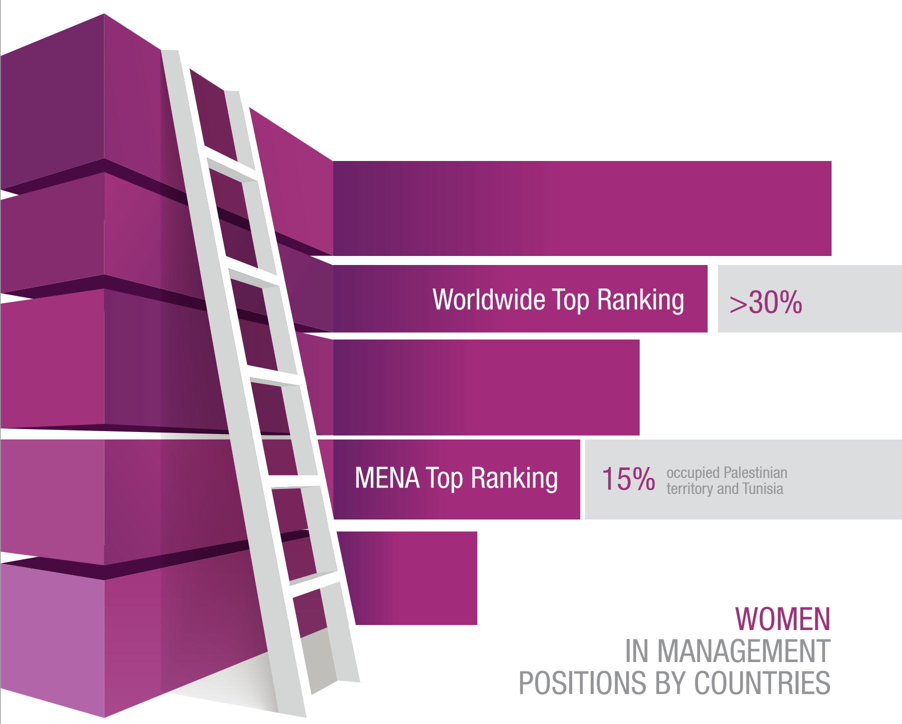


WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT POSITIONS BY COUNTRIES

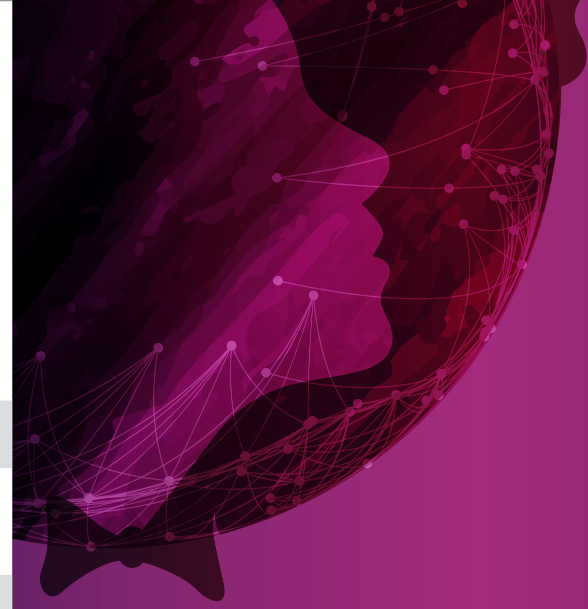
Women
Available Data
in Management

02 Data on women in management positions exclusively in the private sector is scarce globally and in the MENA region in particular. The top ranking countries in the region (the occupied Palestinian territory and Tunisia) registered a 15% share of women legislators, senior officials and managers, compared to an average of more than 30% for countries in other regions where more data is available.

Table 1: Women as a percentage of all managers (legislators, senior officials and managers)

Country	Earliest Year	Women Managers (%)	Latest Year	Women Managers (%)
Algeria	2001	5.2	2013	10.6
Bahrain	2001	12.3	n/a	-
Egypt	2000	10.1	2013	7.1
Iraq	n/a	-	n/a	-
Jordan	2004	5.1	n/a	-
Kuwait	2005	13.1	n/a	-
Lebanon	2004	11.8	2007	8.4
Morocco	2004	10.8	2008	12.8
occupied Palestinian territory	2000	12.8	2013	15.0
Oman	2000	9.3	n/a	-
Qatar	2001	4.7	2013	12.2
Saudi Arabia	2006	9.0	2013	6.8
Syrian Arab Republic	2007	10.2	2010	9.0
Tunisia	2011	13.9	2012	14.8
United Arab Emirates	2000	7.8	2012	10.0

Sources: ILO STAT based on Labour Force Surveys for Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, occupied Palestinian territory, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the UAE. Population Census for Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar and Yemen (2004). Living conditions survey for Lebanon and Household income and expenditure survey for Yemen (2005).



