



## THIRD CYCLE

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## WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS: LOCAL PERCEPTIONS AND OBSTACLES IN MA'AN

JORDAN

This diagnosis focuses on Jordanian women's practice of power and political responsibilities. It analyses existing legislations related to women's involvement in the public life. It also explores local perceptions in this regard through a survey gauging the opinion of more than 400 people. This survey targeted Ma'an Governorate using a statistical and participatory approach. It provides insightful findings on social attitudes towards political commitment, the functioning of institutions and leadership through the lens of gender.



Al Anwar Women Charity Society has consulted the views of Ma'an students, citizens, activists and politicians on women and political power. ©Cincinart / Shutterstock.com



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- Advancing in the common fight for equal rights of women and men to participate in political, economic, civil and social life;
- Eradicating all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls;
- Encouraging a change in attitude and behaviour for gender equality.

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#### Field diagnosis: Women in leadership positions: local perceptions and obstacles in Ma'an

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## Local clusters of gender equality actors© mobilized in 2018



- |                           |  |                            |
|---------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| <b>A</b> Ifrane (Morocco) | <b>D</b> Alexandria (Egypt)                | <b>F</b> Ma'an (Jordan)    |
| <b>B</b> Sétif (Algeria)  | <b>E</b> Al Khalil and Bethlehem (zones C) | <b>G</b> Tripoli (Lebanon) |
| <b>C</b> Tozeur (Tunisia) | (Palestine)                                |                            |

The Euro-Mediterranean Women's Foundation sets up local clusters of gender equality actors coordinated by associations every year, in the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia (1 per country).

Each local cluster of gender equality actors© chooses a target territory that can be a region or a province or a metropolitan area of a large city. Subsequently, the local cluster's members define a topic of interest related to gender equality that they consider a priority in this target territory.

Each local cluster is made up of 5 actors working in favour of gender equality in the target territory: associations; research or education institutions; local or regional authorities or ministerial departments in charge of advocating for women's rights; media; enterprises and trade unions. Their mission is to mobilize the gender equality actors through data collection, consultations and exchange of experiences. Thus, they analyse the situation related to the target topic and they follow-up the effectiveness of public policies in this area with a collective and participatory approach.

This bottom-up approach leads to produce a diagnosis of the situation that highlights the main obstacles to achieve gender equality, and to design a collaborative and replicable field project to address those obstacles. To date, local clusters were set in Algiers, Oran and Sétif (Algeria); Alexandria, Giza and Luxor (Egypt); Irbid, Ma'an and Zarqaa (Jordan); the eastern suburbs of Beirut, Mount Lebanon and Tripoli (Lebanon); Fès-Meknès, Marrakesh-Safi and Souss-Massa (Morocco); Ramallah-Al Bireh, Bethlehem and El Khalil/Hebron Governorates (Palestine); and Douar Hicher, Monastir and Tozeur (Tunisia). These clusters focus on women's access to political decision-making and high-level positions, women's economic empowerment and professional inequalities and violence against women. This document presents the diagnosis which was conducted in Ma'an Governorate.

## A. INTRODUCTION

Women's roles and functions are linked to the cultural, social, political and financial environments they live in. When attitudes and practices tend to be conservative, men use to be more privileged at the expense of women, and the role of the latter is reduced.

Many societies have discriminatory practices between men and women because of the patriarchal tendency to place women in an inferior position. Some societies of them have become aware and campaigns have been launched to eradicate this gender based discrimination.

This study has the following goals:

- Describe and analyse Jordanian women's situation in southern regions of Ma'an Governorate.
- Assess social acceptance of women assuming leadership positions in Ma'an Governorate.
- Identify main barriers hindering women's access to leadership positions.
- Analyse social relations and traditional stereotypes about women's role in society.
- Determine customs and traditions that impact women's participation in public affairs.

The diagnosis aims to answer the following questions:

- To what extent does society in Ma'an accept women in leadership positions?
- What are the barriers that hinder women's access to leadership positions?
- Are there any statistically indicative differences at a significance level of  $\leq 0.05$  between men and women regarding the acceptance of women in leadership positions?
- What are the proposed solutions that enable women to assume leadership positions?

