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Women in Business: The Path to Leadership

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## **Saudi Women in Security positions challenge stereotypes**



With a growing number of facilities in the Kingdom, a need for female security guards arose. More women are joining this field and are taking their spots in private offices run by women, banks, malls and other social, educational and health facilities.

Warda Al-Yani recently decided to become a guard and says people were skeptical at first, telling her she was taking up a man's job. Al-Yani said there's more acceptance of women in this job after many women in this profession have proven their excellence.

However, workers in this domain say this job is not for men alone. "On the contrary, these guards have access to zones men can't enter like female prayer rooms or toilets," Khalid Al-Fehaid, manager at a commercial mall, told Arab News. He said women need to be over 26 years old and have enough confidence to do the job with its security aspects and accompanying problems.

Read more

<http://www.arabnews.com/saudi-arabia/news/724776>

## **Women confronting ISIS: How to Disarm Rape as a Weapon of War**

Under even the harshest circumstances of brutal occupation by ISIS fighters, Iraqi and Syrian women are organizing to save lives and demand their rights. They are setting up shelters to protect women and girls, maintaining escape routes, providing humanitarian aid, advocating for international policy action, and so much more.

These women-led solutions must be spotlighted. That's just what happened at a MADRE co-sponsored symposium with locally-based Iraqi and Syrian women activists and international experts who are addressing the crisis of women's human rights under ISIS.

During the symposium, Yifat Susskind, MADRE Executive Director, discussed the subtle but powerful shift in community responses to rape in Iraq and Syria and how this holds the potential to permanently disarm rape as a weapon of war.

Read more

<http://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/women-confronting-isis-how-disarm-rape-weapon-war>

## **Qatar holds rare vote amid calls for quotas for women**

Qataris will have a rare chance to vote Wednesday as they choose candidates to sit on the country's only directly elected body, with calls growing to ensure more women are selected.

Only one woman was elected onto the 29-seat municipal council at the last vote and out of 118 candidates this time, only five are female, one fewer than the number who stood in the first such election 16 years ago.

Although the electorate of more than 23,000 people is split almost equally between men and women, the gender imbalance between the candidates is striking.

"It would be very disappointing if again only one female candidate won this time," said one of the female candidates, Amal Issa Al Mohannadi.

Wednesday's vote is only the fifth time there have been direct elections in Qatar, with elections to the council taking place every four years since 1999.

Election fever is hardly sweeping the country, but in the streets of the capital Doha, the candidates' posters are hung on hundreds of lamp posts, alongside promises to improve services in their respective constituencies.

Wearing a niqab covering her face, Ms Al Mohannadi said: "I am running for the second time despite all the challenges."

Read more:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse//sites/almonitor/contents/afp/2015/05/qatar-vote-gender.html#ixzz3aPcyXNH>

## **In Iraqi Malls, Syrian Women Work Jobs Spurned by Locals**



Two years after fleeing from her home in Damascus, 22-year-old Rahaf Abdullah is working at a gleaming mall in Iraq's Kurdish region, selling sweets to local women who largely refuse to take such jobs.

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While the mall job is a rite of passage for teenagers in America, in Iraq's conservative and relatively well-off Kurdish region the idea of women working — particularly in menial or retail jobs — is frowned upon. That has created opportunities for some of the tens of thousands of Syrian refugees and displaced Iraqis who have sought refuge here.

"The Kurdish girls are a bit conservative — no, a lot conservative," Abdullah said as she organized boxes of Middle Eastern sweets made of spun sugar, fruit, pistachio nuts and honey. "Their logic is that the women never have to work, they only have to go to school and then return home."

Syria's civil war, now in its fifth year, has killed more than 220,000 people and created nearly 4 million refugees, according to the United Nations.

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/177538-in-iraqi-malls-syrian-women-work-jobs-spurned-by-locals>

## 20 years of Shamefully Scarce Funding for Feminists and Women's Rights Movements

For decades, the women's rights movement and women's rights organizations have been severely underfunded. AWID research in 2010 revealed that the median budget for 740 women's organizations all over the globe was a miserly US\$20,000.

