



## Helpdesk Research Report

# Women's networks in MENA

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27.02.2015

## Question

*Map and analyse the international/cross-country women's networks across the Middle East and North Africa.*

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## 1. Overview

This rapid mapping report gives details of networks in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA<sup>1</sup>) region which work on gender equality and women's issues, such as women's political and economic participation, women's rights, and women's role in peacebuilding. Primarily these are run by women or are women-only, but the report also includes networks which involve men.

In this report, a 'network' is understood to mean a grouping of one or more organisations or individuals, with a degree of formality, united with a mission statement, vision, or issue-based. This is an informal definition. The report excludes individual personal and social networks and political parties.

The report looks at international or cross-country networks which include more than one nation state. However, it excludes global networks. Organisations which are global with a regional MENA arm are excluded, such as Amnesty International, Transparency International or the Red Cross/Red Crescent

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<sup>1</sup> MENA includes: Algeria; Bahrain; Egypt; Iran; Iraq; Israel; Jordan; Kuwait; Lebanon; Yemen; United Arab Emirates; Libya; Morocco; Oman; Palestine; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Syria; and Tunisia.

Society. This is a selective and illustrative report, as there are many additional networks which are active but do not have an online presence.

#### **Key findings:**

- There are a large number of women's networks in the region, ranging in size and influence.
- Grassroots networks exist alongside high-level political and policy networks.
- Most are focused on women-only activities.
- The key areas of activity are: i) improving women's entrepreneurship and developing women as business owners and business leaders; ii) peacebuilding; and iii) reducing violence against women. There are some networks on women's political participation, and some research networks, but not to the extent of the other areas.
- Mentoring and face-to-face networking are the most commonly used strategies. Most networks state the value of communicating with other women in similar positions. Therefore, conferences and events are the most common activities.
- Funding is usually from either membership fees, especially for the entrepreneurial networks, or block grants from international or national funders.
- This report did not specifically look at impacts and effectiveness of the networks, but some of the larger groups have provided their own statements on their impact. The larger regional networks have contributed to international development processes and many civil society networks are respected as important actors in the region.

## **2. Business networks**

### ***MENA Businesswomen's Network (BWN)***

Regional network of businesswomen dedicated to promoting a culture of entrepreneurship and economic empowerment of women in the Middle East and North Africa.

#### **Key issues**

Women's economic empowerment; business development and economic growth.

*Mission statement:* "To empower women in the MENA region through connections, expertise, and success stories to start and grow businesses that will enhance the local economy, community, and environment. To create and sustain a regional network of businesswomen and their stakeholders that works to expand the number of women in business, to increase the value of their businesses, to create a regional culture of women's entrepreneurship and to use their voices and actions to bring prosperity to their communities and countries."

#### **Operations**

- The Network is comprised of "Network Hubs" which are businesswomen's organisations across MENA.
- Each Hub holds eight events per year on a wide range of topics such as access to credit; leadership skills; strategic planning; management; starting a business; work/life balance; marketing and sales; and communications skills. The events are designed to reach over 500

participants during the year. In addition, every year, each Hub identifies an advocacy issue around which they will develop and implement a campaign.

- The overall programme focuses on four areas: (1) strengthen the Network Hub organisations with technical and grant assistance to design and execute country-specific programmes; (2) offer a speakers programme through which top U.S. and Arab business experts share knowledge and experience with Network Hubs; (3) deliver an on-line, cutting edge Business Education Certificate Program; and (4) implement a web-based Portal for an on-line peer learning and idea exchange community.
- Hubs are provided with the resources to hire a full time Hub Program Manager to coordinate Hub events, manage membership and work with Hub executives on organisation and membership development. This is to support the growth of each individual Hub and the Network as a whole.
- The Corporate Ambassadors Program (CAP) was launched for the BWN in 2008. The programme brought small delegations of U.S. female CEOs and senior executives to meet with businesswomen in the Middle East and North Africa to discuss critical business topics of interest in the region. Since its inception, 17 CAP events have taken place, in 10 countries, with almost 2,400 attendees and 215 high profile US, regional and international speakers.
- Business Management Essentials (BME), is a business management curriculum with classroom and online components. Coursework is linked to the participant's workplace through a series of interactive lessons and exercises and supported by extensive faculty and learner resources. BME is the first MENA management training course to offer Arabic and French support for complex business management concepts.
- Conference 2012 ("Unleashing the Economic Potential of Women in the MENA Region", April 2012 in Dubai, UAE; 350 participants) <http://www.vitalvoices.org/get-involved/events/mena-businesswomens-network-forum-12>.
- Hub Highlights is the newsletter of the MENA BWN which features the work of member Hubs and the Network itself. Published in English, Arabic and French monthly and less often during the summer months.
- Active Facebook group.
- Non-active website.