The diagnosis was developed by Al Anwar Women Charity Society, which conducted a pilot action to mobilize gender equality actors in Ma'an governorate in the first half of 2018. Al-Anwar Women Charity Society is a Jordanian development and non-profit society established in 2010, in the Governorate of Ma'an. It aims at improving families' situations through the implementation of programs and activities in all economic, social and human rights fields in Maan governorate.

Among its main objectives:

- Families' economic empowerment, especially women.
- Assisting poor and needy families.

- Raising awareness of human rights and legal aspects, especially of women, and defend them.
- Establishing productive income-generating projects.

The diagnosis has been coordinated by Mr. Sultan Al Quraa, Assistant Professor at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University (AHU) of Ma'an (Department of Media and Strategic Studies) and Mrs. Lana Krishan, President of Al Anwar. It also involved several institutions of the territory targeted by the diagnosis: civil society organisations - CSOs (Koulna El Ourdoun Youth Association; Al Khair & Al Barr Women's Association; Maan Charity Association; South Badia Charity Association; Shorouk Association; Yakine Association; Community Support Committee); the media (Al Ghad Newspaper; Jordan News Agency; Jordan TV); research entities (Ma'an University; Beitna Foundation for Research and Training; South Window for Community Development) and government institutions (Education Directorate; Health Directorate; Youth Directorate; Women's Section of Ma'an Government Hospital; Ma'an Municipality; Community Police Department).

### 1. Diagnosis subject

A number of studies analyzed the phenomenon of enabling women politically and helping them assume leadership positions in Arab societies in general, and in Jordan in particular. Al-Raqab study<sup>1</sup>, for instance, was conducted in order to identify the most common barriers to women assuming leadership positions in higher education institutions in Gaza. It has come to numerous findings, notably that social barriers were the most common ones, followed by political and personal barriers.

Kreishan and Awad study<sup>2</sup> aimed at analyzing women's economic and social reality in Ma'an Governorate, and showed that the most important challenge faced by women was the high illiteracy rate, which led to their poor participation in labor force, their low standard of living, and the increase of unemployment among women.

Al-Hussein study<sup>3</sup> aimed at identifying the attributes and skills of women in leading positions in the Ministry of Education in Jordan and the challenges they encountered. The study drew

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Raqab, Mo'minah Saleh (2009). Challenges Faced by Women in Practicing Leadership Behavior in Higher Education Institutions in Gaza Governorates, and Ways to Overcome Them, Master's Degree Thesis, Islamic University of Gaza, Faculty of Education

<sup>2</sup> Al-Hussein, Iman (2011). Attributes and Skills of Leading Jordanian Women and Obstacles They Face, Damascus University Journal, Volume 27, Issue No. 3, P. 413-473

<sup>3</sup> Kreishan, Fuad; Al-Awad, Akram (2011). Economic and Social Reality of Women in Ma'an Governate, An-Najah University Journal for Research (Humanities), V. 25, Issue No. 4, P. 821-848

several conclusions, mainly that women faced some barriers, such as negative gender stereotypes, lack of ambition and self-esteem, tribal bias, and failure to continue work.

As for the Yaacoubi, Wanass and Taher study<sup>4</sup>, it investigated difficulties preventing women from attaining higher administrative positions in Iraqi universities. Researchers found a high number of administrative barriers hindering women from assuming higher university leadership positions.

The Al Badarin and Al Qawasmeh study<sup>5</sup> aimed at defining Jordanian women's role in leading change, their most significant leadership traits and skills, and the impact of these traits and skills on women's ability to lead change in Jordanian business organizations. The study mainly showed that women had the adequate potential to perform their role in leading organizational change in the institutions they managed, and that Jordanian women's leadership traits and skills had a positive impact on their role in leading organizational change.

Moreover, the Al Shuweihat study<sup>6</sup> was conducted to determine the level of acceptance of women in leadership positions, and the intensity of social and cultural barriers, from Jordanian university students' perspective. The study found that university students strongly supported the idea of women assuming leadership positions, and believed that the intensity of social barriers was moderate. It also showed that female students were more open to women in leadership positions than male students were, whereas male students believed that the intensity of social barriers was higher, compared to female students.

## 2. Diagnosis' geographic location

Ma'an Governorate is located south of Jordan, and is the largest governorate, with an area of 32,832.3 square kilometers, i.e. 37% of the total area of the Kingdom. It stretches from the borders of Amman Governorate in the north to the Saudi-Jordanian borders in the south, and from the borders of Wadi Araba Sub-District in the west to the Saudi-Jordanian borders in the east.