In the same year, as a point of reference, the income for Save the Children International and World Vision International was US\$1.442 billion and US\$2.611 billion respectively. This is in spite of recent research which proves what feminists and activists have known for a long time—that women's movements have been the key drivers defending women's human rights and gender justice worldwide.

As the world commemorates the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Conference this year, creates the sustainable development goals (SDGs), and holds the 3rd International Conference on Financing for Development, it is critical to remember that real systemic impact for women's rights needs significant resources.

Recent research has proven what feminists and activists have known for a long time—women's rights movements and organizations are key drivers for creating change to advance, sustain and defend women's human rights and gender justice worldwide (Htun and Weldon 2012). The Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China was a key catalyst towards this.

Read more:

<http://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/20-years-shamefully-scarce-funding-feminists-and-womens-rights-movements>

## France – Outcry over Muslim School Girl's Long Skirt Ban



*France is facing a fresh backlash against its strict secular policy after it emerged a 15-year-old Muslim girl was sent home from school because she was wearing a long black skirt.*

The student, named as Sarah, was twice blocked from classes because the principal said her skirt broke a ban on religious signs in schools.

The girl removed her headscarf but said the skirt was not a religious symbol.

The case has provoked angry reactions online. The hashtag #JePorteMaJupeCommeJeVeux, or "I wear my skirt how I want to" has had more than 45,000 tweets since Tuesday.

Extreme interpretations

The schoolgirl was sent home in Charleville-Mezieres in the northern Champagne-Ardenne region twice in April, according to reports.

Nicolas Cadene, an official advising the prime minister on secular issues, has said that wearing a long black skirt to school does not break the rules.

Read more:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32510606>

## ***GENDER BASED VIOLENCE***

### **IS Militants Use Social Networking to Attract Women to Syria**



Firuzi would only say that he was "in a country that is like paradise." After some time, Firuzi admitted to Manzura that he was in Syria.

Reports have emerged about young Chechen women who met North Caucasus militants online and traveled to Syria to join them.

In one case, an 18-year-old woman "married" her virtual boyfriend, a 25-year-old resident of Kabardino-Balkaria, before heading out to join him in Syria.

A similar phenomenon is also happening in Tajikistan, according to a report by RFE/RL's Tajik Service, Radio Ozodi.

Radio Ozodi spoke to a 20-year-old Tajik woman named as Manzura (her name has been changed to protect her identity) from the city of Kulob, who described how she had started to chat to a young man she met on the Russian social-networking site Odnoklassniki.

Read more:

<http://www.rferl.org/content/islamic-state-fighter-online-dating-syria-tajikistan/26979106.html>

### **Egypt – Veil or No Veil, Women often stigmatized, Harassed, or Worse**



A photo that went viral on social media of Nehal Kamal, a girl who claims she was assaulted when she decided to take off her Islamic veil

*Calls for women to take off their veils at a demonstration in Cairo initiated debate over Islamic attire for women in Egypt.*

After spending one year living in Cairo, Muslim teenager Sara decided to adopt the Islamic veil, dressing modestly to show only her face and the palms of her hands in public as per mainstream Islamic teachings for women.

She was not following her religious beliefs by wearing the hijab, but rather succumbing to social pressure and seeking to avoid recurrent harassment.

Sara had visited Cairo beforehand. But when she began living there in 2001, she says, she experienced the predicament of being a woman in the huge city, both with and without the hijab.

"Getting groped or touched by sexual harassers would happen on average once a month," recalls Sara, the daughter of an Egyptian mother and a Moroccan father who was born and raised in Kuwait.

Read more:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/151/128817/Egypt/Features/Veil-or-no-veil.-Egyptian-women-are-often-stigmati.aspx>

## Morocco King Eases Restrictions on Abortion for Incest, Rape



Moroccan King Mohammed VI has ordered that laws restricting abortion be loosened, allowing it in the case of rape, incest, danger to the mother's health or fetal malformation.

Debate erupted in this North African kingdom earlier this year over reforming the penal code, which banned abortion except in cases of a threat to the mother's life. The king had his justice minister, religious affairs minister and the head of the state human rights organization study the issue.