### **Funding**

Launched and supported in 2005 by Vital Voices with a grant from the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) of the U.S. Department of State. In 2010, MENA BWN became independent, supported by USD 1.5 million over two years from Exxon Mobil.

As members of the Network, Hubs receive support, services and resources valued at over USD 100,000, including a cash grant of USD 40,000 per programme year to be used to support Hub staffing needs and regional activities.

### **Constituents**

Partnerships between local businesswomen's organisations across MENA, Vital Voices Global Partnership and the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) of the U.S. Department of State.

## Members

Network hubs:

- Algeria - Association des Algériennes Managers et Entrepreneurs (AME)
- Bahrain - Bahrain Businesswomen's Society (BBS)
- Dubai - Dubai Business Women's Council (DBWC)
- Egypt - Association for Women's Total Advancement and Development (AWTAD)
- Jordan - Business and Professional Women – Amman (BPWA)
- Lebanon - Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB)
- Morocco - Association des Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises du Maroc (AFEM)
- Palestine - Business Women Forum - Palestine (BWF)
- Qatar - Qatari Business Women Forum (QBWF)
- Tunisia - Chambre Nationale des Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises (CNFCE)

BME course operates in partnership with Vital Voices, Pearson Learning Solutions, the Cisco Entrepreneur Institute, the Middle East Partnership of the U.S. Department of State and a group of local partners.

2012 forum with H.E. Sheikha Lubna Al-Qasimi, UAE Minister of Foreign Trade; global partners ExxonMobil and Vital Voices; local host the Dubai Business Women's Council.

## Impact

Since the Network was formed in 2005, membership has increased by 200 per cent and the network continues to expand geographically. Over 140 new businesses have been created; over half of the participants established new business partnerships; women have increased the number of women they employ by over 11 per cent and over 90 per cent of participants reported business benefits. In 2006-7, Network Hubs created and executed programmes reaching over 3,500 businesspeople through a series of events designed by each Hub for the interests of its members. Hubs held 44 events in 10 cities across the MENA region.

## Resources

<http://www.menabwn.org/> (currently not working)

<https://www.facebook.com/menabusiness>

<http://www.vitalvoices.org/what-we-do/regions/middle-east-and-north-africa/mena-businesswomens-network/mena-bwn-website>

*Ready for growth: Solutions to Increase Access to Finance for Women-Owned Businesses in the Middle East and North Africa.* Vital Voices; MENA Businesswomen's Network; International Finance Corporation.

<http://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/156534804f860a72be27fe0098cb14b9/12316-vv-sme-report.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>

## **OECD-MENA Women's Business Forum (WBF)**

The WBF is part of the MENA-OECD Investment Programme, an initiative launched in 2005 to reinforce dialogue between MENA governments and OECD member countries designed to promote investment and private sector development for growth and job creation.

## Key issues

The WBF is an inter-regional network of government, private sector and civil society representatives which promotes efforts to accelerate women's enterprise development in the MENA region. The WBF works with governments to improve policies and legislation impacting women's economic integration, but also with

businesses, NGOs and academia to facilitate an exchange of experiences and good practices for providing concrete support to women entrepreneurs.

The key missions of the WBF are to:

- Identify existing support for women entrepreneurs in the region and where gaps lie.
- Improve women's access to finance and business development services.
- Connect women entrepreneurs, provide role models and improve access to information.
- Ensure policy leadership and institutional co-operation.
- Strengthen the provision of tailored business support services.
- Build the advocacy capacity of the businesswomen's community.
- Support greater research efforts and data collection on women's entrepreneurship.