Ma'an Governorate is at 210 kilometers from the capital Amman and is composed of dry desert. It is internationally famous thanks to the city of Petra, one of the Seven Wonders of the World in

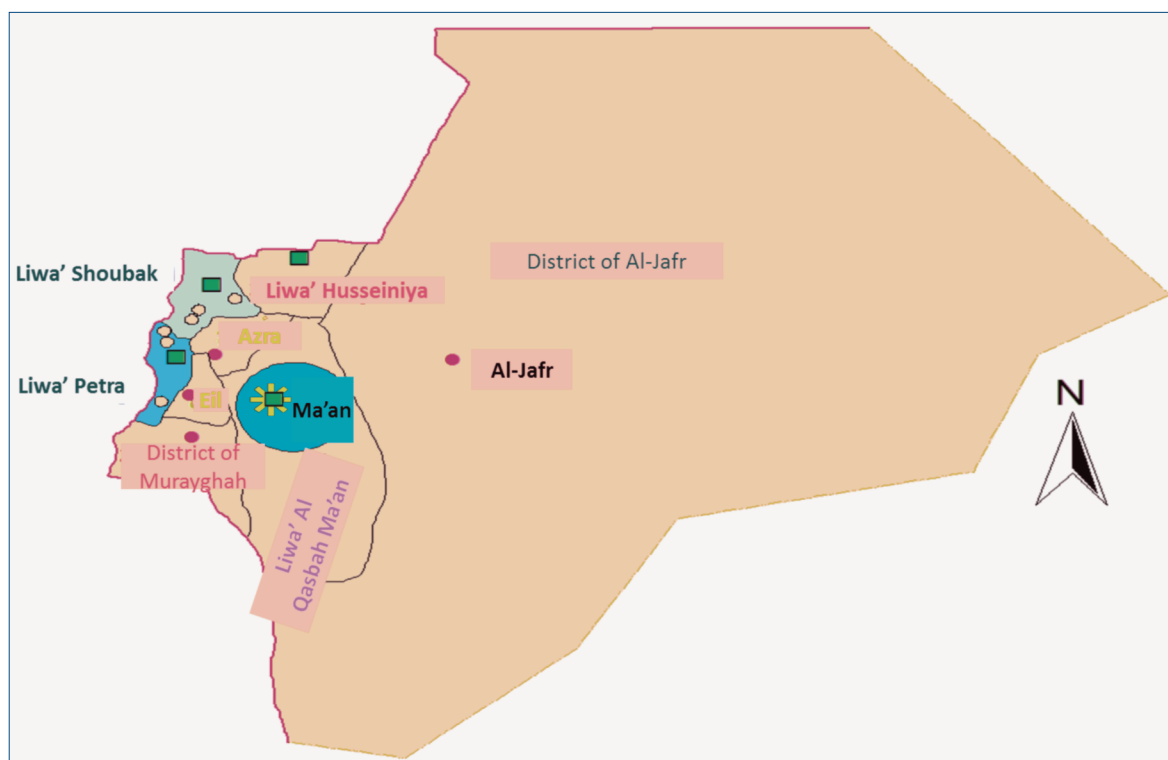
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<sup>4</sup> El Yacoubi, Hassan; Wanas, Aziz; Taher, Habib (2012). Barriers to Women's Work in Higher Administrative Positions in Iraqi Universities (University of Kerbala), Journal of University of Babylon, Humanities, V. 20, Issue No. 2, P. 327-349

<sup>5</sup> Al Badarin, Raqyah; Al Qawasmeh, Farid (2013). Role of Women in Leading Change: Applied Study on Working Women Organizations in Jordan - Balqa Research and Studies, Volume 16, Issue No. 1, P.17-57

<sup>6</sup> AL Shuweihat, Safaa (2017). Social and Cultural Barriers Hindering Educated Women from Assuming Leadership Positions, from GJU Students' Perspective, Jordan Journal of Social Sciences, V.10, Issue No. 1, P. 99-118

Wadi Musa area. Ma'an Governorate has a population of 144,082, of which 75,401 are males and 68,681 are females<sup>(7)</sup>. Table 1 shows the number of inhabitants by area.



