2019
Qatar	70.5	29.5	2019
Saudi Arabia	49.9	50.1	2019
State of Palestine	61.3	38.7	2019
Syrian Arab Republic	51.8	48.2	2016
United Arab Emirates	46.9	53.1	2017
Yemen

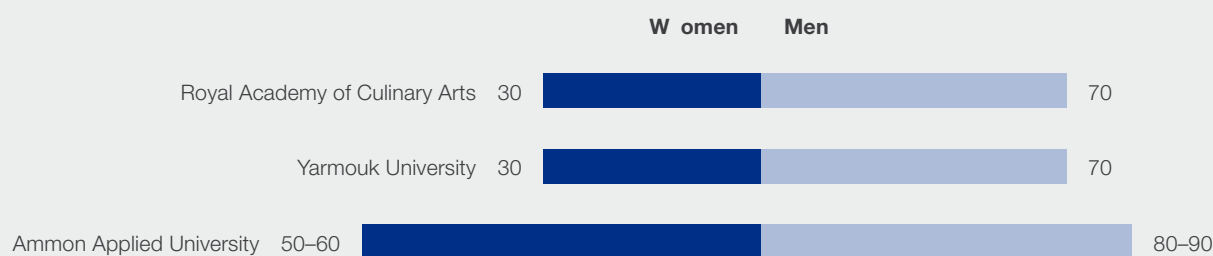
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2020).

1 Countries whose national tourism strategy includes provisions for tourism education and training include: Jordan, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

2 Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia (2012), pp. 12–13.

3 McKinsey and Company (2020), p. 17.

Tourism graduates who go on to gain employment within 3 years, Jordan (%)



Source: UNWTO Academy Survey on Women and Tourism Education and Training in the Middle East (2020).

4.2 Key issues

As table 4.1 highlights, there is no shortage of educated Arab women. However, in two studies carried out in Egypt and Jordan on women and work in the tourism sector, most of the surveyed companies reported on the lack of appropriately qualified women (and men) in the labour market.⁴ This was attributed to a combination of reasons: there were fewer women than men applying for tourism jobs because of society's negative attitudes towards women working in the sector, the influence of family members who may discourage women from employment in tourism, the lack of personal contacts and professional networks, and discriminatory or less transparent recruitment practices in the private sector. Even though it is not legal to specify a gender preference in job advertisements, the practice persists.⁵

Surveyed employers in Egypt and Jordan reported that the skills mismatch increased with the level of education.⁶ For example, in Jordan, employers found that skills shortages were greater among university graduates (55%) compared to vocational education and training (47%) and secondary school leavers (45%).⁷

Female students interviewed in the course of these studies also faulted their education for not adequately preparing them to enter the labour force and expressed a need for more exposure to practical aspects of work during their education, including training on soft skills, such as communication, especially intercultural, and problem-solving skills.

To address the chronic shortage of skilled staff in the tourism sector, many countries have invested efforts in better positioning the industry as an attractive career and employment choice. A number of public, private and specialized universities, community colleges and vocational training institutes exist across the region and are geared towards professionalizing the tourism workforce, particularly

4 Among surveyed companies in Egypt, 48% of the women held a university degree; 43% had received a vocational education; 8% had completed general secondary education; and 2% had completed primary education or less. See: European Training Foundation (2010b), p. 32.

In Jordan, 34% of the women had earned a university education; 25% had completed vocational education and 35% had secondary general education. See: European Training Foundation (2010c), p. 33.

5 European Training Foundation (2010a), pp. 46-49.

6 Ibid., p. 50.

7 Ibid., p. 51.

in Egypt⁸, Jordan⁹ and Saudi Arabia¹⁰. The UNWTO TedQual¹¹ network also has a number of institutions in the Middle East which offer tourism or hospitality programmes, see box 4.1.

Box 4.1

UNWTO TedQual network of education and training institutions in the Middle East

- Amity University, Dubai, United Arab Emirates;
- MODUL University, Dubai, United Arab Emirates;
- Sultan Qaboos University, Oman;
- Ammon Applied University College of Hospitality and Tourism Education, Jordan;
- Royal Academy of Culinary Arts, Jordan; and
- Yarmouk University, Jordan.

As part of its twin efforts to meet the growing human capital needs of the tourism sector and increase women's employment, Saudi Arabia has invested in 14 tourism educational institutions for women throughout the country. The percentage of female enrollment in tourism training and education in Saudi Arabia is 20.1% and 17.3% respectively.¹²

The Higher Institute for Hospitality and Tourism is one such institution which illustrates how government actions can spur demand in a non-traditional sector for women to ensure that they too benefit from expanding employment and career opportunities in a dynamic sector, as explored in snapshot 4.1.

In 2018, the National Centre for Tourism Human Resources Development (Takamul), part of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage, awarded 474 scholarships to women to prepare them for jobs and a career in the sector. In addition, 10,032 women have benefitted from a number of training programs available.¹³

8 European Training Foundation (2010a), p. 29

9 Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (2011), Jordan National Tourism Strategy, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Amman, p. 66.

10 Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage and the National Center for the Development of Human Resources in Tourism (n.d.), Efforts of the National Center for the Development of Human Resources in Tourism (Takamul): Empowering Saudi Women to Work in Tourism, Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage, Riyadh, pp 3-4.

11 UNWTO.TedQual improves the quality of tourism education, training and research programmes among its members through a comprehensive quality assurance system. It recognizes the excellence of institutions' tourism education and training programmes with a quality certification, and currently counts 90 institutions around the world within its UNWTO.TedQual network. For further information see: www.unwto.org/UNWTO-ted-qual (24-09-2020).

12 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, General Authority of Statistics (2020a), *General Authority of Statistics, Riyadh* (online), available at: www.stats.gov.sa (24-09-2020).

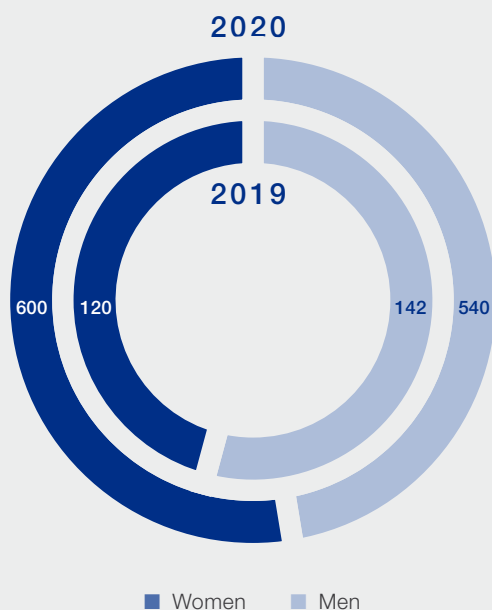
13 Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage and the National Center for the Development of Human Resources in Tourism (n.d.), *Efforts of the National Center for the Development of Human Resources in Tourism (Takamul): Empowering Saudi Women to Work in Tourism*, Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage, Riyadh, pp 3-4.

In Saudi Arabia, the Higher Institute for Hospitality and Tourism, a public sector organization, established a Female Branch in 2019 to support the country's Vision 2030 goal of increasing Saudi women's labour force participation to 30% by 2030. Within its first year of its opening, the Female Branch reached full capacity, with women's enrollment now exceeding that of men's. More than 300 female students have enrolled in the Female Branch. All students, both male and female, attending the Higher Institute are already employed, primarily in the private sector. Their training fees at the Higher Institute and monthly stipends are covered by the Human Resource Development Fund, part of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development.

To further support human capital development in the tourism sector, especially in relation to the planned mega-tourism and entertainment projects in Saudi Arabia, there are plans to open an Entertainment Academy, one for men and one for women, and to promote the culinary arts. The Higher Institute is in discussions with the recently established Saudi Commission on Culinary Arts, that is led by a woman, to establish a campus of Le Cordon Bleu in the country. Le Cordon Bleu is the largest network of culinary and hospitality schools in the world.

Source: Interview with Mr. Mohammad Bsaiso, General Operator, Higher Institute for Hospitality and Tourism, Saudi Arabia, 22 October 2020.

Number of women and men enrolling in courses since the opening of the female branch of the Higher Institute for Tourism & Hospitality, Saudi Arabia



Source: UNWTO Academy Survey on Women and Tourism Education and Training in the Middle East, (2020) results from Higher Institute for Tourism & Hospitality, Saudi Arabia.

In an effort to compile data on the share of women and men's enrollment and graduation rates in tourism education, UNWTO jointly with the UNWTO Academy disseminated a survey to the six Middle Eastern institutions in the UNWTO TedQual network of education and training centres in the Middle East and other partners in the region. Four institutions responded.¹⁴ Case study 4.1 identifies some notable patterns among tourism education institutions in Jordan.

Access to technical and vocational training is critical for addressing the lower rate of transition from school to work among women compared with men, as well as for encouraging women to enter non-traditional sectors. One challenge that many countries report surrounds the difficulty of attracting young people, particularly women, to vocational education and training. A vocational career is a less attractive option than an academic education for both social and economic considerations. The choice to enroll in a vocational programme or training is secondary or exercised as a last resort.¹⁵

Accessibility is another challenge. As many technical and vocational institutes are located in capital cities or other urban centres, women in

14 Ammon Applied University College of Hospitality and Tourism (Jordan), the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts (Jordan), Yarmouk University (Jordan) and the Higher Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (Saudi Arabia).

15 European Training Foundation (2010c), p. 22.

rural or more remote areas face difficulty accessing these learning opportunities. This issue was specifically highlighted in interviews held with stakeholders in Egypt. One solution to address this is to introduce tourism schools or training programmes in tourist areas, which might draw young women in rural or remote areas into the sector, especially if there is the promise of employment afterwards.