### **Operations**

- Convene regular meetings to engage in discussions, with a view to identifying best practices and solutions to reduce obstacles to women's entrepreneurship and enhance women's empowerment in the economy.
- Facilitate and help establish regular contacts and exchanges with the OECD as well as MENA business associations.
- Evaluate, assess and monitor the impact of the Action Plan, as well as assess progress on women's economic empowerment in the region.
- Research publications.
- National Task Forces in 17 countries, composed of representatives from government, private sector and academia from MENA economies. These provide regional input and guidance.
- The WBF's analysis and recommendations feed into the broader policy dialogue of the MENA-OECD Investment Programme through its Steering Group, Business Council and Working Group on SMEs, Entrepreneurship and Human Capital Development. Through participation in OECD events such as committee meetings or the annual OECD Ministerial Forum, the WBF aims at further mainstreaming women's issues into international policy fora and seeks to help identify areas where targeted intervention is needed to support women-led businesses.

### **Funding**

OECD.

### **Constituents**

Launched in 2009, the WBF is a network of over 500 representatives from MENA and OECD governments, business and civil society.

### **Members**

No public list available.

### **Resources**

<http://www.oecd.org/mena/investment/wbf.htm>

<http://www.oecd.org/mena/investment/womenempowerment.htm>

<https://www.facebook.com/OECDMENAWomensBusinessForum/timeline>

OECD (2009). 2009 ACTION PLAN ON FOSTERING WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT IN THE MENA REGION. <http://www.oecd.org/mena/investment/44092571.pdf>

## ***Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF)***

### **Key issues**

AIWF is a unique network linking Arab women with their international counterparts and serves as the voice of Arab women, showcasing their development, ability and competence in business, professional and public life, creating greater global awareness of women's success and prospects in the Arab world.

### **Operations**

- Policy advocacy
- Reports
- Conferences, seminars and events
- Capacity building, mentorship and information exchange

### **Funding**

Membership fees. Sponsorship from partners.

### **Constituents**

Individual and corporate members serving in senior positions in government, business, academia and the non-profit sector from more than 45 countries.

### **Members**

Sponsoring partners:

- PepsiCo
- Pfizer
- Shell
- Willis Group Holdings
- Sharjah Business Women Council
- Omnia
- PwC
- Sungjoo Foundation
- Arab British Chamber of Commerce
- Hawkamah Institute for Corporate Governance
- Mudara Institute of Directors (IOD)
- The Pearl Initiative
- Memac Ogilvy & Mather LLC

### **Impact**

AIWF claims it has received international recognition in the Arab world and internationally as a powerful advocate of women in business for the advancement of women. It is also recognised for its growing role to promote and advance legislative rights for the participation of Arab women. It has also collaborated with, among others, the League of Arab States, the European Commission and European Parliament, United Nations organisations and agencies, the World Bank, the OECD, women's business councils in the Arab States and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

### **Resources**

<http://www.aiwfonline.com/>

## ***Association of Organisations of Mediterranean Businesswomen (AFAEMME)***

### **Key issues**

AFAEMME is a coordinator of European and Mediterranean business and gender equality projects and ground-breaking research. It is also a networking platform for businesswomen and women entrepreneurs from all over the Mediterranean, and a Euro-Mediterranean lobby for strengthening gender equality and facilitating the access of women to decision-making positions in the economy.

Objectives:

- Strengthen gender equality
- Economically empower women
- Promote women entrepreneurship
- Facilitate the access of women to decision-making positions in the economy

### **Operations**

Projects vary considerably.

One current MENA-focused project is *Young Women as Job Creators* (<http://afaemme.org/young-women-as-job-creators>). It promotes self-employment and entrepreneurship among young women university students who are about to graduate from a university in Jordan, Morocco, Palestine and Spain. It implements a series of "Women Entrepreneurship Days" and provides free business start-up advice. In 2013 the project informed, motivated and trained about 800 young women from 32 participating universities to become future successful businesswomen and employers. The second phase of the project, set to take place in early 2015, will be held in Albania, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Palestine, Spain and Tunisia. The third phase will be held in the seven countries of the second phase, as well as in Algeria, Croatia, Lebanon and Turkey.

Another project is *EuroMed@Change* (<http://afaemme.org/projects/ongoing/euromedchange>). This project provides business development actions, task forces (with talents, women entrepreneurs, clusters and investors) and supporting actions (such as IP trainings and soft landing actions). AFAEMME is going to create an online community for businesswomen and women entrepreneurs from Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon and Tunisia. The online community will function as a business to business virtual meeting point where users can register, upload their professional profile and publish their business demands and offers.

