

ESCWA Centre for Women Sewsietter

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Gender Equality – Part One

Centre for Women UN- ESCWA

A monthly ECW issuance aiming at raising the gender awareness and responsiveness through highlighting the gender dimensions in various fields.



Measuring Gender Equality and Human Development

This is the first in a series of newsletters seeking to provide an overview of gender equality in the context of social and economic development in the ESCWA region. This newsletter will define gender equality as an issue of concern in the United Nations development agenda, present the basic analytical tools for measuring gender equality as an aspect of human development, and discuss gender equality measures for the ESCWA region in the global context. Later issues will take a more in depth look at the health, education, and political and economic participation components of gender equality.

Special events in the ESCWA
Centre for Women

The notion of gender equality as development aim bound to the capabilities approach upon which the human development index (HDI) is based. The HDI seeks to measure the capability of countries population to achieve "a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of rather living¹" simply measuring GDP.



While the HDI reflects the average life expectancy, health, educational levels and standard of living of the population of a country, it does not account for inequalities or inequities between sub-sections of a country's population. Disaggregation of data to show the difference in human capabilities across population groups has revealed important characteristics of countries' human development. Measuring gender inequality is instructive, since disparities between genders play a large role in shaping the social, political and economic development of a country as a whole. Two measures of gender equality have been developed to add a gender dimension to the HDI: gender-related development index (GDI) and the gender empowerment measure (GEM.)

¹ UNDP, <u>Human Development Report 2006: Beyond Scarcity: Power, Poverty and the Global Water Crisis</u>

- ECW is organizing in collaboration with UNIFEM, a regional workshop on Gender Budgeting in Amman, Jordan on November 27 and 28 2007.
- an advisory mission to

 Qatar to train members

 of the Supreme Council

 for Family Affairs on the

 Convention on the

 Elimination of all Forms

 of Discrimination against

 Women (CEDAW), from

 11 to 12 December 2007.

Highlights:

- 1- Gender-Related Development Index (GDI)
- 2- Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)
- 3- The Gender Paradox in the Arab World

Gender-Related Development Index (GDI):

The GDI is a gender-equity-sensitive indicator, which looks at the same indicators that comprise the HDI (life expectancy at birth; adult literacy; combined gross enrolment rate for primary, secondary and tertiary schools; and GDP per capita) while also taking into account equality of attainment in human development indicators between men and women. The GDI is calculated by looking at the value of the HDI indicators, disaggregated by sex. Proportional income shares and indices for computed for life expectancy and education (adjusted for women's naturally longer lifespan) are computed; next a parameter of inequality aversion is applied which adjusts the score down for differences in the scores between men and women.2

"In all countries, measures of human developme nt are higher for men than for women."

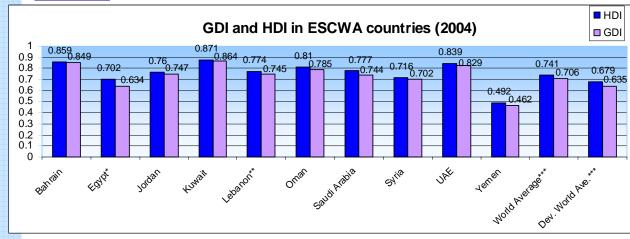
In all countries, measures of human development are higher for men than for women. The difference between a country's GDI and HDI is one measure of the degree of gender inequality in that country.

ESCWA member states vary widely in their HDI scores; the gulf countries and Lebanon score above the world average, while other ESCWA countries fall below. In all ESCWA countries there is a disparity between the human development achievement enjoyed by males and females. A country's HDI and GDI rank shows where it falls with regard to human development and gender disparity in relation other countries. If a country has a lower GDI than HDI ranking, this implies that it has a higher gender discrepancy than other countries. Almost all ESCWA countries have a lower GDI than HDI ranking (see last column of table 2), implying that women and girls in the ESCWA region enjoy the benefits of their country's human development to a lesser degree than do the female populations of other countries.





Table one



UNDP-POGAR; *2002; ** 2003; ***2006 Based on data taken from UNDP, made available by UNDP-POGAR http://www.pogar.org

Table two

Country (HDI rank - 2005) ³	GDI Rank (2003)	GDI value (2003)	Life expectancy at birth, female (years) (2003)	Life expectancy at birth, male (years) (2003)	Adult literacy rate, female (% ages 15 & above) (2003)	Adult literacy rate, male (% ages 15 & above) (2003)	Combined gross enrolment rate, primary – tertiary, female (%) (2002 – 3)	Combined gross enrolment rate, primary – tertiary, male (%) (2002 – 3)	Estimated earned income, female (USD PPP) (2003)	Estimated earned income, male (USD PPP) (2003)	HDI rank – GDI rank (2003)
Qatar (40)	-	-	76.0	71.2	-	-	84	80	-	-	-
UAE (41)	-		80.8	76.4	80.7	75.6	79	69	-	-	
Bahrain (43)	41	.837	75.9	73.1	83.0	92.5	85	77	7,685	24,909	-2
Kuwait (44)	39	.843	79.5	75.2	81.0	84.7	85	75	8,448	24,202	1
Oman (71)	60	.759	75.7	72.8	65.4	82.0	63	63	4,013	21,614	-4
Saudi Arabia (77)	65	.749	73.9	70.1	69.3	87.1	57	58	4,440	20,717	-5
Lebanon (81)	68	.745	74.2	69.8	81.0	92.4	80	77	2,430	7,789	-4
Jordan (90)	73	.740	72.9	69.9	84.7	95.1	79	77	2,004	6,491	-3
Palestine (102)	-	-	74.0	70.9	87.4	96.3	81	78	-	-	-
Syria (106)	84	.702	75.1	71.6	74.2	91.0	60	65	1,584	5,334	-2
Egypt (119)	-	-	72.1	67.7	43.6	67.2	-	-	1,614	6,203	-
Yemen (151)	121	.448	61.9	59.3	28.5	69.5	41	69	413	1,349	-4
ESCWA region Average		0.73	74.3	70.7	70.8	84.9	72.2	71.7	3625.67	13178.67	
World Average		.706	68.1	63.6	75.4	84.2	70.3	70.7	13,337	16,598	

