



IN BRIEF



# WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH DECENT WORK

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## What's the Issue?

Women in Palestine not only have fewer opportunities to access employment but also are less likely to set up their own business than men.

The gender disparities of the labour force participation in Palestine are largely linked to an exceptional economic, social and cultural system and contexts, along with a lack of a supportive environment for women's entrepreneurship. Much of the female labour force concentrates in low-skilled, non-sustainable and low-income generating economic activities including part-time, seasonal and casual work. Additionally, due to a lack of non-traditional vocational and technical training and inadequate alternative sources of financing, a large number of Palestinian women are discouraged from setting off their own business.

## Facts and Figures

- While the rate of Palestinian men unemployment has decreased 1.5 per cent between 2005 and 2017, that of Palestinian women has dramatically increased to 25.2 per cent over the same period. [1]
- In 2017, the average daily wage of Palestinian women (84.6 NIS) is only around 70 per cent of that of men (119.6 NIS) in 2017. [2]
- Only 3.5 per cent of working age (15-64 years old) women set up their own businesses compared to 16 per cent for working age of men in Palestine. [3]
- In Palestine there are almost 7,000 businesses that are owned and operated by women [4]

## Our Solutions

Under its strategic area of "Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy", UN Women promotes women's economic empowerment, placing special focus on the below priorities:

- Increasing efforts on removing the structural barriers that prevent women from having equal access to economic opportunities and decent work conditions;
- Expanding and deepening the partnership with the public sector towards developing gender sensitive policies that promote women's economic empowerment;
- Working with actors from civil society and private sector to strengthen their commitment to advocate for a gender responsive legislative and policy framework that promote decent work and economic opportunities for women;
- Enhancing the access of women entrepreneurs to improved and market-based business skills training and learning opportunities.

UN Women's approach promotes Palestinian women's economic empowerment (WEE) by addressing constraints that operate at the individual level in order to disempower women and entrench gender inequalities in society. At the same time, while a woman's agency might be individually held, it is created and supported by collective action; the programme is focusing on assisting women organizing themselves and in establishing networks and associations that represent their interests. UN Women supports more gender-sensitive national policies and frameworks aiming at promoting women's equal access to economic opportunities and decent work in Palestine.



## How We Make a Difference: Step by Step

UN Women's Approach on women's economic empowerment

### Decent Work for Women Programme

"Promoting Women's Equal Access to Economic Opportunities and Decent Work in Palestine" (Decent Work for Women Programme) aims to increase employment opportunities for women through market-oriented skills training, in topics such as business development, market linkages, marketing and provision of grants to women entrepreneurs. The Programme also supports women's labour market participation in an environment that promotes Decent Work principles and non-discrimination. This is achieved by raising awareness on women's labour rights, and by improving their protection in the workplace through reform of labour related legislation and equitable reinforcement mechanisms.

The Programme aims at achieving the following results:

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**Expected result 1: Increased employment of women and access to decent and productive jobs through market-oriented skills trainings;**

**Expected result 2: Promoting an environment that enables women's labour market participation on the basis of equal opportunity and non-discrimination.**

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### Partners

- Ministries of Women's Affairs, Labour and National Economy
- Federation of Chambers of commerce, Industry and Agriculture
- Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions
- National Committee for Women's Employment
- Business Women Forum
- National policy making bodies and committees
- Private Sector Institutions.

The Programme is implemented by UN Women in partnership with the International Labour Organization in Palestine with generous funding from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation.

### Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine

The regional joint programme aims at promoting decent employment opportunities for women in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine through promoting equitable laws and policies, engaging public, private and community actors and reducing the uneven burden of unpaid care. The programme aims at achieving the following results:

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**Expected result 1: Gender responsive labour laws and related policies in place and effective;**

**Expected result 2: A gender responsive private sector that attracts, retains and promotes women is supported;**

**Expected result 3: Gender stereotypes about women and men's responsibilities concerning unpaid care and household work are challenged.**

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The Programme is implemented by UN Women and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine with generous funding from Sweden.

### References

[1] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2017, March 8). The Eve of the International Women's Day [Press release]. Retrieved from [http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/\\_pcbs/PressRelease/Press\\_En\\_7-3-20148-women-en.PDF](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_7-3-20148-women-en.PDF)

[2] Ibid.

[3] OECD (2013). Gender inequality and entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa

[4] Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) (2014). Policies for Up Scaling the Female Entrepreneurship in the State of Palestine.

**For more information, please visit:**

**Website:** <http://palestine.unwomen.org>

**Facebook:** <http://Facebook.com/unwomenpal>