AFAEMME also offers:

- Technical workshops, seminars, large scale conferences and international business missions and/or encounters
- Newsletter
- Networking platform
- Lobbying
- Research centre

### **Funding**

Young Women as Job Creators is funded by Gas Natural SDG S.L. and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

EuroMed@Change is funded by the European Commission.

## Constituents

The projects have independent partners from industry, non-profit and government. The network as a whole is made up of national-level business associations, mainly women-only. It is unclear if AFAEMME levies membership fees, as projects receive grant funding.

## Members (listing MENA members only)

EuroMed@Change is managed by four organisations from across Europe (ANIMA investment network as project leader, the European Business Innovation Centre Network, INNO AG and the Fondation Sophia Antipolis as partners) and coordinates with more than 45 associated business, finance and innovation networks.

- Algeria:
  - Association des Femmes Algériennes Chefs d'Entreprises-SEVE
  - Association Algérienne des Femmes Managers et Entrepreneurs - AME
  - Association des Femmes Cadres Algériennes (AFCARE)
- Egypt:
  - Egyptian Business Women Association – EBWA
  - Association for Women's Total Advancement & Development Egypt - AWTAD
- Jordan: Jordan Forum for Business & Professional Women - JFBPW
- Lebanon:
  - Lebanese Business Women Association – LBWA
  - Young Arab Women Entrepreneurs (YAWE)
- Libya: Libyan Women Forum
- Morocco: Association of Businesswomen of Morocco – AFEM
- Palestine: Business and Professional Women – Ramallah Club
- Syria: Modernising & Activating Women's Role in Economic Development – MAWRED
- Tunisia: Chambre Nationale des Femmes Chefs d'Entreprise

## Resources

<http://afaemme.org/>

## *Quissal (German-Arab Mentoring Project)*

Quissal is an initiative of the Euro-Mediterranean Association for Cooperation & Development (EMA). The EMA focuses on economic development cooperation between Germany, the Mediterranean region and the Middle East.

## Key issues

Democratic change and economic growth through the empowerment of women.

- Local, regional and international networking of women.
- Enhancement of soft skills, especially inter-cultural and communicative competencies.
- Enhancement of hard skills, focusing on the areas of new media, information technology, law, business development and finance.
- Enhanced visibility of women, especially business women, in the (new) media.

## Operations

Primarily operates as a business mentoring programme. The pilot stage paired German mentors with Tunisian mentees. This culminates in a Forum event where the groups present their projects and reflect on the experience. Other initiatives of EMA include hosting networking events and exchange visits.



**Funding**

Unclear, but funded by German government.

**Constituents**

Individual entrepreneurs.

**Members**

German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

**Resources**

<http://ouissal.org/pages/en/the-project.php>

### 3. Peacebuilding networks

***Chris Stevens Youth Network*****Key issues**

- Building communication and mutual understanding between schools, teachers, and youth in 19 countries in the Middle East and North Africa and the U.S.
- Focus on developing leadership and technology skills for teachers and youth to explore global issues through online, project-based collaboration.

**Operations**

The Chris Stevens Youth Network connects classrooms through online, global projects to give Middle East and North Africa and U.S. youth an international experience, build relationships across countries, and provide a deeper understanding of global and local issues in their curriculum. The programme focuses on developing 21st century skills for teachers and youth to engage in cross-cultural dialogue and explore global issues online. One stream of work encompasses girls' empowerment.

- Courses
- Workshops
- Video conferences

**Funding**

Designed and funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and implemented by iEARN, a global non-profit network that facilitates cross-cultural interaction, global classroom projects, and new learning opportunities online.

**Constituents**

High-school students aged 15-18, teachers.

**Members**

iEARN, Buck Institute for Education. No list of participating schools publically available.

**Resources**

<http://exchange.csyn.org/about/>

<http://exchange.csyn.org/category/girls-empowerment/>

## ***Women's Interfaith Network of the Middle East and North Africa (WIN MENA)***

WIN MENA is an initiative of TRUST-Emun, an Israeli trust and peacebuilding interfaith NGO.

### **Key issues**

*Mission statement:* "Our purpose is to learn together and share information about our religions, traditions, and customs in order to dispel stereotypes, avoid prejudice and mistrust, create sisterhood, and to act together effectively to enhance the cooperation and respect between religions in our region."