"Their consultations showed that a vast majority of society is for the criminalization of abortion with the exception of a few cases that would have negative medical, psychological and social repercussions on the woman, fetus, family and society," said a royal statement carried late Friday by the state news agency.

With the exception of Tunisia, where abortion is legal, the practice is highly restricted across the region, with occasional exceptions made for rape, incest or fetal malformations.

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/179118-morocco-king-eases-restrictions-on-abortion-for-incest-rape>

## In the Space of Only One Year, 276.000 Under-Age Girls Were Married and 109,000 Teenagers Gave Birth in Iran



Justice for Iran – 14 January 2015: The number of Iranian girls who got married between the ages of 10 and 14 reached its highest level in the year 1392 (2013-2014) after the country saw a continuous growth in under-age marriages during the previous five years. The number of girls who became mothers while younger than 15 also rose. At the same time, the last official statistics published in Iran reveal that 10 per cent of the babies born to mothers between 10 and 12 years of age die.

The official figures show that 1,727 girls under the age of 15 gave birth in the year 1392 (2013-2014). On average, more than 8 per cent of women who gave birth during the last five years (1388-1392, or 2009-2010 and 2013-2014) were between 15 and 19 years of age.

The increase in the number of married girls and women who are becoming mothers in childhood comes up as the Iranian parliament, the Majlis, debates a bill designed to curb the access of women to contraceptives and sexual health education with the aim of encouraging population growth. These limitations, the majority of which had been implemented before any decision by the Majlis, expose even more girls to early pregnancies and put their health and the health of their children in danger.

Read more:

<http://justice4iran.org/reports/276000-under-age-girls-were-married/>

## Sudan Changes Law that Left Rape victims Punished for Adultery



Sudan has overhauled a law that led to rape victims being put on trial for adultery, a crime punishable by jail, flogging or even stoning.

The change comes a year after a young Ethiopian woman in Sudan was convicted of committing indecent acts after being gang-raped, a case which sparked international outrage.

Lawyers say that when a woman in Sudan reports rape it is often seen as an admission of zina - the crime of sex outside marriage.

They say the new law introduces a precise definition of rape as a penetrative sexual act involving physical or psychological force.

"In the past the law was confusing and very problematic. In most cases when a woman complained she had been raped she would be tried for adultery," said Hikma Ahmed, a Sudanese lawyer who helped defend the Ethiopian woman.

"This amendment is very helpful for rape victims or survivors seeking justice, and it is also helpful for us lawyers who are supporting these women in court."

Read more:

<http://www.trust.org/item/20150424112558-eo71z>

## GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

### Morocco Gender Pay Discrimination: The \$14.3 Million Cost of a Shattered Shame Ceiling



Charlize Theron got another \$10 million. Lily Ledbetter got \$3.3 million. And even Ellen Pao, who lost her gender discrimination case, still cost Kleiner Perkins a cool \$1 million. (It remains to be seen if she'll have to pay it back.)

When it comes to men treating women badly, the last few years has erupted in a tidal wave of women breaking their silence and speaking out. From Bill Cosby to *Big Eyes*, the biopic of Margaret Keane, an artist who was awarded \$4 million after proving her husband took authorship credit for her paintings, women are officially shattering the shame ceiling, and the cost is both unprecedented and stupendous.

*Gender pay gap: Women break their silence but good*

It was only a matter of time. The only historical safeguard standing between employers having to part with millions of dollars in pay discrimination settlements has been women's silence.