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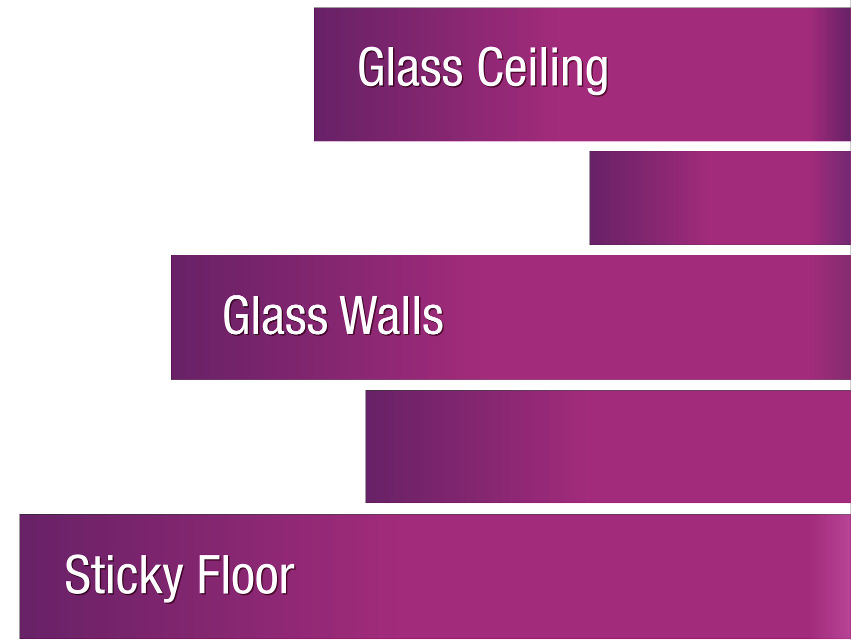
WOMEN IN BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

International Labour Organization

2016

GAINING MOMENTUM
IN THE MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

ACT/EMP
Bureau for employers Activities



Women
Obstacles
to Leadership

01 Research from around the world concludes that women's advancement in management is challenging. Almost insurmountable obstacles block their access to top leadership positions in companies and organizations; the so-called "glass ceiling".

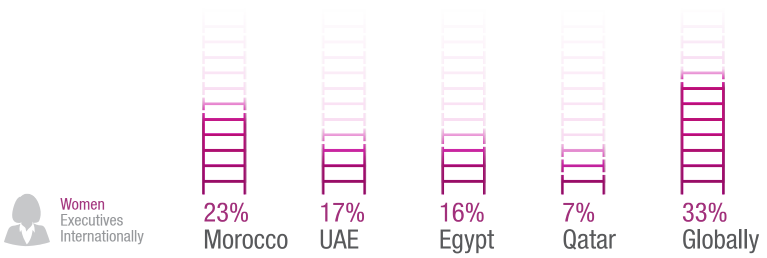
Women start facing barriers at lower management levels generated from structural factors within corporations as well as from social and cultural constraints. At times it can be women themselves who are reluctant to pursue higher-level responsibilities. These factors hamper their career progression as compared to their male counterparts; this is referred to as the "sticky floor".

When women are able to attain higher-level management positions they often find themselves in management support functions that do not lead to the highest-level management jobs. This phenomenon is also known as the "glass walls".

Even when women do enter the labour force, their participation rates drop significantly with age, which is the time when women are experienced enough to assume higher positions and more responsibilities at work. This attrition or exit of qualified women at higher career levels from companies and organizations is often referred to as the "leaking pipeline". It leads also to a shortage of women in senior management posts to serve as role models.

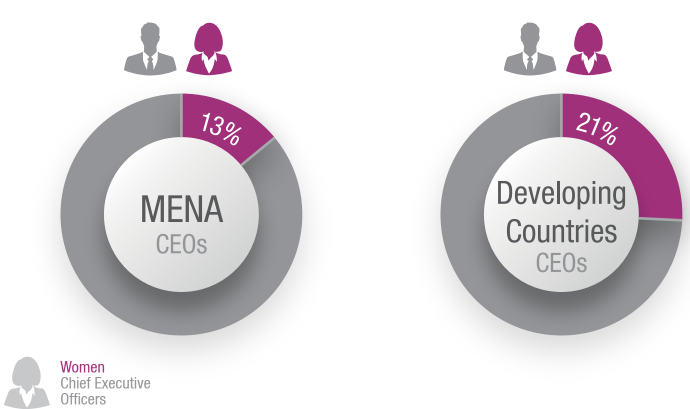
There are gender dividends to be gained by including more women in decision-making and increasing the labour participation of women. Studies show that by tapping into women's skills and talent, business outcomes are enhanced and economic growth is accelerated.