### **Operations**

WIN MENA was formed by Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Egyptian, Israeli, Jordanian, Palestinian, and Tunisian women at the 2003 MENA Conference, with the goal of creating interfaith women's solidarity and the opportunity to pursue joint activities. It regularly meets in conjunction with the annual MENA Region Conferences in Jordan. In the past, it held a three day Women's Interfaith Leadership Workshop in Amman. It focuses on promoting interfaith understanding and solidarity among women of the Abrahamic religions in the region.

Activities include peace walks, peace gardens, leadership training and advocacy.

### **Funding**

Not known.

### **Constituents**

10 leadership members.

### **Members**

Operated by TRUST-Emun, an Israeli trust and peacebuilding interfaith NGO.

### **Resources**

[https://www.uri.org/cooperation\\_circles/detail/trustemun](https://www.uri.org/cooperation_circles/detail/trustemun)

<http://www.trust-emun.org/mission/>

## **4. Rights networks**

### ***Arab Women Organization***

#### **Key issues**

- Empowering Arab women and building their capacities to promote progress of Arab societies.
- Raising awareness of the necessity of engaging women as equal partners in societal development.
- Coordinating Arab efforts in order to foster women empowerment and elevate awareness of their vital role in society.

#### **Operations**

The Arab Women Organization (AWO) tools and instruments include:

- Collecting and disseminating data regarding the status of Arab women.
- Coordinating local and national efforts pertaining to women's issues.

- Following up on relevant developments taking place in international gatherings.
- Networking and cooperating with relevant governmental and non-governmental organisations.
- Organising seminars and workshops to coordinate joint Arab action regarding women's issues.
- Conducting research on Arab women issues and their role in society.

### **Funding**

Unclear.

### **Constituents**

National level state membership.

### **Members**

- The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- The United Arab Emirates
- Kingdom of Bahrain
- The Republic of Tunisia
- The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
- The Republic of the Sudan
- The Syrian Arab Republic
- The Republic of Iraq
- Sultanate of Oman
- State of Palestine
- The Lebanese Republic
- State of Libya
- Arab Republic of Egypt
- The Kingdom of Morocco
- The Islamic Republic of Mauritania
- The Republic of Yemen

### **Resources**

<http://english.arabwomenorg.org/default.aspx>

### ***Euro-Med Women Network***

The North-South Centre of the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe launched "The North-South Process for the Empowerment of Women" in 2011. This was to implement the recommendations adopted at the Conference on "Women as agents of change in the Southern Mediterranean Region", (Rome 24th-25th October 2011). The Euro-Med Women Network was then created in 2012, with the aim of sharing ideas, information and best practices.

### **Key issues**

The goal of this project is to strengthen democratic governance in the southern Mediterranean region and bring together the stakeholders to work on the promotion of gender equality and women's rights in the southern part of the Euro-Mediterranean region, with particular attention to Morocco and Tunisia.

## **Operations**

The Euro-Med Women Network provides its members with a platform, supported by an online website, which facilitates the exchange of best practices, the identification of common challenges and sharing experiences as well as contributing to the identification of projects and partnerships. The Euro-Med Women Network serves as a space for highlighting testimonials and personal experiences in order to inspire, facilitate and support, as well as exchange, successful examples.

The North-South Centre has organised various activities, such as national workshops in Tunisia (2014) and Morocco (2012, 2014), and regional conferences (Rome, 2011 and Istanbul, 2012). The Centre has also supported the training of young women from these countries, coordinated the organisation of online debates and provided to its members with a resource centre enriched with tools and reference documents.

## **Funding**

Council of Europe.

## **Constituents**

650 individual members, representing governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society. Drawn from the North and South, but also the eastern and western part of the Mediterranean region.

## **Members**

CSOs, but no available list of members.

## **Resources**

<http://nswomennetwork.org/index.php/the-network>

## ***Karama***

### **Key issues**

Karama's mission is to build upon and strengthen approaches to raise and expand the influence of Arab women as leaders in regional and international contexts. In amplifying their voices and skills, Karama aims to act as a catalyst to end violence against women in the Middle East and North Africa by bringing together key civil society groups and enhancing their capacity for collaboration. Karama is about impact, influence, and dignity.