Read more:

[http://www.payscale.com/compensation-today/2015/05/gender-pay-discrimination-the-\\$14.3-million-cost-of-a-shattered-shame-ceiling?utm\\_source=Marketo&utm\\_medium=Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=May%2012&mkt\\_tok=3RkMMJWWfF9wsRonu6zBcu%2FhmiTEU5z16eQtWaa%2FgZl41El3fuXBP2XqjvpVQcVgPbzYDBceEJhqyQJxPr3BLdcN1NI2RhHqCA%3D%3D](http://www.payscale.com/compensation-today/2015/05/gender-pay-discrimination-the-$14.3-million-cost-of-a-shattered-shame-ceiling?utm_source=Marketo&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_campaign=May%2012&mkt_tok=3RkMMJWWfF9wsRonu6zBcu%2FhmiTEU5z16eQtWaa%2FgZl41El3fuXBP2XqjvpVQcVgPbzYDBceEJhqyQJxPr3BLdcN1NI2RhHqCA%3D%3D)

## Saudi Arabia: Moms Visiting Clinics Seeking Male Children

*Many Saudi women are obsessed with having male children in the belief that they are more likely to become breadwinners and continue the family line, Arab News has found.*



In this file photo, Saudi women and a child walk along a street in Riyadh.

These women, including those who have only had female children, are increasingly heading to clinics in the hope that doctors can help them determine the sex of their offspring.

Fawzia Al-Shamakh, director of the self-development consultation center and psychology and sociology consultant at Dar Al-Hekma College, said that women doing so are driven by the mainstream view in the country that male children stand a better chance of succeeding and supporting their families.

“You will find that a woman carrying a male fetus is energized with feelings of satisfaction and dignity.”

There is a prevailing belief among Saudis that a girl should grow up to take care of the household and produce babies, while a man has the responsibility of continuing the family line, she said.

Read more:

<http://www.wluml.org/news/saudi-arabia-moms-visiting-clinics-seeking-male-children>

## UK - Muslim Women 71% More Likely to be Unemployed

*Unemployment rate among Muslim women is 18 per cent, according to the survey - Getty Images*

Discrimination against Muslim women in the workplace means they are much more likely to be unemployed than white Christian women - even when they have the same qualifications and language skills - research shows.

British Muslim women are around 70 per cent more likely to be looking unsuccessfully for work, according to the University of Bristol's Dr Nabil Khattab, who spoke at the British Sociological Association's annual conference in Glasgow.

The recent national Labour Force survey showed the unemployment rate among Muslim women was 18 per cent, compared with 9 per cent for Hindu women and 4 per cent for white Christian women. This has previously been attributed to Muslim women being less well educated and less fluent in English, but Dr Khattab says his data shows the discrepancy is also likely to be explained by employer discrimination.

Dr Khattab analysed a sample of 2,643 from the national Labour Force survey to compare the rates of those looking for work without success. He adjusted the sample in order to compare women with similar educational level and language abilities and controlled for marital status, children and strength of religious belief.

He found that Muslim women were 71 per cent more likely than white Christian women to be unemployed, even when they had the same educational level and language skills.

Read more:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/british-muslim-women-71-more-likely-to-be-unemployed-due-to-workplace-discrimination-10179033.html>



## Iraq Tries to Improve Human Rights Through Education

In a society where conservative religious trends and the rule of tribal law are on the rise, the dissemination of human rights principles is a difficult task. Often, interpretations of religious and tribal customs contradict with basic rights as stated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), such as the freedom of opinion, the freedom of religious belief and other personal rights.

Since 2006, the Iraqi Ministry of Education has been trying, to no avail, to include human rights-related vocabulary into school courses, namely the constitution's articles on women's and children's rights.

On Feb. 23, Ministry of Education spokeswoman Salama al-Hasan said in a statement published on the ministry's website that the project does not correspond to the required educational level in the human rights dissemination field. This is because the ministry has not developed an integrated program to teach human rights. Rather, it has included a number of simple human rights principles into ordinary teaching courses, such as language and math classes.

In a society where social movements and values contradicting the principles of human rights are on the rise, such as in Iraqi society, it is absolutely necessary to teach and disseminate human rights principles on a large scale. This was confirmed by a number of human rights figures and parties, such as the parliamentary committee on human rights, which described the Ministry of Education's program as "modest" in its proposal in September 2012.

Read more:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/05/iraq-education-human-rights-dissemination-violations.html#ixzz3acgm7Y6y>

## Egypt Restricts Women Travelling to Turkey



Egypt has imposed restrictions on female citizens traveling to Turkey, police said Sunday, months after introducing similar measures for men to stop them joining the Islamic State jihadist group.