So where is the blockage to women's advancement in management in the MENA region?

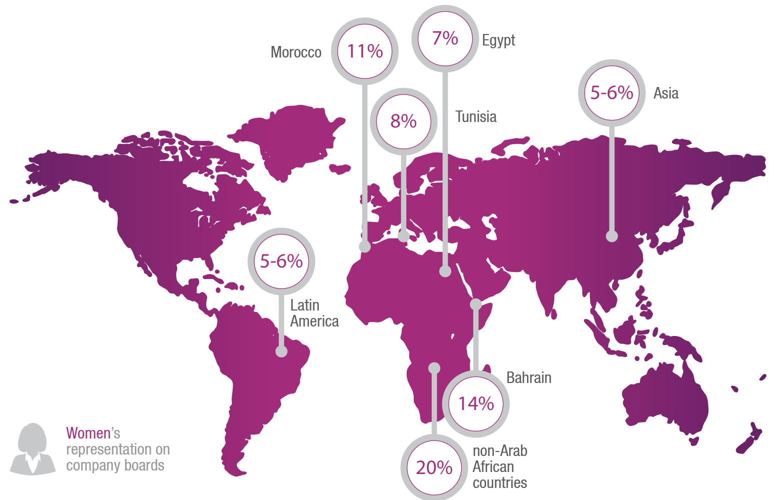


03 Going further up the ladder, women in the region also report a weak presence as executives. Data with the ladder as it is already (23% in Morocco out of all executives, 17% in the UAE, 16% in Egypt and 7% in Qatar). The highest rate reported globally was 33%.

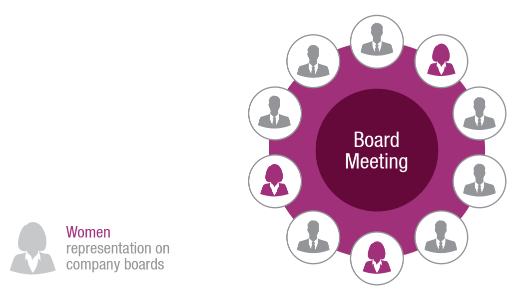
04 According to the 2013 **ILO** company survey, Women Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) in the MENA region have the lowest representation globally. The MENA region reported a share of 13% as women CEOs out of the total, versus a 21% similar share in all developing countries regions.



05 In the GCC countries, the share of women represented on company boards does not exceed 2%, with some countries showing some progress. For example, in Bahrain companies with female board members increased from 12% in 2010 to 14% in 2014. In other parts of the region, there are some countries where women are more present on boards. A 2013 survey in Morocco covering a diverse group of companies reported that among the 76 companies listed in the Stock Exchange, 11% had women holding board seats. In Tunisia, the percentage of women on the boards of listed companies was close to 8% at the end of 2013 and in Egypt, it was almost 7% in 2011.

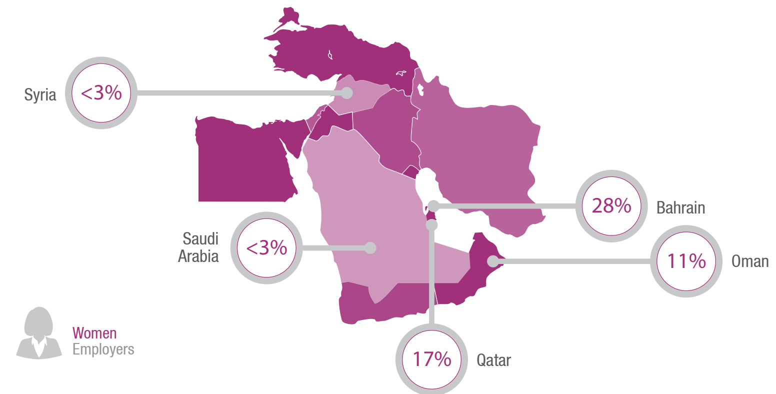


Women as chairpersons or presidents of boards are an even smaller minority across all regions. According to the ILO, no more than 7% of companies surveyed had women as board presidents in the MENA region.



06 Women in the MENA region are just starting to climb the corporate ladder. And, while very few are breaking through the glass ceiling to top managerial posts in the private sector, entrepreneurship is gaining importance as an alternative avenue for their economic empowerment.