### **Operations**

- Advocacy
- Capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and exchange

Karama works to end violence against women in the Middle East and North Africa by building coalitions addressing the multi-sectoral causes and consequences of violence and enhancing their capacity to advocate, lobby, and build awareness on women's issues, priorities, and rights in the region. Karama works from the ground up, emphasising local expertise and elevating this to inform national policies, regional dialogues, and international advocacy.

**Funding**

Unknown.

**Constituents**

Individual and NGOs working on VAWG. Karama works with women, men, and youth academics, activists, community leaders, politicians, parliamentarians, and others.

**Members**

Karama has built a strong coalition with hundreds of partners in thirteen countries—including Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.

**Impact**

Many of Karama's recommendations have been adopted into new and existing constitutions, as well as official recommendations made to the state by international bodies such as the UN.

**Resources**

<http://www.el-karama.org/>

**SALMA****Key issues**

Criminalising domestic violence and violence against women. The "SALMA campaign" calls for increased gender equality and improved social and legal position of women in the Arab world, focusing on Egypt, Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The project, however, does not only aim to increase protection from domestic violence against women in the Arab countries, but also aspires to create a sustainable network of Arab women's NGOs.

The group has adopted a vision based on "constructing democratic societies living in freedom, social justice and equality among all human beings without any discrimination whatsoever."

**Operations**

- Campaigns
- Advocacy and lobbying national parliaments
- Research and publications
- Regional networking
- Capacity building

**Funding**

Supported and hosted by Heinrich Boell Stiftung.

**Constituents**

Individuals and NGOs working on VAWG.

**Members**

SALMA project partners are:

- Association Tunisienne des Femmes Democratres
- SOS femms en detress

- The Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women
- Centre FAMA d'Information sur les Droits des Femmes
- Women Center for Legal Aid and Counseling
- Sisters Arab Forum
- Sisterhood is Global Institute - Jordan
- Women against Violence- Nazareth
- Women's Empowerment Project
- El Nadim center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence- Magda Adly

### **Resources**

<http://ps.boell.org/en/2013/11/05/stronger-together-network-salma-against-violence-against-women-arab-world-democracy>

<http://ps.boell.org/en/2013/11/05/democracy-3>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Salma-network/> (Arabic)

### ***MENA-Rosa***

#### **Key issues**

MENA women affected by HIV. MENA-Rosa offers women living with HIV an opportunity to talk about their issues in dealing with HIV, from medical matters to family affairs.

#### **Operations**

- Face-to-face meetings.
- Long-distance networking.
- Workshops.
- Raising awareness among key decision makers.
- Mobilising money to reach their goals.

#### **Funding**

Ford Foundation grant. Supported by UNAIDS.

#### **Constituents**

Individual women living with HIV in the MENA region.

#### **Members**

Individuals.

#### **Resources**

El Feki, S. (2012). *Standing up speaking out. Women and HIV in the Middle East and North Africa*. UNAIDS Issue Brief.

[http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2012/20120713\\_MENA\\_Women\\_and\\_AIDS\\_2012\\_en.pdf](http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2012/20120713_MENA_Women_and_AIDS_2012_en.pdf)

## 5. Research networks

### *The Arab Network for Gender and Development (@NGED)*

#### **Key issues**

@NGED objectives are:

- Mobilise regional expertise and resources to address priorities in the field of gender and development;
- Advocate the use of a robust analytical base in policy making and advancement of gender equality through media;
- Contribute to the formulation of policy recommendations which take into consideration the context of the Arab region;
- Promote findings of regional policy-oriented research including CAWTAR's Arab Women Development Reports in the international, regional and national levels;
- Provide a unique space for dialogue on gender issues.

#### **Operations**

- Annual Meetings as an opportunity for members to engage in dialogue, plan activities, and attract new members.
- Research Competitions/ Publications for members to contribute to regional knowledge.
- Cooperation with media for members to sensitise decision makers and the community.
- Training of members to acquire essential tools to effectively manage programmes.

#### **Funding**

Funded by the World Bank's Development Grant Facility (DGF), in addition to supplementary funds committed by other donors to cover some of its activities.

#### **Constituents**

Membership consists of: research centres, governmental institutions, NGOs, journalists, media professionals, trainers, experts, parliamentarians as well as regional and international organisations from 19 Arab Countries (Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Sultanate Oman, Syria, Tunisia, Qatar, The United Arab Emirates, and Yemen).