Women aged 18 to 40 are now required to obtain security clearance before going to Turkey, a senior police officer told AFP, without specifying why.

"A security clearance can be acquired within 72 hours, and it is now mandatory for women traveling to this country (Turkey)," the officer said.

The restriction took effect on Thursday, a Cairo airport official said.

In March Egypt's state-sponsored Islamic authority, Dar al-Ifta, warned women against marrying IS fighters over the Internet who woo them to travel to jihadist-controlled territory.

The compulsory security clearance for men, introduced in December, applies to war-torn Libya as well as Turkey.

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/179175-egypt-restricts-women-traveling-to-turkey>

## Why Progress in Women rights has been Compromised



One of the most profound social transformations of the past century is in the status of women, and importantly, in the worldwide acceptance of the notion of women's rights and gender equality as desirable goals.

This incredible change has occurred not by accident but by design – through the conscious and determined struggles of courageous women and the movements they have built. Through their activism and advocacy, our very understanding of what constitutes social justice has been indelibly altered, and the once seemingly normal forms of gender-based discrimination, violence, and exclusion are now at least recognized as problems, if not resolved.

The recent and increasing focus on and awareness of the challenges affecting women, girls and, increasingly, transgender people worldwide has contributed to a strong interest in "investing" in women and girls by corporate donors and new private philanthropists. This "arrival" of women and girls into mainstream development represents an opportunity to advance women's rights. But it also presents new challenges.

Read more:

<http://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/why-progress-womens-rights-has-been-compromised>

## Iran - Women Still Banned from Sports Stadiums

*"Good Iranian Women Don't Watch Sports"*

Following the announcement that the ban against women in stadiums would stay intact, two Friday imams have called for Iranians to pursue "religious and revolutionary values" in their daily lives.

"The idea of letting women to go to sport stadiums to watch matches has many immoral and negative social consequences," said Hassan Mosleh during his sermon in Borazjan, Bushehr province, on Friday, 17 April.

Another Friday Imam echoed Mosleh's comments, saying most Iranian women were not interested in such immoral behavior. "Those who support this idea have unfortunately lost the right and straight path," said Ali Rahdoust, Friday imam in Delvar, in the southern part of the province. "They imagine that the dignity and virtuosity of our girls and women is about going to sport stadiums, while the majority of our women are chaste and noble and are repulsed by such conduct."

"Men and women sitting next to each other to watch matches will destroy religious and revolutionary values," Mosleh said, as reported by Persian Gulf Website.

At the beginning of April, the Director of Information and International Affairs at the Ministry of Interior contradicted earlier statements by the Minister of Sport, who had said the government was reviewing the law prohibiting women from watching sports in stadiums. AbdolhamidAhmadi had said that changes were likely to be implemented.

Read more:

<http://en.iranwire.com/features/6441/>

*RESOURCES & CALLS*  
*BOOKS & REPORTS*

**Call “Progress of the World’s Women  
2015-2016: Transforming Economies,  
Realizing Rights”**

*“Progress of the World’s Women 2015-2016:  
Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights”  
Launches in Seven Cities*

*New Report from UN Women Unveils Far-  
Reaching Alternative Policy Agenda to Transform  
Economies and Make Gender Equality a Reality*

A major report from UN Women, released today in seven locations globally, brings together human rights and economic policymaking to call for far-reaching changes to the global policy agenda that will transform economies and make women’s rights, and equality, a reality. It takes an in-depth look at what the economy would look like if it truly worked for women, for the benefit of all.

Progress makes the case that the alternative economic agenda it outlines would not only create fairer societies, it would also create new sectors of employment, for instance in the care economy.

The report is being published as the international community comes together to define a transformative new agenda for sustainable development, 20 years after the landmark Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, which set out an ambitious agenda to advance gender equality.

Since the Beijing Conference, significant advances have been made by many societies, particularly in advancing women’s legal rights.