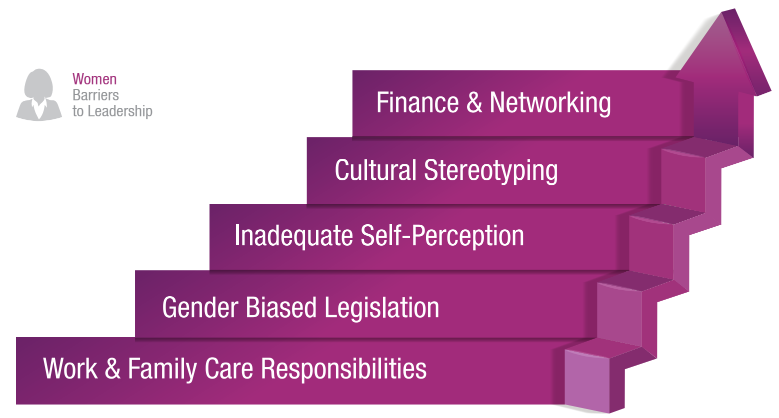
It has been estimated that the rate of entrepreneurship among women in MENA is lower than in other regions and remains lower than men's entrepreneurial initiatives within the region.



07 Out of all employers, the share of women remains small in much of the region with the highest being almost one third in Bahrain (28%) but less than 3% in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Syria, according to the latest available data. Nevertheless, some of the Gulf countries are reporting progress in the share of women as employers, with several more than doubling in the last decade: to 28% in Bahrain, to 11% in Oman and to 17% in Qatar.

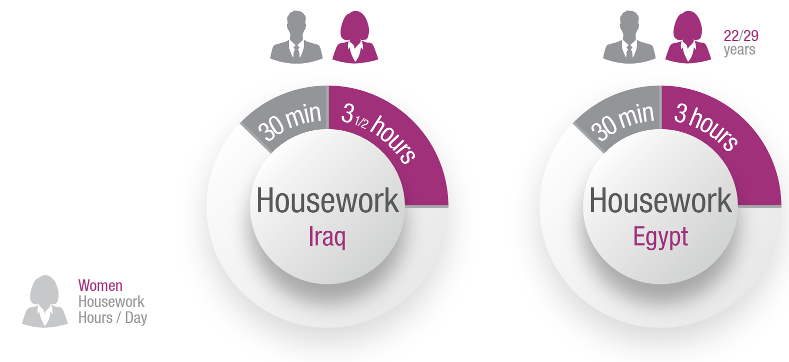
In general, the share of men who are employers is 15% in Egypt, 12% in Lebanon, 7% in the occupied Palestinian territory, the corresponding indicator for women does not exceed 2% in these countries according to the latest available statistics (2013).

Despite their low numbers as employers, women's representation in **chambers of commerce** is increasing, especially as many chambers have set up women's business committees (as in the GCC countries, as well as in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, occupied Palestinian territory and Yemen). Their aim is to support women entrepreneurs and respond to their needs by providing business development services and networking opportunities.



08 INTERRELATED BARRIERS TO WOMEN EMPLOYMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Women in the MENA region face similar barriers as other women in the world to reach top positions in business and management. One of the key challenges, is that women face the double burden of work and family care responsibilities. Research in the GCC countries indicated that women considered **balancing work and family/life** as the single most important obstacle to their career aspirations. **Cultural stereotyping** and **inadequate self-perception** also hamper women's career advancement. **Gender biased legislation**, as well as limited access to **finance and networking** can act as disincentives for women to enter or exit the labour market and to pursue careers.



09 Measures

Amidst the multiple challenges constraining women's representation in the business world, responses are also gaining ground in the MENA region. Governments have introduced reforms at **macro levels** starting with legislation. Most reforms do not necessarily target women in business and management directly. However, as they aim to ensure greater equality of opportunities generally, they can ultimately influence women's economic choices and outcomes. At the **meso level**, emerging alliances to support women in business are increasing in both number and outreach. The majority of MENA countries now have more than one businesswomen's association to support female leadership and entrepreneurship. The employers' organizations are also more active in supporting women to grow and sustain their businesses and increase their representation. At the **micro level**, more companies are introducing human resources measures to support women in their careers.

It is undeniable that the MENA region is undergoing significant changes. Demographic, economic, and technological trends together with changes in national employment policies across the region represent opportunities for more equality between men and women. In addition, the **growing talent** and **capabilities of women** with their increased levels of education can be of tremendous benefit to companies and organizations.

Companies can play a major role in promoting women's participation in the labour force by focusing on the gains that this would bring to their businesses and to social and economic development. Practicing equity, building gender-sensitive human resources management systems, creating enabling environments for women in the corporate world, establishing an accommodating social infrastructure and **endorsing work – life balance** arrangements for both women and men are all vital elements for successfully **advancing women's careers**. Meanwhile, employers' organizations, business associations, trade associations, chambers of commerce and women's organizations can also make a difference by empowering women to flourish in business and management in the region.

All references / data are available in the ILO publication "Women in Business & Management in the Middle East & North Africa", ISBN 9789221308232, 2016.