Case study 4.1 **Select tourism educational institutions, Jordan**

Three education and training institutes in Jordan, two specialized and one general, responded to a survey disseminated by the UNWTO Academy designed to assess trends in the share of women's enrollment in and graduation from tourism programmes, as well as on the school-to-work transition for women and men: Ammon Applied University College (AAUC), the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts and Yarmouk University.

Women's enrollment and graduation rates

The data shared by these institutions finds that the overall numbers of women enrolling in hospitality and tourism programmes increased between 2010 and 2020 but this trend has not been consistent over time. Institutions attribute this growth to changing sociocultural norms and views towards women working in the hospitality industry, as well as better job opportunities in the sector.

In relation to men's enrollment, however, the proportion of female students has remained relatively stable at the specialized institutes, averaging 35.8% per year at the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts and 18% per year at the Ammon Applied University College. At Yarmouk University, the proportion of female students to male students has fluctuated more widely, with female students outnumbering male students in some years.

Similarly, the number of female graduates from the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts and AAUC increased over time but not by as much as the number of male graduates. For example, between 2000 to 2019, the number of female graduates at the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts tripled from 10 to 30 while the number of male graduates grew by more than nine-fold, from 7 to 68. At AAUC, the ratio of female to male graduates over this period has been 1:4. At Yarmouk University, despite wide fluctuations, the number of female and male graduates were relatively on par.

School-to-work transition

To support the school-to-work transition, the tourism educational curriculum at each institution combines pedagogy with practical training or industry placement, with more emphasis placed on practical training. Two institutions have career placement centres, as well as active alumni networks to support job-seeking students; none offer mentorship programmes to students. Nevertheless, only 30% of female graduates at the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts and Yarmouk University go on to gain employment within three years of course completion, as opposed to 70% of male graduates. According to the Royal Academy, many female graduates start their own businesses, while men join 5-star hotels and restaurants. At Ammon Applied University College, between 50% and 60% of women graduates find job placements within three years in comparison to 85% to 90% of male graduates.

The primary reason given for women's lower rates of school-to-work transition was the persistence of a "cultural of shame" related to work in hospitality for women and men, but especially for women. In addition to the stigma associated with service work, there is also the view that work in tourism conflicts with traditional values and what is appropriate for women, especially as the work environment in hotels are male-dominated, include long and unsocial hours and bring women into contact with foreigners and alcohol.

Lessons learned

Measures are needed to combat the negatively held views of employment in the tourism sector. Aware of this, some institutions offer female students full or partial scholarships; schools also travel to different governorates to raise awareness of tourism and the available job and career opportunities among high school students, including their families; and use media platforms to disseminate information on and opportunities in tourism.

Sources: UNWTO Academy (2020), *UNWTO Academy Survey on Women and Tourism Education and Training in the Middle East*, survey results from Ammon Applied University College in Hospitality and Tourism, Royal Academy of Culinary Arts and Yarmouk University.

Interview with Ammon Applied University College in Hospitality and Tourism, 1 November 2020.

On-the-job training is another way of enhancing skills among staff; it is especially more cost effective than enrolling in vocational education and training programmes. Nearly all international hotel chains conduct in-house trainings to orient their staff to service standards, as well as to support staffs' professional and career development. Research in Egypt and Jordan however found that women appear to benefit less from these opportunities than men.¹⁶ Case study 4.2 illustrates why it is important to apply a gender focus when designing any programme seeking to provide professional development opportunities for both women and men.

Case study 4.2 Pathways to Professionalism, Jordan

Pathways to Professionalism (P2P) was a labour market initiative launched as a joint effort of USAID, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Vocational Training Corporation to respond to the growing demand for qualified workers in the hospitality sector in Jordan. It sought to create jobs, enhance professionalism and improve standards at hotels through an accredited and certified scheme based on national professional standards and structured training in the workplace. Trainees who completed the program received a nationally recognized qualification in hospitality and tourism skills.

Marriott International was one of the 5-star hotels which implemented the Pathways to Professionalism training programme across all its properties in Jordan (Amman, Dead Sea and Petra). The training focussed on upgrading the skills of staff working in specific departments: food production, housekeeping, food and beverage service, concierge and front office and was open to staff who could commit to the four-month training cycle. One of the advantages of the training was that it provided staff with an opportunity to work full-time while following a structured training program at work. For women, this did not therefore conflict with their family obligations. Yet, in 2019, of the 85 trainees who had participated in the programme, only 12 (or 14%) were women.

Lessons learned

One of the main reasons behind women's low participation rates was that few women worked in the departments that the Pathways to Professionalism programme targeted. Applying a gender lens to the design of any initiative is therefore crucial for ensuring equal access to training and professional development opportunities for women. This way, programmes can address issues that inadvertently preclude women from enrolling in such trainings from the outset.

Sources: Interview with Loyal Assaf, Learning & Development Manager, Marriott International, Amman, 19 October 2020.

Marriott International (2020), *'Women's Empowerment: Jordan Marriott Hotels'* [presentation], Marriott International, Amman United States
Agency for International Development (2018), *Mid-term Performance Evaluation of Building Economic Sustainability Through Tourism (BEST) in Jordan*, USAID, Washington, D.C., p. 159.

As discussed in chapter 2 on employment, tourism education and training have a predominant focus on preparing students for jobs and careers in hospitality. Greater emphasis on entrepreneurship education and training, either as stand-alone or within existing education programmes, can help spur women's entrepreneurship in tourism, diversify job opportunities in the sector and stimulate economic growth. Saudi Arabia has rolled out entrepreneurship education nationally and the girls' section at the Technical Vocational Training Corporation was the first to incorporate such courses in its curricula. In Jordan, an innovation and entrepreneurship centre at the University of Jordan was established to provide pre-incubator facilities along with mentorship, financial resources and assistance in securing patents. In the State of Palestine, the ILO's flagship entrepreneurship

16 European Training Foundation (2010a), p. 51.



education programme, Know About Business (KAB), was successfully integrated into the curricula of vocational training centres and integrated into the curricula of secondary vocational schools.¹⁷

Elsewhere, as highlighted in the Global Report II, gender equality training provided to tourism decision makers, employers and students can contribute to greater gender equality outcomes in tourism. This training is largely absent from the sector in the Middle East region overall. UNWTO TedQual institutions in the region use the UNWTO Global Code on Ethics for Tourism as an entry point to embed gender equality in teaching and training curriculum.¹⁸ Building on this, there is an opportunity to promote gender equality training in the public and private tourism sectors to challenge prevailing attitudes on women's employment in the sector, create more inclusive workplace environments, ensure equality in access to training and professional opportunities as well as career advancement for both men and women.

4.3 Conclusion

As a region, the Middle East has narrowed the gender gap in primary and secondary education. Moreover, women's enrollment in tertiary education outpaces that of men in some countries. In tourism, there are several universities and vocational training institutes in the region. In view of the limited, publicly available data, however, it is not possible to compare the share of women's enrollment in tourism education and training with the share in other world regions and where women make up the majority of tourism students.

17 International Labour Organization (2016b), p. 34.

18 Interviews with Higher Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (Saudi Arabia) and the Ammon Applied University College for Hospitality and Tourism (Jordan).



From case study 4.1: Tourism students from Ammon Applied University, Jordan

The high levels of women's education stand in stark contrast to the levels of women's workforce participation, both in tourism and the broader economy, suggesting the existence of barriers for women to make the school-to-work transition. This was further evidenced in the primary research conducted which showed under half as many women going on to achieve employment than men within three years of graduating in the tourism institutions surveyed. Increased integration of work-placements within tourism courses would help with the transition into employment, with a majority of responding institutions reporting that a third or less of their tourism related courses include vocational training.

Other barriers that affect women in the Middle East's transition from education to employment can also be deconstructed using educative tools. A greater focus on entrepreneurship within tourism courses could spur greater numbers of women to open their own businesses, particularly at a time when many countries in the region are working to expand their tourism market.

Negatively held attitudes towards tourism employment and in particular women's participation in tourism employment, which were cited by a large majority of stakeholders interviewed, should also be combatted through awareness raising and educational campaigns targeted at improving the image of tourism.

Finally, as has been shown to be effective in other world regions, the inclusion of gender-equality training within tourism educational institutions and workplaces would have a tangible impact on their capacity to reduce barriers for women across the sector.