**Table 1**

Administrative division	Males	Females	Total
Qasabet Ma'an District (Liwa)	46489	41163	87652
Ma'an Sub-District	22307	19325	41632
Eil Sub-District	7864	7270	15134
Jafr Sub-District	4410	3394	7804
Murayghah Sub-District	7572	7136	14708
Azra Sub-District	4336	4038	8374
<b>Petra District</b>	<b>10149</b>	<b>9679</b>	<b>19828</b>
<b>Shoubak District</b>	<b>9728</b>	<b>9551</b>	<b>19279</b>
<b>Husseiniya District</b>	<b>9035</b>	<b>8288</b>	<b>17323</b>

<sup>7</sup> See: POPULATION AND SOCIAL STATISTICS DIRECTORATE, DEPARTMENT OF POPULATION STATISTICS, General Census of Population and Housing 2015, [http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos\\_home\\_a/main/population/census2015/No\\_of\\_pop\\_deband\\_on\\_GOV.pdf](http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_a/main/population/census2015/No_of_pop_deband_on_GOV.pdf)



Mrs. Lana Krishan, Al Anwar's President, calls on public authorities, grassroots associations and the media to join forces to change the stereotyped image of women and men in Ma'an.

### 3. Methodology

The research team followed a scientific approach based on observing, formulating and testing hypotheses, collecting and analysing data, and drawing conclusions. The team adopted both a statistical analytical methodology and a direct methodology for the collection of information, through focus groups and brainstorming to analyze the chosen subject.

Following the focus groups, the team designed a survey questionnaire comprised of two parts. The first part included statements to measure the level of social acceptance of women assuming leadership positions, whereas the second part included statements to evaluate barriers that prevent women from attaining decision-making, through using the Likert Scale<sup>8</sup> from 1 to 5. Then, the information was presented to a number of experts for validation, and the experts' remarks were taken into consideration.

In order to calculate the tool's consistency, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated. The consistency coefficient<sup>9</sup> for the social acceptance of women in leadership positions stood

<sup>8</sup> The Likert scale is a psychometric tool for measuring an attitude in individuals. It consists of one or more statements (statements or items) for which the respondent expresses his or her degree of agreement or disagreement.

<sup>9</sup> This is a statistic used in particular in psychometry to measure the internal consistency (or reliability) of the questions asked during a test. Its value is less than or equal to 1, and is generally considered "acceptable" from 0.7.

at 0.882, whereas the consistency coefficient for barriers stood at 0.908. These values have been considered appropriate for the purpose of the diagnosis.

The survey was conducted among 419 people from Ma'an governorate (presidents of CSOs, activists, university students, journalists, government officials, professors and lawyers) in July and August 2018. Based on the results of previous studies, it is estimated that the sample under study has characteristics similar to and comparable to those of the general population analysed, taking into account the rate and proportionality of areas attached to Ma'an governorate, where a cluster stratified systematic random sampling was used.

#### 4. Definition of concepts

**Ma'an Governorate Community:** a group of individuals residing in Ma'an city and the related districts (Ma'an, Jafr Sub-District, Iel Sub-District, Mraighah Sub-District, Azra Sub-District, Huseiniya District, Shobak Qasabah District).

**Assuming Leadership Positions:** Measures that aim at enabling women to attain leadership positions through election or appointment.

**Barriers:** The barriers that women may face, such as social, cultural, personal, political and legal barriers.

## B. JORDANIAN WOMEN IN POLITICS AND IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Traditional culture prevails in some Jordanian regions, such as Mraighah Sub-District in Ma'an Governorate, and impacts women negatively. Women have little access to jobs and participation opportunities, since they are still the most marginalised category in the local community. This is reflected in the high rates of women's illiteracy and unemployment and the low rates of women's economic, social and developmental participation. There is a lack of job opportunities and limited diversity of economic activities for women in Mraighah Sub-District in particular, and in Ma'an Governorate in general, as well as patriarchy that deliberately excludes women from public life<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Al-Nusrat, Mohammed, et al., Socio-economic reality in Mraighah Sub-District, Study from a developmental perspective, Jordan Journal of Social Sciences, V.11, Issue No. 1, 2018, p. 145-163



There is an urgent need to prepare women for the exercise of political power and to raise the public's awareness through media campaigns.  
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As for the economic situation, the poverty rate is 26.6% in Ma'an, compared to 14.4% Kingdom-wide. The number of poor people in Ma'an stands at 30,966, i.e. 3.5% of the total number of people living in poverty in the Kingdom, while the number of poor families in the Kingdom reaches 3,882, i.e. 3.3% of the total number of poor families in the Kingdom. Moreover, there are five pockets of poverty in Ma'an Governorate: Mraighah Sub-District, Iel Sub-District, Jafr Sub-District, Azra Sub-District and Ma'an Qasabah District<sup>11</sup>. This has repercussions on the economic, social and cultural status of women living in these areas.