Read more:

[http://www.wunrn.com/news/2015/04\\_15/04\\_27/0427\\_15\\_progress.htm](http://www.wunrn.com/news/2015/04_15/04_27/0427_15_progress.htm)

**Call for Participation: 13th AWID  
International Forum on Women's Rights  
and Development**

*Contribute to the 2016 Forum by submitting a  
proposal to organize a session!*

This invitation is for those who believe in futures free from gendered oppressions, the realization of full rights for people and planet, and self-determination from the body to the nation!

At a time of increased global repression and the attempted silencing of progressive voices, the 2016 Forum of the Association for Women’s Rights in Development is a space for feminist voices and our allies to imagine futures free from gendered oppressions, racial, ethnic, and economic injustice, environmental degradation, and war and violence, to renew solidarities and advance concrete joint action agendas.

At the Forum, we hope to share ideas and experiences of diverse voices and movements that will converge to examine the lessons of the past, conjure fresh perspectives and daring ideas, and explore new ways of working together that move us beyond our existing silos and build our collective power.

Read more:

<http://www.awid.org/node/3243>

## Canada – Women in Niqab speak



Whether through the power exercised by the media, public figures, policy makers or other community stakeholders, Muslim women are often denied the platform and agency to express their thoughts, beliefs and experiences concerning their faith and community. This is best exemplified by the current debate concerning the prohibition of the niqab, the facial covering worn by a small portion of Muslim women. Various governments such as Belgium, Netherlands, the UK, Germany, Austria and France have engaged in highly publicized debates and policies concerning the face veil with Canada also following suit, with the proposed Bill 94 in Quebec and the recent federal decision to ban the niqab during citizenship ceremonies.

In response to these events CCMW has issued position papers and offered public statements at the Bill 94 hearing (download CCMW Bill 94 Brief – May 7 2010 in PDF). Yet more recently, with a grant rewarded by the Trillium Foundation, CCMW is undertaking a study on the practice of Muslim-veiling. Conducting a series of surveys, interviews and focus groups (Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto and Waterloo) with Muslim women who wear the niqab and those who do not, the overarching goal of this project is to allow Muslim women to speak for themselves.

Read more:

<http://ccmw.com/what-we-do/projects/muslim-women-and-the-niqab/>

## Update of World Bank Group Gender Strategy: Consultations



*The World Bank Group is preparing a new gender strategy, which is expected to be finalized and discussed by the Board of Executive Directors later this year. In developing the strategy, we will consult with stakeholders worldwide from mid April to mid July 2015.*

The strategy is being developed to reflect fundamental changes in the world and at the World Bank Group and to respond to accumulating evidence on what works to close gender gaps. The previous World Bank strategy on gender, adopted in 2001, emphasized gender equality as an issue of development effectiveness and laid the basis for integrating gender into the Bank's policy dialogue, analytic work, and operations.

A Concept Note, discussed by our Board of Executive Directors on April 8, outlines a framework for a renewed gender strategy and serves as a basis for discussion during the consultative process.

Read more:

<http://consultations.worldbank.org/consultation/update-world-bank-group-gender-strategy-consultations>

## Women in Business: The Path to Leadership

*Why do so few women make it to the top of the business world? And what can we do about it?*

These are the key questions considered by our 2015 women in business report which looks at the barriers and enabler along the path to business leadership. Drawing on a survey of 5,404 business leaders and in-depth interviews with 20 policymakers, academics and senior decision-makers from inside and outside Grant Thornton, we draw out 12 recommendations for society, government, businesses and women themselves on how to facilitate female advancement.



### *Headline findings*

We have been tracking gender diversity in business leadership over the past decade but there has been very little change in the headline figures. Today, just 22% of senior roles are held by women, compared with 19% in 2004. Almost a third of businesses have no women in their senior leadership teams, although this has fallen by 6 percentage over the past three years. Russia sits top of the global league table with 40% of senior roles occupied by women.

Read more:

<http://www.grantthornton.global/insights/articles/women-in-business-2015/>

For a direct link to report:

[http://www.grantthornton.global/globalassets/insights/ibr/ibr2015\\_wib\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.grantthornton.global/globalassets/insights/ibr/ibr2015_wib_report_final.pdf)

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