Chapter 5: Leadership, policy and decision-making



From case study 5.1: Maram Kokandi, general manager of a Radisson hotel in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

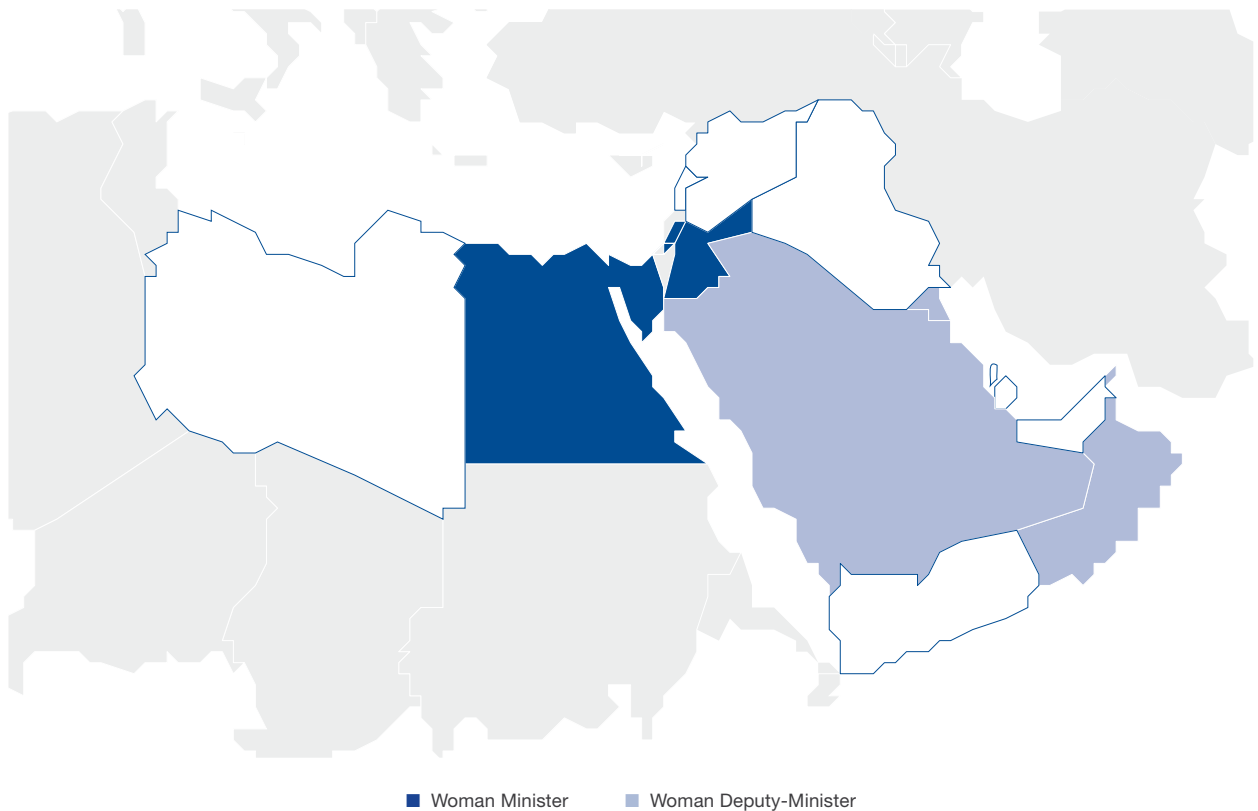


This chapter examines the context of women's leadership in the Middle East as well as the overall policy framework for gender equality and women's empowerment, including in the tourism sector. It also discusses the sociocultural and institutional barriers that limit women's participation in political and public spaces and argues for better and more gender-responsive tourism policies and greater investments in leadership development efforts by public and private tourism actors.

Key messages:

- In 2019, there were a total of three female ministers of tourism: in Egypt, Jordan and the State of Palestine. At a regional proportion of 21% in 2019, the Middle East was relatively on par with the global average proportion of tourism ministerial positions held by women of 23% in 2019.
- There is little available sex-disaggregated data on women's executive and management leadership in tourism in the Middle East. However, on the whole, the region has the lowest representation globally for women in management and leadership positions. Political will, deliberate government policies and private sector initiatives are instrumental for redressing imbalances in women's representation in tourism as is the increased presence of female role models.
- Integrating gender equality objectives in tourism national policies and strategies that are aligned with the overarching national policy framework and objectives for gender equality are vital for addressing and resourcing the gender gaps in employment, entrepreneurship, education and training and leadership.

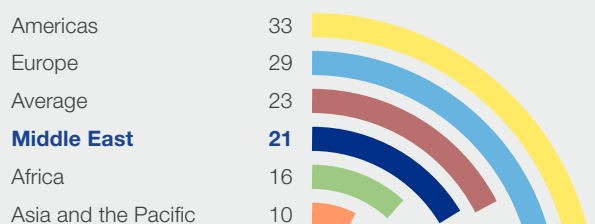
Women in Ministerial tourism positions (2019)



Source: UNWTO.

https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284422371 - Tuesday, January 12, 2021 11:12:02 AM - IP Address: 89.149.87.160

Tourism ministerial positions held by women by world region, 2019 (%)



New opportunities for strengthening and expanding women's leadership and participation in political and public life followed the Arab Spring uprisings in 2010. Women's agency and voice in political and public leadership is critical for reshaping and influencing priorities to better reflect the broader views of society as a whole and women's gender-specific concerns, values and experiences. Moreover, it is a fundamental cornerstone for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment and for driving progress towards sustainable development and peaceful and inclusive societies.

5.1 Statistical overview

The numbers of women in leadership and decision-making positions has grown worldwide, but overall progress has been slow, and women remain significantly under-represented in all aspects of decision-making. Over the past 25 years, women's representation in national parliaments globally doubled from 12% in 1995 to 24.3% in 2019.¹ In the Middle East, the average share of female parliamentarians grew to 19.4% in 2018. Much of these gains are owed to the adoption of quotas by twelve countries.²

Countries in the region have taken a number of measures to increase women's political representation. In 2019, the United Arab Emirates achieved an important milestone of gender parity in the Federal National Council³ while in Saudi Arabia women constituted 20% of parliamentarians.

Women's leadership and representation has increased at other levels of government, particularly at the ministerial level. Based on table 5.1, Egypt, Kuwait and Lebanon, as of 1 January 2020, surpassed the global average of women ministers which stands at 21.3%.⁴

Table 5.1 Women in ministerial positions, 1 January 2020 (% of total)

Country	Female	Country	Female
Bahrain	4.3	Oman	11.1
Egypt	24.2	Qatar	7
Iraq	4.5	Saudi Arabia	0
Jordan	13.8	Syrian Arab Republic	13.8
Kuwait	21.4	United Arab Emirates	16.7
Lebanon	31.6		

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women (2020).

1 United Nations Economic and Social Council (2020), p. 61.

2 Inter-Parliamentary Union (2019), Women in national parliaments (as of 1 February 2019), IPU, New York.

3 Gulf News Web Report (2018), 'Women to have 50% on UAE Federal National Council', *Gulf News*, published 8 December 2018 (online), available at: www.gulfnews.com (24-09-2020).

4 Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women (2020), *Women in Politics 2020 Map*, IPU and UN Women, New York (online), available at: www.ipu.org (24-09-2020).

In tourism, there were a total of three female ministers in 2019: in Egypt, Jordan and the State of Palestine, putting the Middle East as a region on relative par with the global average proportion of tourism ministerial positions held by women, 21% and 23% respectively.⁵

Additionally, women are found in executive government positions in tourism, including as the Vice Minister for Strategy and Investment in Tourism (Saudi Arabia), the Under Secretary of Tourism (Oman); the Vice Minister for Tourism (Egypt). Kuwait and Lebanon have also previously had high ranking women in tourism, including the Assistant Undersecretary for Tourism Affairs and the Director-General of Tourism respectively. In Egypt and Jordan, women also lead the national tourism boards.

Having female role models in spaces traditionally dominated by men matters for women.

According to stakeholders in Egypt, opening the tourism portfolio for the first time to a female minister in 2018 broke the glass ceiling and led to opportunities for other women leaders, such as the Vice Minister to come into or rise up in the Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism.



Layali Nashashibi, Director of Public and Community Relations, Mövenpick Hotels, Jordan

Data on women in executive and management leadership positions in the private sector is scarce in the MENA region overall. As a proxy measure for women in management, ILO relies on the indicator of legislators, senior officials and managers, combining the public and private sectors in a single occupational category.⁶ The Middle East ranks lowest globally for women in management and leadership positions. There is an even weaker presence of women as executives: 17% in the United Arab Emirates; 16% in Egypt and 7% in Qatar.⁷ The share of women CEOs in the MENA region is 13% versus a 21% similar share in all developing countries' regions.⁸ Of the companies surveyed, ILO found no more than 7% had women as board presidents.⁹ In the GCC countries, the share of women represented on company boards did not exceed 2%.¹⁰

Although there is little available sex-disaggregated data, women's corporate leadership in tourism likely reflects similar trends given women's low labour force participation rates in the sector, the occupational segregation they experience, the glass ceiling effect as well as the inherent tensions reconciling family and work responsibilities.

5 World Tourism Organization (2019a), p. 65.

6 International Labour Organization (2016b), p. 14.

7 Ibid., p. 8.

8 Ibid., p. 8.

9 Ibid., p. 8.

10 McKinsey and Company (2014), *GCC Women in Leadership – from the first to the norm*, McKinsey and Company, New York (online), available at: <https://es.uefa.com> (24-09-2020), p. 16.

5.2 Key issues

The overall policy framework for gender equality and women's empowerment has been strengthened across the region. Arab countries have stepped up national efforts to advance women and promote gender equality in several ways. Interviews with stakeholders in Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates all acknowledged greater political support at the highest levels of government for women's political and economic inclusion and leadership. This political support also finds expression in national development strategies, which are aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As well, all 14 countries in the region have national women's machineries.¹¹ While the degree of influence of national women's machineries vary by country, several have developed National Action Plans on Gender Equality to support gender mainstreaming and the inclusion of women's priorities across policy and sectoral areas.

Many countries have undertaken legislative reforms to facilitate women's participation in the labour market and enhance their rights at work as discussed in chapter 2. Yet, women's labour force participation remains stubbornly low in many countries. Progress is hampered when gender equality issues are not addressed in a comprehensive and coordinated manner through an integrated and coordinated set of policies or actions. As case study 2.3 highlights, Saudi Arabia has been able to increase women's labour force participation by addressing their barriers to employment holistically, including through the provision of affordable childcare and transport services.

Addressing the gender gaps in employment, entrepreneurship, education and training, leadership in the tourism sector requires the integration of gender equality objectives in tourism national policies, programmes and budgets as well as institutional frameworks that are strongly aligned with the overarching national policy framework and objectives for gender equality.