Jordanian legislations helped improve women's role in Ma'an Governorate by emphasizing education for all, regardless of gender. The Jordanian Constitution stipulated that "Jordanians shall be equal before the law. There shall be no discrimination as regards to their rights and duties, on grounds of race, language or religion. The Government shall ensure work and education within the limits of its possibilities, and shall ensure a state of tranquility and equal opportunities to all Jordanians". In the context of efforts to empower women at national level, the

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<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Development Program in Ma'an Governorate (2013-2016), August 2013, p. 5-6

government enacted the legislative election's quota law<sup>12</sup>, the decentralization law, and the municipal election law to increase women's chances of assuming decision-making roles and leadership positions in general<sup>13</sup>.

Despite the barriers that hinder women's participation in development and decision making, Jordanian women did some progress compared to previous years and to peers in other countries. However, it is necessary to increase women's participation and enabling women to assume leadership positions.

In fact, in the Prime Minister Hani Mulki's second cabinet (28th September 2016- 14th June 2018), there were only two female ministers out of 29 ministers, i.e. 6.8% of the total number of appointed ministers. In the first cabinet (1st June 2016 – 25th September 2016), there were four female ministers, i.e. 13% of the total number of ministers<sup>14</sup>. The number of women who were assigned ministerial portfolios increased in Omar Razzaz's current cabinet, which was approved by King Abdullah II of Jordan on 14th June 2018, and which has 28 ministers, including 7 women, i.e. 25% of the total number of ministers. However, there are no female ministers from Ma'an Governorate<sup>15</sup>.

In the eighteenth House of Representatives' elections, Jordanian women earned 38.15% of seats, i.e. 20 out of 130 seats, of which 5 were earned by women through competition<sup>16</sup>. This is the highest rate of women's political participation in Jordan's history. In Ma'an Governorate, women earned 0% of non-quota seats allocated to the electoral district, while only one woman earned a quota seat<sup>17</sup>.

In the House of Senate, the number of women reached 10 of 65 members, i.e. 38.15%, with no representation of women from Ma'an Governorate<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> This law provides for a quota of 10% of women's parliamentary seats, or 15 out of 150 seats. See HUSSAINY, Mohammed. The social impact of Jordan's electoral system, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Jordan and Iraq (2014), <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/amman/10583.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> AL Hussein, Iman (2011). Attributes and Skills of Leading Jordanian Women and Obstacles They Face, Damascus University Journal, Volume 27, Issue No. 3+4, P. 413-473

<sup>14</sup> Jordanian governments by constitution date: <http://www.pm.gov.jo/byFormationDate>

<sup>15</sup> THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. 13th Annual Report on The Human Rights Situation in The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for 2016, Amman, 2017, p. 189, [http://www.nchr.org.jo/Admin\\_Site/Files/PDF/d40d289f-92e1-425d-97df-c55f7c390d06.pdf](http://www.nchr.org.jo/Admin_Site/Files/PDF/d40d289f-92e1-425d-97df-c55f7c390d06.pdf) and <http://www.pm.gov.jo/content/1475687996/%D8%A3%D8%B9%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1-.html>

<sup>16</sup> Official website of the Jordanian Parliament, list of members: <http://www.representatives.jo/ar/%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%B9%D8%B4%D8%B1>

<sup>17</sup> List of winners of the additional seats awarded to women in the 2016 parliamentary elections: [https://iec.jo/sites/default/files/00\\_001\\_Candidates\\_winers\\_List\\_2\\_0.pdf](https://iec.jo/sites/default/files/00_001_Candidates_winers_List_2_0.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> List of Senate members since September 2016 to date: <http://www.senate.jo/ar/content/%D8%A3%D8%B9%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A1->

The rate of female candidates running for the eighteenth House of Representatives elections Kingdom-wide was 52%, compared to 48% of male candidates. However, the actual number of female voters was lower than the number of males. The actual number of female voters constituted 23% of the total number of women registered on the final electoral roll, compared to 40% for male voters<sup>19</sup>.

