

# ILO Arab States Gender Equality Newsletter

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Greetings from the Gender Equality Program of the ILO Regional Office for Arab States. This is our third newsletter providing highlights of select activities and products from April to June 2010.

## Team Profile



*Gender Team in oPt:* The ILO is part of a joint initiative with the UN country team under the Spanish MDG Achievement Fund on “Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”. The ILO project team in oPt has three staff members on board. As gender specialist *Hanan Al Jayyousi* works on increasing the effectiveness of gender advocates, workers’ and employers’ organizations as well as the Ministry of Labour by strengthening their capacities to implement specific measures that promote women’s employment and protection in the workplace. As Entrepreneurship and TVET Specialist *Rawand Madmouj* oversees the Women’s Enterprise Development and Technical and Vocational Education and Training components of the programme, working on increasing employment

opportunities for low-income women and women graduates including those in the refugee camps. As Project Assistant, *Tharwat Nashashibi* supports the coordination and implementation of ILO activities under the programme.

## Staff Presentations

*Presentation at the American University of Beirut:* American University of Beirut’s Issam Fares Institute for public policy hosted a workshop on the situation of Palestinian refugees. Senior Gender Specialist Simel Esim gave a presentation entitled *Overcoming informal employment among Palestinians in Lebanon*.

*Contributing to ITC Turin’s Gender Budgeting Course as Resource People (June 14-18):* The International Training Centre of the ILO ran a Gender Budgeting course where Research and Knowledge Officer Mansour Omeira presented on macroeconomic concepts and policies from a gender perspective, highlighting how macroeconomic policies can affect men, women, rich and poor differently. Ms. Gudrun Jevne, Associate Expert, also participated in the course.

## Documentary Films on Gender Equality in the World of Work in Arab States

*Maid in Lebanon I:* Tens of thousands of Asian and African women leave their homes each year to work as domestic workers in Arab States to secure better futures for themselves and their families. Tracing their journeys from Sri Lanka to Lebanon, this documentary film sheds light on the experiences of migrant domestic workers with interviews from family members, employers, recruitment and placement agents and specialists in the field. Shot on location in Lebanon and Sri Lanka - funded by EC, Caritas Lebanon Migrant Centre, Dutch Embassy and the ILO (2005). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rY91LCyY4s>

*Maid in Lebanon II: Voices from Home:* A follow up to its predecessor, this documentary film delves further into exploring the complexity of the relationship between migrant domestic workers and the Lebanese households that play a double role as employers and immigration sponsors. Shot on location on Lebanon and Sri Lanka - funded by the ILO (2008). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94rO242G6dY>

*Voices from Yemen:* Successful social dialogue among government, trade unions, employers, is key when it comes to improving gender equality and changing perceptions about women workers. This can be quite a challenge where gender discrimination runs deep. Yet, gender divisions of labour at home and work are being reconfigured and renegotiated, even in traditional societies, like Yemen. Shot on location in Yemen - funded by the ILO (2008). <http://www.youtube.com/user/ILOTV#p/search/0/xb5iS3r3k8k>

## Activities

*GET Ahead TOT workshops undertaken in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in May, 2010:* ILO Jerusalem office implemented two Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops on Gender and Entrepreneurship Together (GET Ahead). The first workshop was conducted in Ramallah, West Bank (May 2-6) followed by a second workshop in Gaza Strip (May 9-13). The workshops were delivered by Mr. Ned Lawton, Consultant in Women’s Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality, with support from national facilitators under the MDG-F programme. The training

targeted local Palestinian Business Development Service Providers who deliver direct support to women entrepreneurs, microfinance institutions, UN agencies and the employers' organizations.

### In the Media



*TV spots in Yemen:* Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) can play a role in delivering skilled persons to the labour market. Women's enrolment in these institutions in Yemen was estimated at a low 13 per cent in 2007, and often concentrated in sectors that are traditionally associated with gender roles. As a part of a concerted effort to better integrate women in TVET institutions, the ILO has produced six different TV spots and a 30 minute documentary film. The TV spots have been aired on Yemeni TV seven times already in June 2010. The documentary film will shortly be used in school campaigns across Yemen and aims to sensitize parents and the wider society on the opportunities and benefits of TVET, and its relevance for young men and women alike.

*Gender team in oPt, media coverage:* Over the past three months, activities of the ILO oPt field offices have appeared repeatedly in national periodicals including the Al-Ayam, Al-Hayat, and Falasteen newspapers. The March 26 issue of Al-Ayam covered the ILO-led three-day workshop on Gender Equality (GE) and International Labour Standards (ILS). The article outlines the workshop's emphasis on gender equality in the workplace and the empowerment of women in the oPt. The article cites Ministry of Labour representative stressing the importance of implementing legislative measures towards this cause. The May 8 issue of Al-Ayam covered the five-day-long ILO GET Ahead workshop on women in entrepreneurship, held in Al-Bireh. The article emphasizes GET Ahead's particular focus on basic skills of enterprise management from a gender perspective, adding that the workshop stood out amongst the traditional project training programs, with its practical, hands-on nature.

*Minister of Labour in Lebanon Launches the Information Guide for Migrant Domestic Workers:* The Minister of Labour of Lebanon launched the information guide for migrant domestic workers on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2010 in a press conference. The information guide, which will be printed in 12 different languages, outlines the rights and responsibilities of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon. Incorporating inputs from ILO offices, domestic workers' organizations, INGOs and NGOs, the guide is only one of many steps needed to bring about real changes in the lives of domestic workers. Comprehensive legislative changes have to be put into effect and enforced along advocacy efforts in order to bring about positive changes in the normative frameworks. See article on the press conference:

[http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=2&article\\_id=115476#axzz0rf8ah0mP](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=115476#axzz0rf8ah0mP)

### Publications

*Policy Brief 8: Gender, Employment and the Informal Economy in Syria (English and Arabic)*

The policy brief discusses some strategic considerations for the world of work of the Syrian public policy move towards achieving a social market economy, as set in the 10<sup>th</sup> five-year plan of 2006-2010. The brief lays down recommendations for moving informal economic activities in Syria to the formal economy. Hardcopies are available from the Regional Office for Arab States. The brief is also posted on [www.ilo.org/arabstates](http://www.ilo.org/arabstates) and [www.ilo.org/gender](http://www.ilo.org/gender)

### Upcoming

*Training of Trainers (ToT) GET Ahead workshop Tripoli, Northern Lebanon:* Following the success of GET Ahead delivery in the Arab States region, a GET Ahead ToT workshop will be held in Tripoli in September. The partner agencies who will participate include: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), a number of microfinance intermediaries including Association for the Development of Rural Capacities (ADR), Al Majmoua, and Ameen among others. Participants from Syria, Yemen and Jordan are also expected to join the ToT workshop.

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