Few tourism strategies in the region incorporate gender equality outcomes or adequately mainstream gender in the policy, budget and institutional framework. Three of the five strategies¹² reviewed included a focus on women to varying degrees; the remainder had a gender blind approach. Egypt's Tourism Reform Program (2018) stands out as a good practice not only for having a specific goal area on women's economic empowerment¹³, but also that it builds on the economic pillar of the



11 Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia (2019a), *Cultivating Resilient Institutions in the Arab Region: National Women's Machineries in Challenging Times*, ESCWA, Beirut (online), available at: www.unescwa.org (28-11-2020), p. 16.

12 See: Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (n.d.), *Jordan National Strategy for Tourism (2010–2015)*, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Amman, p. 65.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Tourism (2020), p. 6.

Sultanate of Oman (2016), *Oman Tourism Strategy 2040*, Ministry of Tourism of the Sultanate of Oman, Muscat.

13 It also bears noting that this reform initiative was launched under the tenure of the first (and former) female Minister of Tourism in Egypt.

National Strategy for the Empowerment of Women 2030. To achieve this goal, the Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism has partnered with the National Council of Women to:

- Increase the numbers of women in the tourism workforce;
- Address women’s low school-to-work transition;
- Ensure safe work environments, free of sexual harassment; and
- Improve the image of tourism as a profession.

Although there are more women in the Middle East moving into middle and senior management positions in tourism, especially in the hospitality sector, they are still far outnumbered by men in these positions. This is a global reality in the hospitality sector across all world regions. Like women in Africa, Asia, Latin America as well as Europe, women’s leadership in tourism in the Middle East (as well as other sectors) is constrained by their care and family obligations.¹⁴ Promotion and career progression among women might also be limited by the “glass ceiling”.¹⁵ Occupational segregation pigeon-holes women in certain positions that does not allow them to progress in the hierarchy to become assistant or general managers. Further, employer perceptions of women’s professional commitment might be influenced by a sociocultural context where primacy is placed on women’s family obligations and responsibilities. This results in women being overlooked for training and professional growth opportunities, including promotions.

There is evidence of more active leadership efforts by the public and private sector to support women progress to management and leadership roles. The United Arab Emirates have launched initiatives to promote women’s greater inclusion in public and economic life as described in snapshot 5.1.

Snapshot 5.1 **Gender Balance Council, United Arab Emirates**

The United Arab Emirates Gender Balance Council, created in 2015, works to reduce the gender gap across all government sectors and to achieve gender balance in decision-making positions, including in the workplace. In conjunction with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, it has jointly issued *The Gender Balance Guide: Actions for UAE Organisations* to support government, semi-governmental enterprises and private companies achieve gender balance in leadership and decision-making positions. This is done through the implementation of policies and actions in the areas of non-discrimination in recruitment, promotion, training and pay; fostering flexible working practices; and using gender-responsive budgeting to ensure budget allocations for gender balance initiatives.

Source: Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (2017), *Gender Balance Guide: Actions for UAE Organisations*, OECD Publishing, Paris (online), available at: www.oecd.org (24-09-2020).

In the tourism sector, there are also examples of private sector-led initiatives, namely international hotel chains, that have adopted diversity and talent management strategies to nurture female leadership and advance women’s careers as shown in snapshots 5.2 and 5.3.

14 See: World Tourism Organization (2019a), p. 118.

15 Campus-Soria, J. et al. (2011), ‘Patterns of occupational segregation by gender in the hospitality industry’, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, volume 30, pp. 91–102.

Snapshot 5.2 **RiiSE, Accor, worldwide**

Featured in the *Global Report on Women in Tourism – Second Edition*, under its previous name *Women at Accor Generation*, the newly branded RiiSE is a 29,000-member-strong global network that aims to overcome gender stereotypes, promote gender equality and offer support to women within the Accor group. Through RiiSE, AccorHotels' junior female managers are offered the support of a mentor, as well as training and an opportunity to share experiences. The mentor pairings offer added value for all.

Source: Accor Group (2019), *RiiSE, already 1 year of commitment and support!*, Accor Group, Issy-les-Moulineaux (online), available at: www.group.accor.com (24-09-2020).

Snapshot 5.3 **STEPS Programme, Radisson Hotel Group, Saudi Arabia**

The STEPS programme is part of the Radisson Hotel Group's wider Balanced Leadership initiative which is implemented in Saudi Arabia. The initiative works across three different pillars:

- 1. Corporate policies:** Corporate policies are reviewed to identify barriers to women's career advancement. Issues such as flexible working conditions for female managers and leaders in order to retain female employees and foster their leadership potential are considered;
- 2. Training and development:** Women are trained on how to become better leaders with a focus on communicating with better impact, career management and life balance overall; and
- 3. Behavioural change:** This pillar tackles the unconscious bias and challenging the status quo.

Source: Shambler, T. (2017), 'Why balanced leadership matters: Stephanie Aboujaoude', *Arabian Business*, published 16 July 2017 (online), available at: www.arabianbusiness.com (28-11-2020).

Case study 5.1 **Maram Kokandi, General Manager, Park Inn by Radisson, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia**

"Hospitality is in our blood; it is embedded in our culture and traditions."

Maram Kokandi made history in 2017 by becoming one of the first Saudi woman appointed as a General Manager with the Radisson Hotel Group. She led the opening and runs the operations of the Park Inn by Radisson hotel in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Her appointment coincided with the launch of the Kingdom's Vision 2030, which has as one of its cornerstones women's empowerment.

Ms Kokandi's career in tourism sector was accidental. Her desire to work coincided with a time when the world of work was becoming more open to Saudi women, including jobs in the hospitality sector. Previously, Saudi women's employment was limited to teaching and medicine. At the suggestion of a friend, she found work in reception with an international hotel brand. In the beginning, she recalls encountering disapproval from a few hotel guests who were surprised to find a young Saudi woman in that role. Overwhelmingly, however, she felt supported and encouraged. In many ways, she believes her presence helped to normalize work in the hospitality sector for Saudi women and allowed others to imagine their own sisters or daughters occupying this space. This pushed her to want to excel in the sector and to disrupt the narrow view of what work in the hospitality sector meant for women. She wanted to prove that as a Saudi woman, you can have greater ambitions and aim for bigger positions. She set out to become a role model for women and building greater awareness of the hospitality sector was key.

Her career path led her to work with other international brand and concept hotels in Jeddah and in Dubai. A chance meeting with Prince Sultan bin Salman (a former Minister of Tourism) at the Arabian Travel Market in Dubai led to an international scholarship to study hospitality management in the United Kingdom. She was the first Saudi women to receive an international scholarship by Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Higher Education and Tourism. She returned to the Middle East following her studies, taking up various hospitality roles before taking up her position with the Radisson Hotel Group.

Role models like Maram Kokandi are needed to show young women in Saudi Arabia the way forward.

Sources: Interview with Ms Maram Kokandi, 13 October 2020.

Political will, deliberate government policies and private sector initiatives are therefore instrumental for redressing imbalances in women's representation in tourism. Networking and mentors are also essential for promoting women's leadership and empowerment and supporting more deliberate career guidance more deliberate career guidance and career planning.¹⁶ There is a correspondence between improving political empowerment for women and increased numbers of women in senior roles in the labour market.¹⁷ This underscores the importance of nurturing female role models and showcasing their achievements and contributions to success.

5.3 Conclusion

Women's role in tourism leadership needs to be assessed within the broader context of women's leadership and decision-making roles, where women are still under-represented in political and public life. Consistent with the findings of the Global Report II, women's under-representation is tied to gender discrimination, few role models, women's concentration in lower skills and lower paid areas, as well as unpaid care and domestic work. Where political will has been exercised, however, the numbers of women in leadership have increased as can be seen in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Few tourism strategies in the region adequately incorporate gender equality outcomes or mainstream gender in the policy, budget and institutional framework. It is important to recognize that though policies might appear to be unbiased, men and women have different needs and priorities and therefore require different solutions.

Progress on gender equality and women's empowerment is best achieved through integrated, coherent and coordinated policies and actions which relies on a range of partnerships with other public sector actors, the private sector and civil society. Crucially, women's agency and voice must be at the center of all efforts so that policies better respond to their concerns and experiences.

16 Boone, J. et al. (2013), 'Rethinking a Glass Ceiling in the Hospitality Industry', *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, volume 54 (3), pp. 230–239.

17 Kemp, L. (2020), *Having women in leadership roles is more than important than ever, here's why*, World Economic Forum [electronic], available at: www.weforum.org (24-09-2020).

https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789248442237.1 - Tuesday, January 12, 2021 11:12:02 AM - IP Address:89.149.87.160

Chapter 6: Community and civil society

From snapshot 6.1: Nour Al Huda Akhras in employment following training from Arc en ciel



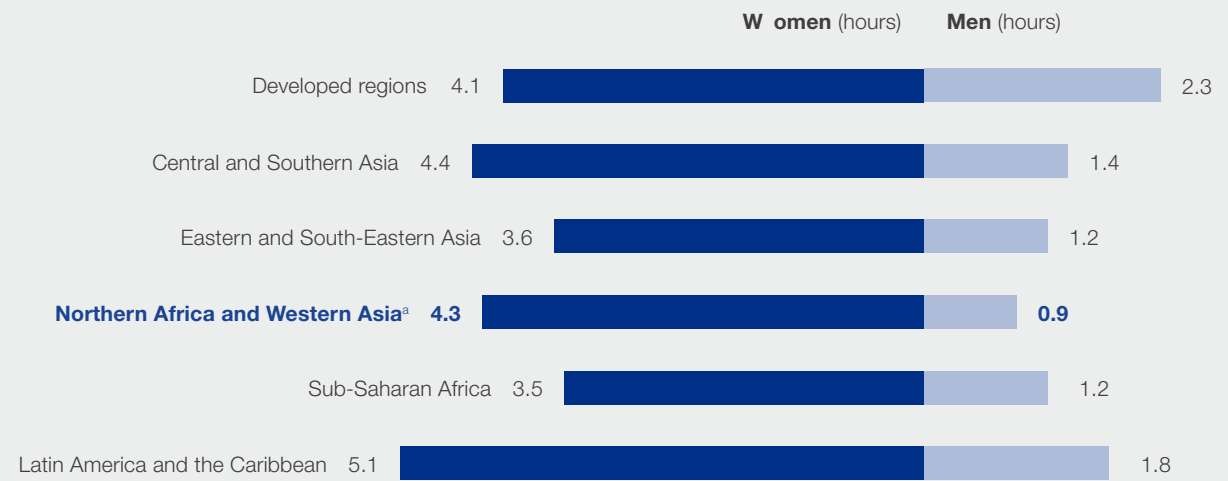
Community

Key messages:

This chapter considers the potential of tourism to empower women economically, politically, psychologically and socially, including through opportunities for leadership in community and civil society.