As for Governorate Councils, the Law on Decentralization No. 48 of 2015 divided the Kingdom into 145 electoral districts, with 270 reserved seats, 10% of which were allocated to women (27 seats). Clause D of Article 6 of the Decentralization Law also stipulated that “the Council of Ministers shall appoint as members of the Governorate Council, upon a recommendation by the Minister, no more than 15% of the number of elected Governorate Council members, provided that one third of this percentage is allocated to women.”<sup>20</sup> Ma'an Governorate's share was 16 seats, and while women were not able to win any seats through competition, they won two seats through the quota system. Moreover, women in Ma'an Governorate failed to win any mayor seats<sup>21</sup>, but secured two seats in the Municipal Council, i.e. 0.98% of seats, as well as 22 quota seats<sup>22</sup>.

Women's participation in the judiciary system has also increased, and the number of female judges reached 178 in 2016 out of 974, i.e. 18,2%. At the same time, female representation in the Royal Committee for Developing the Judiciary and Enhancing the Rule of Law decreased, where only one woman was appointed out of 13 Committee members. It is the same for the Integrity & Anti-Corruption Commission, where only one woman was appointed out of 5 members, including the president<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. 13th Annual Report on The Human Rights Situation in The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for 2016, Amman, 2017, [http://www.nchr.org.jo/Admin\\_Site/Files/PDF/d40d289f-92e1-425d-97df-c55f7c390d06.pdf](http://www.nchr.org.jo/Admin_Site/Files/PDF/d40d289f-92e1-425d-97df-c55f7c390d06.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Alghad, “270 seats in the Governorates' councils”, <https://alghad.com/270-%D9%85%D9%82%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A7-%D9%84%D9%80%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B8%D8%A7%D8%AA/>

<sup>21</sup> See Online Official Gazette: <https://iec.jo/sites/default/files/%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%86%20%D8%B1%D8%A6%D9%8A%D8%B3%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9%201.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Tadamon, “The percentage of women's representation on municipal councils is 41%”, <http://alrai.com/article/10403786/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%AA%D8%B6%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%86-41-%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D8%B6%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9 and see also Online Official Gazette: https://iec.jo/sites/default/files/%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%86%20%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3%20%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B8%D8%A9.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. 14th Annual Report On the Human Rights Situation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for 2018, Amman, 2018, [http://www.nchr.org.jo/Admin\\_Site/Files/PDF/619d5615-23e5-49b5-bf33-f2367f64b856.pdf](http://www.nchr.org.jo/Admin_Site/Files/PDF/619d5615-23e5-49b5-bf33-f2367f64b856.pdf)

## C. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON MA'AN SOCIETY'S ACCEPTANCE OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

The arithmetic averages of statements used to measure the level of social acceptance were calculated as shown in table 2.

**Table 2.** Arithmetic averages of statements (1 to 5) that measure social acceptance of women in leadership positions

Statement	Arithmetic Average	Standard Deviation <sup>24</sup>	Assessment
I accept that a woman represents me in the House of Representatives	3.2	1.1	Medium
I accept that a woman represents me in the House of Senate	3.2	0.9	Medium
I accept a woman assuming the position of Head of an organization	3.1	1.0	Medium
If a woman has more educational qualifications than a man, I wouldn't mind electing her Head of an organization	3.0	1.1	Medium
I accept a woman as a judge	2.7	1.3	Medium
I accept a woman as a minister	2.6	1.0	Medium
If a woman has more educational qualifications than a man, I wouldn't mind electing her member of the House of Representatives	2.6	0.9	Medium
If a woman has more educational qualifications than a man, I wouldn't mind electing her Head of a political party	2.6	0.8	Medium
If a woman has more educational qualifications than a man, I wouldn't mind electing her Head of a union	2.4	0.7	Low
I accept a woman in the position of a university Dean	2.3	0.8	Low

<sup>24</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard\\_deviation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_deviation)

Statement	Arithmetic Average	Standard Deviation <sup>25</sup>	Assessment
I accept a woman in the position of Head of a political party	2.3	0.8	Low
I accept a woman representing me in an international organization	2.0	0.8	Low
I accept a woman in the position of Director of Public Security	1.9	0.9	Low
I accept a woman assuming the position of Governor	1.9	0.8	Low
I accept a woman to represent my country as an ambassador	1.8	0.9	Low
I accept a woman in the role of Prime Minister	1.7	0.7	Low
I accept a woman as chief of my tribe	1.4	0.7	Very low
<b>Extent of social acceptance of women in leadership positions</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>Low</b>
N= 419			

