

Economic integration of women in Egypt :
Findings, state of play and new courses of action

Monday, October 29th, 2018

From 09:45 am to 02:00 pm

at l'Institut français d'Égypte

Mounira (Cairo)



PRESENTATION :

In 2017, the Egyptian government launched the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030. One of its main concern is to favor women's economic empowerment, that is, to support women's capacities to enhance their employment options, to expand their participation in the workforce, to support entrepreneurship and to realize equal opportunities in all sectors.

On the labor market, women continue to face challenges (cf. higher unemployment rate for women and lower participation in the labor market). The Female Labor Force Participation (FLFP) in Egypt has fallen in spite of the increasing level of education. Women education showed significant progress in recent years, and the number of female students at universities exceeded that of male students.

On an entrepreneurship perspective, female and male-owned enterprises operate in the same business environment, but the challenges they face differ. Women face more challenges than men in starting, managing and growing businesses. Notably, women entrepreneurs still have difficulties to access financial services and to face social norms that still commit women to family and home responsibilities.

Numerous Technical and Financial Partners are mobilized to support women economic empowerment in Egypt, for example through financing services dedicated to women, since it is well identified that one of the major problems for female entrepreneurs is obtaining a loan from a financial institution. However, women are still under-represented in the labor market and in terms of entrepreneurship.

The aim of this workshop is to provide a platform for engaging with all stakeholders interested in the topic of women participation in the labor market and women entrepreneurship and allow a constructive dialogue between varied perspectives and experiences.

What are the different tools and opportunities to enhance and strengthen women's economic empowerment? How is it possible to develop a gender-sensitive vision and public policy in the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector? What are the women's needs in terms of public orientations and policies to improve their financial and personal autonomy, create jobs and employment opportunities and contribute to the economic and social well-being of their communities? Are the efforts made to increase financial inclusion and existing tools enough to reach the objective of a "decent" job? Could new tools and new approaches be developed in order to facilitate women's participation in the labor market?

PROGRAM :

09:45 : Registration

10:00-10:15 : Opening remarks

Mr. Fabio Grazi (AFD Director), Mrs. Nevine Gamea (MSMEDA Chairman) and Mrs. Marine Poirier (CEDEJ)

10:15 - 11:30 : First session

The Situation of Women in the Egyptian Labor Market: Gendered Roles and Economic Mobilities

Moderation : Mrs. Azza Shalaby (Director of gender sector, MSMEDA)

Presentations

- Mrs. Irène Selwaness (Cairo University, FEPS) “ Marriage and women’s employment in Egypt ”
- Mrs. Ranime Alsheltawy (Université Paris 9, IRISSO) “ Rural to urban migration and the feminization of poor urban families. Does Cairo empower women? ”

Discussions

- Evolution of the position of women in the public and private sphere
- Role of women / expectations of women (in the labor market, in the family, etc.)
- Constraints and challenges to reach expectations / aspirations

11:30 - 12:00 Coffee - break

12:30-13:45 : Second session

Experiences on the Labor Market: Traditional Approaches of Employment and New Entrepreneurships

Moderation : Mrs. Sally Zohney (gender expert, GIZ)

Presentations

- Mrs. Rehab Sakr (University of Cairo, FEPS) “ Women entrepreneurship, citizenship and the Facebook-Metro Economy in Egypt ”
- Mrs. Nouran Salah (Cairo Cycling Geckos founder)
- Mrs. Shaimaa Sheta, Mrs. Hadir El Kabissi, Mrs. Abla El Hout, Mrs. Intissar Fathi (MSMEDA beneficiaries)

Discussions

- New forms of employment / work
- How can social networks and new means of communication be an opportunity for women?
- Emergence of new models for women in the labor market

13:45 - 14:00 : Conclusion and perspectives

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS:

AFD

Since 2013, AFD has been developing a strategy to promote gender equality in all the sectors and countries where it operates. It finances projects which specifically focus on reducing inequality, by increasing access to basic services, combating violence against women, improving access to the labor market and via the participation of women in good governance. Today, in line with the objectives set by the French Gender and Development Strategy:

- 100% of AFD projects are examined on the basis of OECD gender equality standards;
- 50% of the operations financed are rated 1 or 2 according to OECD standards;
- AFD's project managers have been sensitized to the gender issue.
- The gender issue is a central theme in AFD's new strategy for 2018-2020.

In Egypt, AFD is working to design a new credit facility dedicated exclusively to finance MSMEs owned by women. It should mobilize a grant for a Technical Assistance Program, to support and develop the implementation agency's gender capacity which is the Micro Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (MSMEDA). The project aims to alleviate constraints faced by women to start a MSME business, create job opportunities, grow, be competitive in domestic and global markets and play an effective role in the socio-economic development of Egypt.

CEDEJ

The Centre for economic, legal and social studies and documentation (CEDEJ) is a multi-disciplinary research centre, whose works encompass all humanities and social science research with a main focus on contemporary Egypt. The CEDEJ hosts researchers and students of diverse backgrounds and supports them in their research. It organizes workshops and conferences and publishes research, most notably in its open edition journal Egypte/Monde Arabe (<https://journals.openedition.org/ema/>).

The CEDEJ has participated to the production of a critical approach and knowledge on gender dynamics in Egypt. It has supported researchers working on these issues from disciplines as various as anthropology, sociology, history, geography and political sciences. It recently published a special edition of its journal Egypte/Monde Arabe entitled " Local governance in the Arab world and the Mediterranean: what role for women?" in 2012 (ed. Sylvette Denèfle and Safaa Monqid), and " New gender-related struggles in Egypt since 2011 " in 2015 (ed. Leslie Piquemal).

PRACTICAL INFORMATION :

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