- Women perform between four and six times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men¹ in the Middle East, representing the widest gender gap of any region. This also exposes them to informal and vulnerable employment, where jobs are typically associated with low pay and little or no access to social protection. It also drastically constrains their time and ability to participate in public and community life.
- The development and growth of alternative tourism models in the region by public, private and civil society actors have led to important employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for women in rural and remote areas which have not only enhanced their livelihoods but has contributed to strengthened household and community decision-making roles. They have not however resulted in a reduction of women’s care work.
- Reducing women’s disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work is vital for increasing women’s leadership and participation in tourism at all levels.

Amount of time spent by women and men on unpaid domestic work and unpaid care work in hours per day, averaged by region: 2001–2018 (latest available)



a) Four countries reporting data from UNWTO Middle East Region: Egypt, Oman, Qatar and State of Palestine.

Source: United Nations Statistics Division (2020), *The World’s Women 2020: Trends and Statistics portal*, UNSD, New York (online), available at [worlds-women-2020-data-undesa.hub.arcgis.com](https://www.unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284422371) [accessed 01-12-2020].

Tourism in some parts of the world offers considerable potential for women’s activism and leadership in community and political life.² The *Global Report on Women in Tourism – Second Edition* (Global Report II) drew attention to the importance of looking beyond the economic benefits that the tourism sector generates to consider how it can be used to promote inclusive, more equitable sustainable development, especially in rural areas. It also detailed examples of how tourism had bolstered women’s participation and decision-making at local levels over the development, management and use of resources. Indeed, for many countries in the Middle East region, national tourism strategies have sought to ensure more balanced regional development by integrating local communities across the tourism value chain.

2 Pritchard, A. (2014), p. 316.

UNWTO, in collaboration with the Saudi Arabian 2020 G20 Presidency, recently developed the *AIUla Framework for Inclusive Community Development through Tourism*³ to aid national governments in advancing tourism's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals. Gender equality and women's empowerment is one of the central tenets of the framework, amplifying tourism's empowering potential for women at a community level and looking to ensure that no-one is left behind.

6.1 Statistical overview

As discussed in the preceding chapters, the gender division of labour in the Middle East prioritizes women's role as the primary caregivers and men as the main breadwinners. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Arab States region has the largest proportion of women who work full time as unpaid carers at 59.9%.⁴ Even when women do work, there is little reduction or redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work, causing many to leave the formal labour market, especially once they are married and have children.

AIUla Framework for Inclusive Community Development through Tourism (2020)



Under the leadership of the 2020 G20 Saudi Presidency, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the G20 Tourism Working Group have developed the AIUla Framework for Inclusive Community Development through Tourism to help fulfil the sector's potential to contribute to and achieve inclusive community development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Placing inclusive community development at the heart of tourism policies through education, investment, innovation and technology can transform the livelihoods of many millions of women and men, while also preserving our environment and our culture and drive a more inclusive and sustainable recovery of tourism.

Source: World Tourism Organization (2020), *AIUla Framework for Inclusive Community Development through Tourism*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284422135>.

While comprehensive data is scarce, the United Nations Economic and Social Council for Western Asia estimates that in the Middle East women perform almost six times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men representing the widest gender gap of any region.⁵ The United Nations Statistics Division calculates that women in the region perform almost five times as much, again representing the widest gender gap of any region.⁶ And in rural areas, women tend to spend more time than their urban counterparts on unpaid care and domestic work due to poorer access to infrastructure such as running water or labour-saving technology.⁷

As a result, women may be drawn into informal and vulnerable employment where jobs are typically associated with low pay and little or no access to social protection. A substantial proportion of women in Egypt (41.1%) and the State

- 3 World Tourism Organization (2020a), *AIUla Framework for Inclusive Community Development through Tourism*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284422159>.
- 4 International Labour Organization (2020f), *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2000*, ILO, Geneva, p. 51.
- 5 United Nations Economic and Social Council for Western Asia (2020), p. 20.
- 6 United Nations Statistics Division (2020).
- 7 International Labour Organization (2018).

of Palestine (40.4%) were found in informal employment in 2018; these are the only two countries in the region for which ILO has data.⁸ The top three countries with women in vulnerable employment include Yemen (67.3%), Egypt (34%) and the State of Palestine (22.1%).⁹ Sizeable proportions of women in Egypt and Yemen are also found as contributing family workers, 40.1% and 25.3% respectively.¹⁰

6.2 Key issues

Recent years have witnessed the development and growth of alternative tourism models in the region to ensure more equitable regional development and in response to changing tourist preferences for more culturally authentic experiences. These models include, *inter alia*, rural tourism, nature-based tourism, heritage tourism, responsible tourism, ecotourism and pro-poor tourism.¹¹

Sustainable tourism development can generate a range of economic, social and environmental benefits if planned and managed effectively and in partnership with communities as detailed in box 6.1.¹²

Ensuring that tourism contributes to women's empowerment, especially in more remote or marginalized communities, requires deliberate policy and programme actions that address women's household roles and constraints.

Jordan has long been an innovative leader in the field of sustainable tourism. The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities has promoted public-private partnerships aimed at expanding destinations and diversifying experiences that build on the country's natural and cultural heritage and authentic presentations of rural life. This has the added benefit of creating job opportunities for communities in more remote areas and also expands awareness of the different opportunities that tourism creates. Ministries of Tourism in Egypt and Oman have or plan to establish Centers of Sustainable Tourism, which will facilitate a greater focus on women.

For example, Baraka Destinations, a woman-led social enterprise, has helped to transform Um Qais, a town in northern Jordan that is home to the ancient city of Gadara, into a secondary tourism site. By establishing a guest house, *Beit al Baraka* ("House of Blessings") in the village and working with community partners to design tourist experiences showcasing their town to travellers and tourists, Baraka Destinations has succeeded in not only increasing the time spent by tourists in Um Qais from 2 hours to at least 2 days (or even longer); but also in increasing average tourist spending by six-fold from USD 10 to USD 63 per day. 73% of the tourism revenue generated remains in the village, benefitting the community and the local economy. As tourism to Um Qais has grown, Baraka Destinations has also invested in building the town's tourism infrastructure, including direct and indirect tourism services. By localizing the supply chain and creating additional tourism experiences, the number of community partners has grown from 6 to 130, 63% of whom are women.

8 International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT (2019b).

9 International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT (2019b).

10 Ibid.

11 Asli, D.A. et al. (2013), p. 6.

12 Ibid., pp. 16–17.

Economic benefits	<p>Increased local income and poverty alleviation.</p> <p>Economic recovery.</p> <p>Increased flow of resources towards local level development initiatives.</p> <p>Improved infrastructure.</p> <p>Provision and creation of markets for existing products and services.</p> <p>Development of linkages among sectors.</p>
Social benefits	<p>Enhanced human capital through training and education for locals to improve skills and capacity relevant to planning, production, business development and management of business-related tourism services.</p> <p>Enhanced social capital, such as support on community institutions, improved capacity of, linkages between, and involvement of public, non-governmental, private, local, civil society and NGOs in tourism development.</p> <p>Good governance through participatory planning at all levels.</p> <p>Community development, including enhanced community identity, sense of pride, social cohesion, community empowerment.</p> <p>Enhanced quality of life through improved/upgraded public facilities, sanitation and sewage and transport systems; electricity network and telecommunications.</p> <p>Preserving and promoting the local culture, historical heritage and natural resources in partnership with communities.</p> <p>Improved inter- and intracultural relations and links through cultural exchange and dialogue between local community members and tourists.</p>
Environmental benefits	<p>Sustainable use and development of sensitive natural capital environments.</p> <p>Conservation of local natural resources.</p> <p>Use of a wide range of resources rather than depending on one intensively.</p> <p>Encouraging non-consumptive uses of natural resources.</p> <p>Increased environmental awareness at the national and local levels.</p> <p>Improved understanding of the relationship between the environment and sustainable economic development.</p>

Source: Asli, D.A. et al. (2013), *Community-Based Tourism: Finding the Equilibrium in COMCEC Context*, COMCEC Coordination Office, Ankara. pp. 16–17.

In Lebanon, in the absence of a national tourism strategy or a national tourism board, several community and civil society-driven initiatives have focussed on empowering women and rural communities through tourism, especially domestic tourism. The Food Heritage Foundation is an example of one such organization. To support rural livelihoods through the promotion of food heritage and tourism, it created the first food trail (*Darb el Karam*) that link nine villages in the Higher Shouf and West Bekaa. Visitors experience a day with a community, taste local culinary specialties and learn about the food traditions of the region. The Foundation has also worked with women to operate homestays and guest houses which is an important local actor in rural areas in Lebanon. Through their participation in these tourism schemes, women in rural areas have been able to generate and increase household incomes. One woman, in fact, has developed her own brand of products that are now widely sold in Beirut.