3 Chart based on data taken from UNDP, 2005 Arab Human Development Report: Toward the rise of Women in the Arab World

As measured by value rather than rank, the disparity between GDI and HDI in the ESCWA region falls below both the world average and the average for the developing world. This is because of the achievements made by Arab countries in the past decades in improving female's health and education. While these achievements are laudable they have not translated into an increase in many other capabilities; the disparity in earned income in ESCWA member states is far above the world average and includes the highest rates in the world. Looking at each of the component factors, "despite considerable progress, the Arab states still show the greatest gender inequality in basic capabilities of any region in the world. ⁴"

There are problems associated with comparing the GDI as a measure of gender disparity; both the variables and the methodologies used in computing the GDI are currently being revisited¹. In general, the use of so few indicators in the composite measures leads to an incomplete picture of human development and gender equality. There remain aspects of gender equality which are not captured by the GDI; thus while the GDI is a valuable tool, it provides only an incomplete and potentially misleading picture of gender equality.

4 For further information see Sili-Giri, Bharati, *Revisiting the GDI and GEM* in *Gender and Development in Brief: Gender and Indicators*, Bridge Bulletin, Issue 19, August 2007





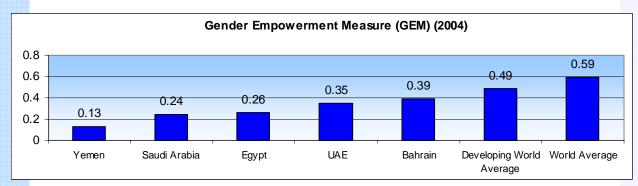
Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)

While, the GDI focuses on capabilities, another measure, the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) focuses on participation. The GEM is a "composite index measuring inequality in three basic dimensions of empowerment - economic participation and decision-making, political participation, and decisionmaking and power over economic resources.5" Women's political participation is measured by the percentage of seats in national parliament held by women. The number of female legislators, managers and senior officials and the percentage of women active in the technical and professional fields serve as measures of women's professional participation. Women's economic participation is measured by the percentage of household income earned by women. Although income appears in both the GDI, and the GEM, it serves a very different role. In the GDI, income is a tool for expanding women's choices and capabilities, in the GEM, percentage share of income represents women's control over resources in her household and society.

⁵ UNDP, <u>Human Development Report 1995: Gender and Human</u>
Development

Country for which GEM Rank (of 75) available ⁶					
Egypt	73				
Saudi Arabia	74				
UAE	70				
Yemen	75				

⁶Ranks taken from UNDP, Human Development Report 2006



UNDP, Human Development Report 2006

The GEM, like the GDI is a gender-equity-sensitive indicator, which adjusts a country's score down to reflect disparity from an equally distributed equivalent percentage which is derives for each variable.⁷

Gender empowerment is not dependant on income. Many countries with low incomes, have high rates of gender empowerment. For example, Poland ranks 25th in the GEM, ahead of Japan, in 44th place although Poland's per capita GDP in Poland is about one third that of Japan's (9,450 PPP US\$ vs. 25,130 PPP US\$ for 2001)⁸.

Despite high income and impressive achievement in women's human capabilities in the ESCWA region as measured by the GDI, the countries of the Middle East have some of the lowest GEMs in the world. Of the few countries for which GEMs are calculated in the last Human development Report, all fall in the bottom six of global rankings. Women in the Middle East have the lowest levels of both political and economic participation of any region in the world.

⁷ UNDP, <u>Human Development Report 1995: Gender and Human Development</u>, Technical Notes

⁸World Bank, <u>Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa:</u> <u>Women in the Public Sphere</u>, Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2004





"Women in the Middle East have the lowest levels of both political and economic participation of any region in the world."

The Gender Paradox in the Arab World

"ESCWA countries have made investments in improving women's health and education, but lack of economic and political participation limit the degree to which society benefits from women's increased capabilities. "

High achievement in education coupled with the world's lowest rates of political and economic participation have led the World Bank to describe a "gender paradox" in the Middle East⁹. In effect ESCWA countries have made investments in improving women's health and education, but lack of economic and political participation limit the degree to which society benefits from women's increased capabilities.

The next edition of this newsletter will examine the gains made by Arab countries in decreasing gender inequality with regard to health and educational; the following will examine the costs to society of limits on women's participation.

World Bank, <u>Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa: Women in the Public Sphere,</u> Washington, D.C: World Bank, 2004





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See us at:

www.escwa.org.lb

About Our Organization...

The ESCWA Centre for Women was established on October 1, 2003, following the Commission's adoption of Resolution 240(XXII). This resolution, recognizing that a fundamental part of development is the empowerment of women, called for the creation of a Committee on Women comprising the member countries, and for the establishment of a women's Centre at ESCWA. The Centre continues and expands on the work carried out by the Women Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming Team, formerly a part of the Social Development Division at ESCWA.

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