Table 2 shows that social acceptance of women assuming leadership positions was low in Ma'an Governorate, with an arithmetic average of 2.456. The results of this survey were different from the results of Al Shuweihat study<sup>26</sup>, which concluded that the German-Jordanian University (GJU) students were supportive of the assumption of educated Jordanian women of leadership roles. This may be due to the difference in study samples, as GJU students are required to travel and spend a whole academic year abroad, according to the university regulations, and therefore become familiar with the situation of women in Western societies. In addition, these students have a different cultural and educational background since they have studied foreign curriculum in mixed private schools, which has increased their knowledge of each other's capacities.

The reason behind the poor social acceptance of women assuming leadership positions in Ma'an Governorate may be the negative role of political and social education channels, as well as civil society institutions that attempt to preserve the traditional culture instead of adapting it to the Human Rights principles and to democracy and civil society concepts. In fact, all these institutions play complementary roles in the education of individuals, for they are the ones that instill in them values

<sup>25</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard\\_deviation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_deviation)

<sup>26</sup> AL SHUWEIHAT, Safaa (2017), op. cit.

and beliefs. It goes without saying that promoting positive values, beliefs and trends about women enables society to empower women and help them improve. When these values, beliefs and trends are negative, they will have repercussions on society in general and on women in particular, encouraging gender stereotypes where women's only role is to stay at home.

The survey showed that people in Ma'an Governorate did not accept anything new and unusual in the Kingdom in general, and in the Governorate in particular. For instance, the level of acceptance of a woman as a chief of tribe was very low, with an arithmetic average of 1.427. Also, people were not highly supportive of women assuming certain positions, for lack of familiarity, such as prime minister, ambassador, administrative governor, Director of Public Security, member of an international organization, Head of a political party, university Dean, and Head of a union. The arithmetic average of all these statements was between 1.5 and less than 2.5.

Moreover, people in Ma'an Governorate accepted, to a certain extent, the assumption by women of certain positions that were familiar and recurrent in the Kingdom or in Ma'an itself. These positions were, by order of acceptance: member of the House of Representatives, member of the House of Senate member, Head of an organization, judge and minister. The arithmetic average of all these sections ranged from 2.5 to less than 3.5.

Second, in order to answer the survey's second question about barriers that hinder women from assuming leadership positions, the arithmetic averages and standard deviations of statements used to measure these barriers were calculated as shown in tables 3, 4 and 5.

**Table 3.** Arithmetic averages of statements that measure social and cultural barriers hindering women from assuming leadership positions

Social Barriers	Arithmetic Average	Standard Deviation	Assessment
The house is a woman's kingdom and a woman should not leave her house unless in case of emergency	4.2	0.9	High
Our customs and traditions require women to take care of their homes	4.0	1.0	High
Society looks down on women and believes that they cannot move freely from one place to another	3.8	1.2	High

Social Barriers	Arithmetic Average	Standard Deviation	Assessment
Tribes stand in solidarity with men to assume leadership roles	3.7	1.0	High
Behavior based on social ties leads society to react collectively, not individually, to most issues, including selection of male candidates	3.6	0.9	High
There is discrimination against women in practical procedures adopted by men for nomination for higher positions	3.6	1.1	High
Women in the Governorate do not support each other for reasons related to male dominance	3.4	0.8	Medium
Men have the last say at home, and therefore will not accept women being their superiors at work	3.4	1.3	Medium
Parents and husbands are opposed to women assuming leadership positions	3.3	1.6	Medium
Leaders believe that succeeding in higher leadership positions requires physiological traits that are lacking in women	3.2	1.2	Medium
Jordanian families focus on developing leadership skills of males more than females	2.8	1.5	Medium
<b>Social barriers that hinder women from assuming leadership positions</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>High</b>

Table 3 shows that the level of social and cultural barriers that hinder women from assuming leadership positions was high, with an arithmetic average of 3.609 and a standard deviation of 0.501. This may be due to culture in general, and religious culture in particular, and the interaction between general culture and religious culture. Disagreement between Muslim scholars regarding the assumption by women of leadership and public positions has led people in the Governorate to believe that this was unlawful and against the Sharia<sup>27</sup>. In addition, some