Snapshot 6.1 and case studies 6.1 and 6.2 describe other sustainable tourism development initiatives implemented by civil society actors in Lebanon or supported by the government in Oman, which aim to strengthen women's livelihoods, especially in rural or remote areas.

Case study 6.1 **Women's Association of Deir El Ahmar (WADA), Lebanon**



Dunia Khoury founded the Women's Association of Deir El Ahmar (WADA), a non-governmental organization, to empower women in rural areas. Deir El Ahmar is located in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon's most important agricultural region, and is on the road that links the ancient Roman town of Baalbeck to the ancient seaport of Byblos.

Among its many goals, WADA seeks to promote rural tourism and to improve the living standards of Deir El Ahmar while simultaneously safeguarding the village's natural, cultural and historical heritage. Through WADA, Ms Khoury helped open the eyes of the community to the potential role of tourism in improving rural livelihoods and boosting the local economy. With funding from UNDP, WADA mapped the historical attractions in the area, raised community awareness of the heritage assets, organized community trainings, including for local guides, on topics such as cultural conservation and hospitality and hygiene. WADA also created a network of guest houses where families earned additional income by opening their homes to travellers. They also created

three hiking trails: a green route, a wine route, as well as a religious route. As the number of tourists grew, Deir El Ahmar now owns a hotel and motels, as well as small restaurants.

WADA has become a reference point for all organizations and institutions that want to work and implement projects in Deir El Ahmar, including the Ministry of Tourism and local development councils. Women from the rural area, through their engagement in WADA, have also come to play a more active role in community development and in community decision-making. Even dynamics at household level have changed as women have become income earners. According to Ms Khoury:

"Before women had no role, now they are very strong. Women are fighting to have a role in decision-making, and, as a result, the opinion of men towards them has changed."

Sources: Interview with Ms. Dunia Khoury, President, WADA, 20 October 2020.

Case study 6.2 **Zaree, Oman**

In 2013, the Oman Tourism Development Authority (OMRAN) launched Zaree, a women's tourism microenterprise, to empower young women in the port city of Khasab, a prime destination for international cruise ships. Realizing that the community was not benefitting from cruise ships' stop-overs, OMRAN trained over 25 women on providing traditional Omani experiences to tourists, including the opportunity to try traditional hand-made Omani garments and henna, learn common Arabic phrases and sample the local cuisine. The training also focused on strengthening women's interpersonal skills to help them better communicate with tourists and improve the quality of the experience. To further enhance women's earning opportunities, OMRAN also brokered a relationship between Zaree and Atana Hotels, a local hotel chain in Oman, to allow women to provide cultural hosting experiences for tourists.

Lessons learned

Tourism can and does provide women with entrepreneurship and business opportunities that can empower them socially and economically, as well as enhance their community leadership. In addition to increasing their income, women in Khasab have become important local ambassadors for representing Oman and serve as community role models. Moreover, their success has helped shift, once negatively held views of tourism, and earned greater support for women's participation in the sector.

Sources: Interview with Badriya Siyabi, 23 October 2020.

Sustainable Square (2015), *Oman Tourism Development Company: Social Return on Investment Analysis 2015*, Al Anan Printing Press, Muscat.



Arc en ciel supports the integration and development of marginalized communities, including people with disabilities and refugee populations, in Lebanon through five key programmes, one of which focusses on responsible tourism.

Arc en ciel engages local communities in the preservation and promotion of the natural and cultural heritage of the Shouf and Bekaa regions through employment and skills training. As an employer, Arcenciel recruits community members to operate its ecolodge, Ecolodge de Taanayel, and restaurant, Khan al Makssoud. It also provides training, particularly to women in vulnerable situations, on traditional methods of food preservation (mouneh), which are sold through the Khan, as well as the preparation of traditional rural cuisine served at the restaurant, such as Wafaa Joseph Samaha (picture).

In a context where employment and income generating opportunities are limited for marginalized women and communities, such opportunities are invaluable for enhancing household incomes and strengthening their social integration.

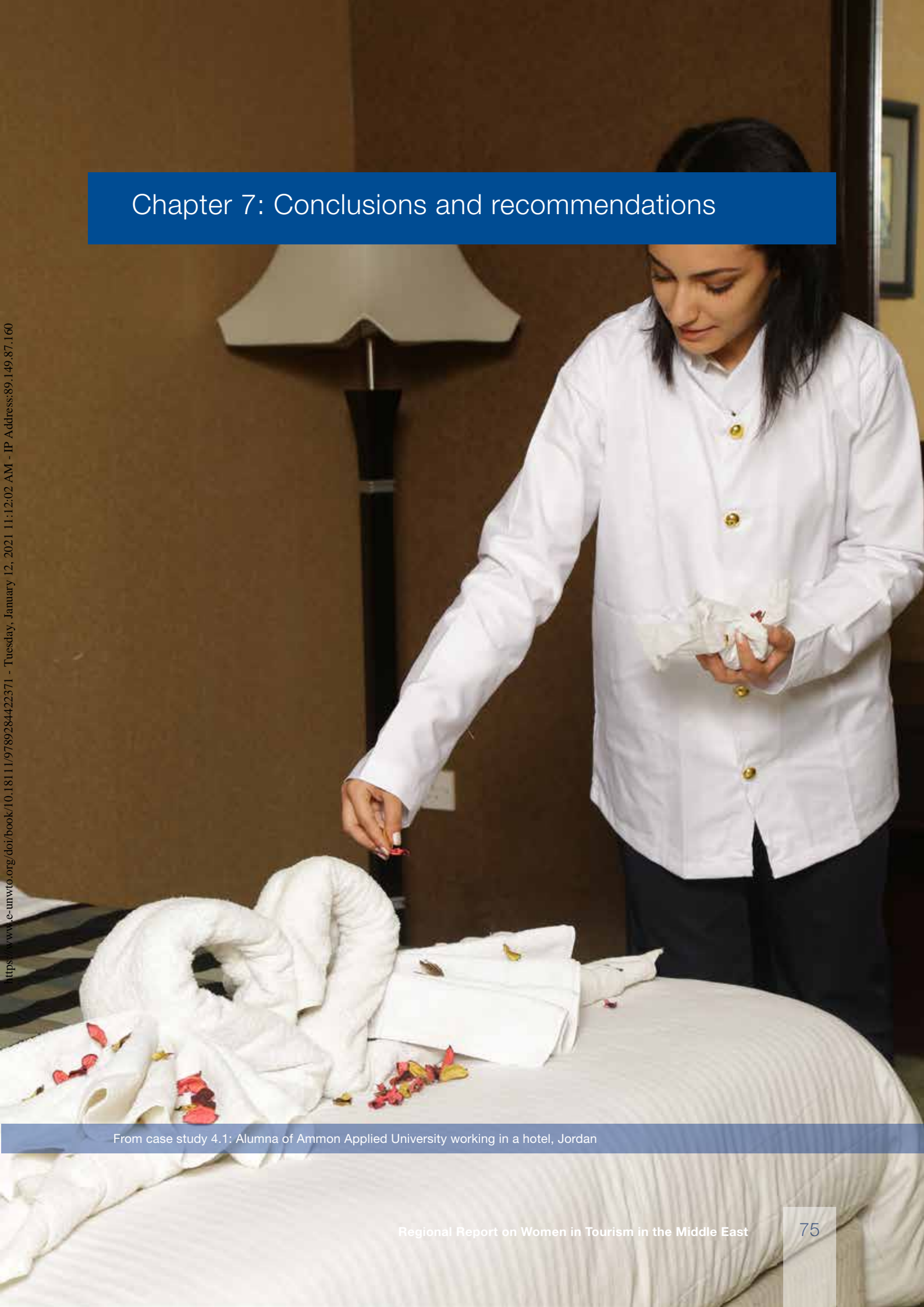
Source: Interview with Mr. Johnny Hayek, Managing Director, Arcenciel, October 2020.

6.3 Conclusion

The case studies featured above highlight the importance of partnership and collaboration with communities, whether the initiative is led by civil society organizations, the public or the private sector. When links are made and strengthened between tourism actors and communities, women's empowerment is more substantive, a finding that is consistent with Global Report II. Tourism has led to an increase in women's incomes, as well as strengthened their status and decision-making in the household. Families have largely been supportive of women's participation in tourism, despite initial misgivings. Women's public roles have also been enhanced and redefined, and often have extended beyond the community. In all the examples, women are often called on to share advice and their experiences; some have been interviewed on radio talk shows or have met with heads of state or other government representatives. Nurturing role models that are from within the community is very empowering for rural women and encourages more women to come forward.

However, women's engagement in community tourism has not lessened the burden of unpaid care and domestic work. This remains a core responsibility of women and is viewed as such by both women and men. Reducing the disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work that women bear in the region will be vital if many countries in the Middle East are to increase women's leadership and participation in tourism at all levels. Accessible child-care facilities, affordable transport and flexible working patterns could help to facilitate such a reduction however, as in other world regions, the biggest change will only be made possible with an equivalent shift in societal views on the division of domestic tasks and responsibilities.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and recommendations



From case study 4.1: Alumna of Ammon Applied University working in a hotel, Jordan

7.1 Conclusions

It is important to highlight the acute lack of available, sex-disaggregated data in the tourism sector in the Middle East and the urgent need to improve the collection of comparable tourism data and gender statistics across the region. Sex-disaggregated data is particularly critical for developing evidence-based policies and programmes to strengthen the tourism sector's contribution to the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

There are currently two international United Nations adopted standards for measuring tourism, both advanced by UNWTO: the *International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008 (IRTS 2008)* and the *Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework 2008 (TSA: RMF 2008)*. Each of these recommends statistics on employment in the tourism industries to be disaggregated by sex.¹ However, the coverage of this data is sparse as demonstrated throughout this report, and efforts need to be made by countries in the Middle East, and across the world, to develop the production of this information.