#### **Members**

Launched with the support of the World Bank in 2002 with a starting number of 100 members, the Arab Network for Gender and Development includes nowadays 500 members from 19 Arab Countries within which 200 are effectively active.

#### **Resources**

<http://www.cawtar.org/template.php?code=12>

<http://go.worldbank.org/9WQJSWIG00>

Gwin, C., & Le Libman, M. (2006). *An Independent Evaluation of the World Bank's Support of Regional Programs: Case Study of the Arab Network for Gender and Development*. IEG, Washington, DC.

<http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01056/WEB/IMAGES/392830MN.PDF>

### ***Persian Gender Network (PGN)***

Since 2006, PGN has been placed within a broader World Bank-funded Gender Network for the Middle East and North Africa Region to be coordinated by Center for Arab Women's Training and Research (CAWTAR) in Tunisia. It is a spinoff of the successful @NGED model.

#### **Key issues**

The mission of PGN is to establish a link and be a focal point among organisations and individuals working on gender issues in Persian-speaking countries. These include practitioners, researchers, academicians, civil society, policy makers, and advocates. It intends to help capitalise on their collective knowledge and synergise each other's work and efforts. It serves women in Persian speaking countries of Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. PGN refrains from political and ideological issues.

The initial focus of PGN's work programme is around women's economic empowerment through employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship.

#### **Operations**

The network is set out to:

- Establish a broad and diverse membership.
- Identify and map out individual and organisational expertise across the globe.
- Provide a comprehensive e-Library.
- Provide a periodic conference.
- Research studies.
- Events and focus groups.

It is operated by the Tunisia-based Center for Arab Women's Training and Research (CAWTAR).

#### **Funding**

PGN is initiated and funded by the World Bank.

#### **Constituents**

Individuals and organisations working on gender issues in Persian-speaking countries.

#### **Members**

Starting in 2009, based on a renewed demand for broader activities and membership, it was decided to reconfigure the Network's terms of membership to include practitioners inside and outside the PGN countries. This synergises and capitalises on substantial research expertise among the diaspora.

#### **Resources**

<http://www.persiangundernetwork.org/about-us>

### ***Nordic-Arab Network of Research on Women's Empowerment, Gender and Politics (WEP)***

KVINFO is the Danish Centre for Gender, Equality and Ethnicity. KVINFO's Middle East and North Africa department runs the WEP project.

#### **Key issues**

Providing opportunities for young scholars, from master students to post doc researchers, in gender research to exchange theories, methodological approaches and empirical findings. They also get access and



contact to other researchers in the field – regionally or between the Nordic countries and MENA – along with external supervision capacity.

### **Operations**

- Annual research seminars.
- Courses.
- Opportunities for PhD students from the MENA region to obtain scholarships for 3-4 months of study at Aalborg University in Denmark.
- Facebook group to share information on newly published research, call for papers for conferences and journals, information on scholarships and other relevant issues for gender researchers.
- The steering committee which consists of professors from Jordan, Morocco, Denmark and Sweden are responsible for organising courses, annual conferences and scholarships to Denmark.

### **Funding**

Supported by KVINFO.

### **Constituents**

Individual researchers in gender research.

### **Members**

- Aalborg University
- Stockholm University
- ISIS Center For Women and Development (I.C.W.A.D)
- Center for Women Studies (University of Jordan)
- KVINFO - Coordinating role

### **Resources**

<http://kvinfo.org/mena/nordic-arab-network-research-womens-empowerment-gender-and-politics-wep>  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/304506002920619/>

## **6. Networks with little available information**

Sayyidaat Dentons, businesswomen's association: <http://www.dentons.com/en/whats-different-about-dentons/connecting-you-to-talented-lawyers-around-the-globe/news/2014/october/sayyidaat-dentons-women-in-business-a-middle-east-perspective>

Euro Mediterranean Human Rights Network: <http://www.euromedrights.org/>

Arab Organization for Human Rights: <http://www.aohr.net/> (Arabic); <http://ngo-db.unesco.org/r/or/en/1100026598>

## 7. About this report

### Key websites

- Anna Lindh Foundation – Euro-Med civil society networks:  
<http://www.annalindhfoundation.org/networks>

### Suggested citation

Browne, E. (2015). *Women's networks in MENA* (GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report 1205). Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham.

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