In addition, UNWTO is currently developing the Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST)² statistical framework. An important aim of this framework is to consider the social elements of sustainability in tourism, such as the role of women, as a central part of tourism statistics. This is done precisely in response to the needs, such as those exposed in this report, for better data on women in tourism to support policy. Different aspects of the MST framework are being piloted in several countries ahead of presentation to the UN Statistical Commission for consideration as an official standard. Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Oman from the Middle East region are currently represented on the MST Working Group of Experts.

Boosting women's participation in tourism in the Middle East will rely on greater and *smarter* policy, and resource incentives and investments to catalyze direct and indirect opportunities for women's employment, entrepreneurship, education and training, leadership and decision-making, and community development. While regional and country level data and research in these areas are limited, the preceding sections point to both opportunities that can be leveraged and challenges to be addressed so that the tourism sector can generate more inclusive, equitable and sustainable development.

1 More specifically, the IRTS 2008 (para. 7.27) states that "in order to adequately analyse employment in the tourism industries, it is recommended that countries collect the following key variables for each of the tourism industries [...] and for the tourism industries as a whole:

- Employment by age group, sex and nationality/country of residence (if relevant);
- Employment by type of establishments (size, formal, informal, etc.);
- Employment classified by occupation and status in employment;
- Permanent/temporary employment expressed in terms of number of jobs, hours of work, full-time equivalent, etc.;
- Employment by educational attainment;
- Hours of work (normal/usual, actually worked, paid for); and
- Working time arrangements".

See: United Nations (2010).

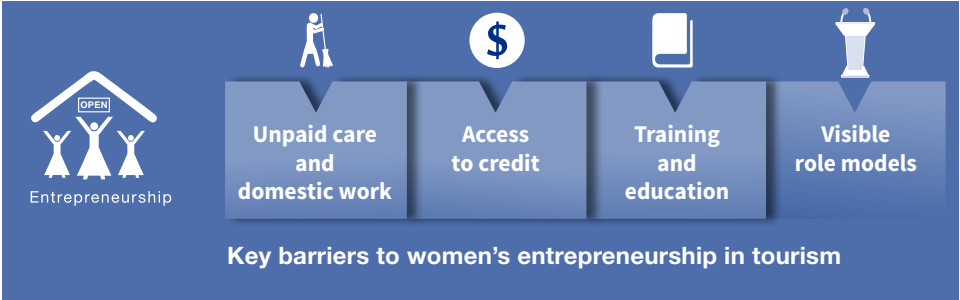
In addition, the TSA: RMF 2008 identifies 10 tables that should comprise a Tourism Satellite Account with one of them (TSA Table 7) focusing specifically on employment in the tourism industries and which recommends disaggregation of jobs by sex.

See: United Nations; Commission of the European Communities, Eurostat; World Tourism Organization and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010).

2 See for further consultation: World Tourism Organization (n.d.), '*Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism*' (online), available at: www.unwto.org/standards/measuring-sustainability-tourism (01-10-2020).



The Middle East is an anomaly among other world regions in that tourism employs less than 9% of women in the labour force.³ This stands in stark contrast to the 54% of women who are employed in tourism worldwide and means that while tourism is generating jobs throughout the economy, women are not sufficiently accessing them. Part of the explanation is rooted in women’s continued preferences for more secure, better paying employment in the public sector; gender-based discrimination, occupational segregation, restrictive social norms and laws, as well as family-work responsibilities. The other part of the explanation lies in the poor image in which tourism is socially and professionally held, influencing women’s choice of studies and career options. This too must be addressed.



While there is a critical data gap in the area of women’s entrepreneurship in tourism, women entrepreneurs across the region share a common set of barriers that limit the growth potential of their businesses. This includes a lack of access to credit, technology, training, as well as mentors/role models and business/financial networks. Private capital initiatives, including women-led investor networks, have emerged and are contributing to a stronger ecosystem of support for women’s entrepreneurial ideas and businesses. It is crucial that policy, program and institutional linkages are made to connect women entrepreneurs in tourism to these vital sources of support.

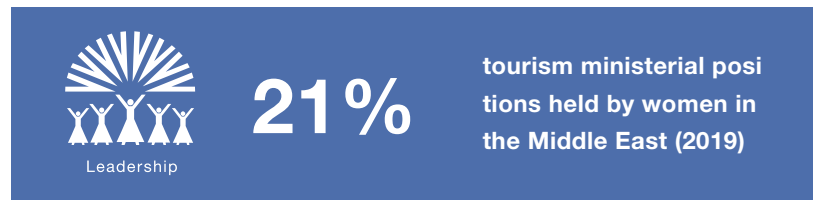


The gender gap in education in the Middle East more often than not favours shows more women than men enrolling and graduating, standing in stark contrast to workforce participation levels. There is a need for school-to-work barriers in tourism for women to be broken down, with increased work-

3 As detailed in chapter 1.3, ILO employment data on ‘accommodation and food service activities’ has been used as a proxy for tourism employment.

4 Surveyed institutions: Ammon Applied University College in Hospitality and Tourism (Jordan), Royal Academy of Culinary Arts (Jordan) and Yarmouk University (Jordan).

placements and vocational training offering benefits in this regard. In addition, the deconstruction of negative attitudes towards tourism employment and the reduction of sociocultural barriers could be achieved through awareness raising and other educational tools aimed at a wider segment of the population.



While rates of women's leadership rates in political, public and corporate governance are well below global averages, the past ten years in the Middle East have seen increasing numbers of women enter politics, either as elected candidates at national and local levels or as appointed ministers, including in tourism. Progress in the public and corporate domain is being made through deliberate strategies to increase women's representation in middle and senior management in the hospitality sector. The presence and visibility of women in leadership positions is vital to helping motivate women to advance in their careers. Women's access to and continued role in leadership positions in the Middle East however continues to be challenged by an interlinked set of constraints, including discriminatory laws and practices, institutional barriers and sociocultural norms and practices that still privilege women's traditional roles.



The disproportionate burden of women's unpaid care and domestic work not only limits their participation in public life but renders them into informal and vulnerable employment. Ensuring that tourism contributes to women's empowerment, especially in more remote or marginalized communities, requires deliberate policy and programme actions that alleviate women's household roles and constraints rather than exacerbate them.

Thematic area: Education and training

Goal: Tourism education and training promotes gender equality and women's empowerment

- Introduce a national tourism accreditation system to support professional recognition of tourism jobs; National tourism administrations
- Make work placements an integral part of tourism education and training to give young women opportunities to gain practical experience; National tourism administrations; educational and TVET institutions; private sector
- Promote further academic research on women in tourism; Educational institutions
- Promote tourism as an attractive sector for women and raise awareness of the diversity of jobs and careers available through national public education and media campaigns; and National tourism administrations; educational and TVET institutions
- Develop targeted training programmes for women in tourism, including different levels of skills training. National tourism administrations; educational and TVET institutions

Thematic area: Leadership and decision-making

Goal: Women are represented and influential in decision-making spaces at all levels of the tourism sector

- Integrate gender equality perspectives in national tourism strategies with clear objectives and adequate budgets; National tourism administrations; national mechanisms for gender equality
- Develop national gender equality strategies for the tourism sector; National tourism administrations
- Promote initiatives to support women's career progression to senior positions, through mentoring and leadership development programmes; Private sector
- Facilitate gender-equality training and a sensitization of the barriers women face as part of gender-equality strategies and programmes; and National tourism administrations; national mechanisms for gender equality; regional and local authorities; private sector; civil society
- Support women's representation and leadership in tourism trade unions. Private sector; trade unions

Thematic area: Community and civil society

Goal: Tourism supports women to address gender inequalities in homes and communities

- Support women's cooperatives and women-led tourist organizations; and Civil society
- Ensure women's meaningful participation and decision-making in programme planning, implementation and M&E at national and local levels. Civil society

Thematic area: Measurement for better policies

Goal: Systematically collect and report data on the tourism sector that is disaggregated by sex

- Regularly collect and report data that is disaggregated by sex on employment in the tourism sector and, where possible, formal and informal tourism employment, gender pay gaps, entrepreneurship, education and training, leadership and decision-making, time use and work-life balance; and National statistics institutes; National tourism administrations
- Regularly report data disaggregated by sex on employment in the tourism sector to UNWTO. National statistics institutes; National tourism administrations

Annex 1

Good practice criteria

To explore how far the tourism sector is meeting the five thematic goals proposed by this report, the following good practice criteria were developed and answered using a combination of quantitative analysis, documentary analysis and in-depth case studies.

Good practice criteria

Thematic area: Employment**Goal: Tourism provides decent work for women**

- 1.1 Tourism has provided decent work for women;
 - 1.2 Vulnerable employment for women has been reduced;
 - 1.3 Vertical and/or horizontal gender segregation have been reduced;
 - 1.4 Trade union membership or representation for women tourism workers has increased;
 - 1.5 ILO policies on maternity and care responsibilities are being respected;
 - 1.6 Gender pay gap is being addressed;
 - 1.7 Measures are being taken to provide or campaign for adequate childcare for tourism workers; and
 - 1.8 Attempts are being made to address gender exploitation/harassment of women and girls in the tourism sector.
-

Thematic area: Entrepreneurship**Goal: Women's tourism businesses lead to economic empowerment**

- 2.1 Women's tourism businesses are being formalised;
 - 2.2 Women's tourism businesses have led to financial inclusion for women;
 - 2.3 Women have market access and fair trade for their tourism products and services;
 - 2.4 Opportunities for development and advancement are being developed;
 - 2.5 The macroeconomic environment and policies are becoming gender-sensitive;
 - 2.6 Measures are being taken to include childcare and unpaid care work; and
 - 2.7 Women's access to land and finance for tourism.
-

Thematic area: Education and training**Goal: Tourism education and training promotes gender equality and women's empowerment**

- 3.1 Public and/or private sector training programmes for women in tourism have been developed;
 - 3.2 The participation of female students and graduates in tourism studies and qualifications is being promoted;
 - 3.3 Gender equality training has been provided for tourism policymakers; and
 - 3.4 Gender equality training has been provided for tourism managers and employees.
-

Thematic area: Leadership and decision-making**Goal: Women are represented and influential in decision-making spaces at all levels of the tourism sector**

- 4.1 Gender equality strategy is in place/being developed for tourism sector;
 - 4.2 Women are represented and have influence in decision-making spaces in the tourism private sector;
 - 4.3 Women are represented and have influence in decision-making spaces in public sector tourism bodies and agencies; and
 - 4.4 Women are represented and have influence on boards of tourism companies.
-

Thematic area: Community and civil society**Goal: Tourism supports women to address gender inequalities in homes and communities**

- 5.1 Women's tourism networks and NGOs are active/in progress;
 - 5.2 Women's tourism cooperatives are active/in progress;
 - 5.3 Tourism has facilitated women's voice in community decision-making;
 - 5.4 Tourism has facilitated women's voice in household decision-making; and
 - 5.5 Tourism has led to a more equitable division of unpaid care work.
-

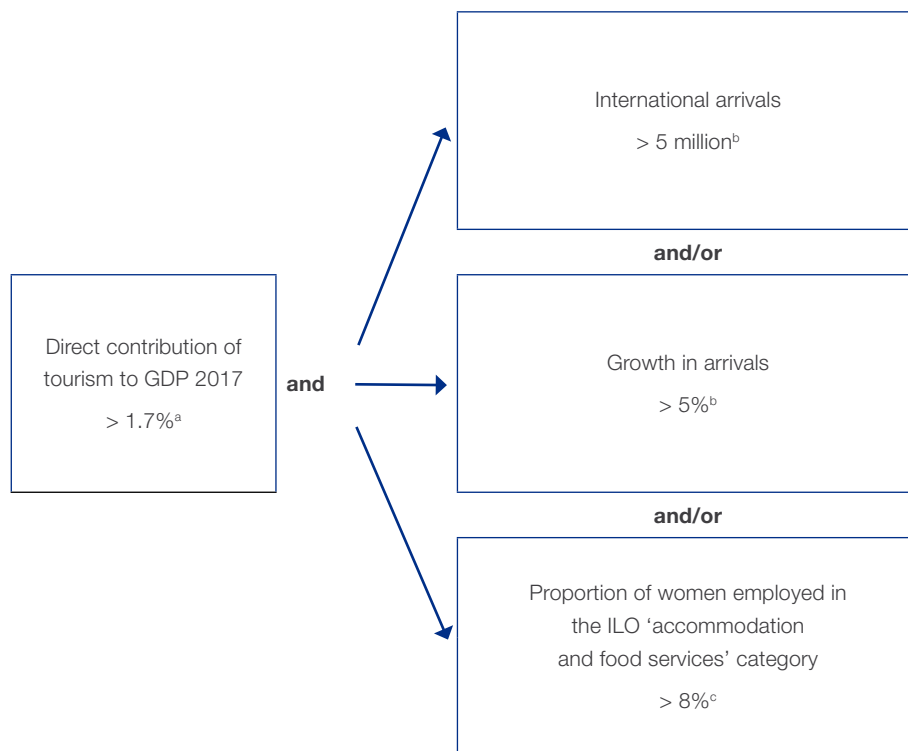
Annex 2

Country selection criteria

In selecting the qualitative focus of the *Regional Report on Women in Tourism in the Middle East*, the country selection criteria included in this annex was applied to the countries in the region with a view to prioritizing countries reporting sex-disaggregated data to UNWTO and ensure that the report focuses on countries where tourism is a large or growing sector.

The five country selection criteria and thresholds are the same as those applied in the *Global Report on Women in Tourism – Second Edition*, with the exception of one adjustment of the threshold for the proportion of women employed in the ILO ‘accommodation and food services’ category from 50% to 8% in the fifth criteria in order to reflect the overall, lower regional proportion of women in tourism.

Figure A2.1 **Country selection criteria and thresholds**



Sources: a) World Bank (2020b), TCdata 360, *Travel and Tourism direct contribution to GDP and Travel and Tourism direct contribution to employment*, World Bank, Washington, D.C. (online), available at: www.tcdata360.worldbank.org (24-09-2020).

b) World Tourism Organization (2018b), *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer and Statistical Annex*, volume 16 (3), UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/wtobarometereng>.

c) International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT (2019b).

Applying the criteria resulted in the following:

Table A2.1 **Application of country selection criteria**

Provides sex-disaggregated tourism data to UNWTO (A)	Meets at least two criteria, includes data for all four criteria (B)	Meets at least two criteria, but missing data for one or two categories (C)	Meets at least two criteria, but missing data for one or two categories (D)
Egypt	Bahrain	Kuwait	Iraq
Jordan	Egypt		Libya
Saudi Arabia	Jordan		Oman
	Lebanon		State of Palestine
	Qatar		Syrian Arab Republic
	Saudi Arabia		Yemen
	United Arab Emirates		

Based on the above table, seven countries met the selection criteria: **Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.** These countries were further sub-divided into four categories:

1. Primary focus for qualitative research; based on UNWTO criteria;
2. Secondary focus for qualitative research;
3. Desk research and quantitative analysis; and
4. Quantitative analysis only.

Table A2.2 **Final country selection**

Primary focus for qualitative research (A)	Secondary focus for qualitative research (B)	Desk research and quantitative analysis (C)	Quantitative analysis only (D)
Egypt	Bahrain	Qatar	Iraq
Jordan	Lebanon	Kuwait	Libya
Saudi Arabia	Oman		State of Palestine
	United Arab Emirates		Syrian Arab Republic
			Yemen

Note: Oman has been included for potential further qualitative research due to the higher level of research available on women in tourism in Oman.

Annex 3

List of stakeholders interviewed

Name	Title	Organization	Country
Ms. Joanna Abi Abdallah	Business Support and Development Manager	Berytech	Lebanon
Ms. Nour Akhras	Saj Expert	Khan El Maksoud	Lebanon
Dr. Nabila Al Anjari	Former Assistant Undersecretary for Tourism Affairs	Ministry of Information	Kuwait
Mr. Sattam Al-Balawi	Chairman	Saudi Tour Guides Association	Saudi Arabia
Dr. Lubna Al-Mazroei	Human Capital Leader	Ministry of Heritage and Tourism	Oman
Ms. Layal Assaf	Learning & Development Manager	Marriott International	Jordan
Ms. Somaya Badr	General Manager	Art of Heritage	Saudi Arabia
Mr. Ramy Boujawdeh	Deputy General Manager	Berytech	Lebanon
Mr. Mohammad Bsaiso	General Operator	Higher Institute for Hospitality and Tourism	Saudi Arabia
Ms. Petra Chedid	Rural Tourism Coordinator	Food Heritage Foundation	Lebanon
Ms. Muna Haddad	Founder/Managing Director	Baraka Destinations	Jordan
Mr. Johnny Hayek	Managing Director	Arcenciel	Lebanon
Dr. Manal Kelig	Co-Founder	Great Wonders of Egypt for Responsible & Sustainable Travel	Egypt
Ms. Jackie Khairallah	Local tour guide	Lebanon Mountain Association	Lebanon
Ms. Dunia Houry	Executive Director	Women Association of Der el Ahmar (WADA)	Lebanon
Ms. Maram Kokandi	General Manager	Radisson Hotel Group	Saudi Arabia
Ms. Umaima Mathjoub	Lecturer	Ammon Applied University College	Jordan
Dr. Maya Morsy	Executive Director	National Council on Women	Egypt
Ms. Amira Mourad	Director	Investment Development Authority of Lebanon	Lebanon
Ms. Noha Mubaideen	Tour Guide Programme Coordinator	Ammon Applied University College	Jordan
Ms. Layali Nashashibi	Director, Communications & Public Relations	Movenpick Resorts and Hotels	Jordan
Mr. Abbas Ramadan	Economic Advisor	Investment Development Authority of Lebanon	Lebanon
Ms. Sally Sedky	Senior Tourism Marketing Specialist	Bahrain Tourism & Exhibitions Authority	Bahrain
Ms. Ward Sfeir	Business Owner	Ward Café Trottoir	Lebanon
Ms. Ghada Shalaby	Vice Minister	Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism	Egypt
Ms. Roula Sidani	Consultant	Investment Development Authority of Lebanon	Lebanon
Ms. Badriya Siyabi	Founder	Sidab Women Sewing Group	Oman
Dr. Dima Steitieh	Deputy Dean	Ammon Applied University College	Jordan
Dr. Nashwa Talaat	Advisor	Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism	Egypt

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The *Regional Report on Women in Tourism in the Middle East* maps the participation of women in the tourism sector across the region prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. In doing so, it assesses the contribution of tourism to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 – to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The report, compiled to mark the 2020 G20 Saudi Presidency, aims to inform further work on gender equality and equip stakeholders with tools they need to boost women's empowerment in the region's tourism sector.

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