<sup>27</sup> For more information, see: Al Mazloum, Jawdat (2006). Women's Right to Hold Public Office in Light of Sharia, Master's Degree Thesis, Department of Islamic Law, Faculty of Sharia and Law, Islamic University of Gaza  
Awad, Nasser (2012). Women Leading the Justice System in Light of Modern Developments, Master's Degree Thesis, Faculty of Graduate Studies, An-Najah National University, Palestine  
Al Amoush, Bassam (2010). Women Assuming State Presidency from an Islamic Perspective, Studies, Shari'a and Law Sciences, V. 37, Issue No. 2, P. 405-423  
Al-Khawli, Hind (2011). Women Assuming Higher Positions in The Country in Islamic Jurisprudence, Damascus University Journal of Economic and Legal Sciences, V.27, Issue No. 1, P. 277-312

education trends and methods continue to focus on women's single role within the household, and do not acknowledge their multiple roles in society, which prevents women from advancing in everyday activities and even reaching decision-making positions<sup>28</sup>.

Many survey's respondents interviewed in the study believed that the house is a woman's kingdom and a woman should not leave her house unless it is urgent. They also believed that customs and traditions in Ma'an Governorate required women to take care of their homes and not go outside, due to society looking down on women and believing that they cannot move freely from one place to another. According to respondents, tribes in Ma'an Governorate support men more than women to reach leadership positions and always nominate a man to be the chief of tribe. There is also discrimination against women in the practical procedures adopted by men for nomination for higher positions. The arithmetic average of all these issues ranged between 3.5 and less than 4.5.

This was confirmed by some leaders in the region, such as the Head of Al-Anwar Society, Lana Krishan, whose father made a concession on her behalf to a male member of the tribe when she decided to run for parliamentary elections. The Head of Southern Badia Women Association, Ola Thiyabat, said that she had been a victim of conspiracy, not because she was a woman, but because a former deputy did not want anyone, male or female, to take his place in the parliament.

The table also shows that there are social and cultural barriers that hinder women from assuming leadership positions, such as women not supporting each other because of male dominance, and men having the last say at home and therefore not accepting women being their superiors at work. Not to mention that parents and husbands are opposed to women assuming leadership positions, and leaders believe that succeeding in higher leadership positions requires physiological traits that are lacking in women. Jordanian families also focus on developing leadership skills of males more than females. The arithmetic average of these barriers ranged from 2.5 to less than 3.5, and some authorities confirmed these results. For instance, Rabiha Kreishan, Teaching staff member at the Center for Languages and Cultural Communication, Al-Hussein Bin Talal University, said that many reasons had led to these barriers, including the fact that society in Ma'an Governorate does not provide women with

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<sup>28</sup> Al Ahmad, Wassim (2016). Political Empowerment of Arab Women, Comparative Study, The Center for Promising Research in Social Studies and Women's, Riyadh

enough support and confidence, women themselves do not have the necessary skills to convince others of their capabilities, and women do not support each other<sup>29</sup>.

**Table 4.** Arithmetic averages of statements that measure personal barriers hindering women from assuming leadership positions

Personal barriers	Arithmetic Average	Standard Deviation	Assessment
Women's physical capacities (for example pregnancy and delivery) do not qualify them to assume higher leadership positions	3.1	0.7	Medium
Lack of competent and trained women to assume higher leadership positions	3.1	1.4	Medium
Women follow their emotions, which hinder them from assuming higher leadership positions	3.1	0.8	Medium
Women's poor job performance decreases their chances of assuming leadership positions	2.8	1.0	Medium
Women's poor capabilities to make rational decisions	2.8	1.4	Medium
Women's poor capabilities to resist emotional stress	2.6	0.9	Medium
Women's poor capabilities to face challenges	2.6	1.7	Medium
Lack of drive and motivation among women to assume higher positions	2.6	0.9	Medium
Women are incapable of assuming higher leadership positions	2.5	1.4	Medium
Women's poor perception of their role and importance in society	2.4	1.2	Low
Women's lack of objectivity to make rational decisions	2.3	1.5	Low
<b>Personal barriers</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>Medium</b>

Table 4 shows that the level of personal barriers hindering women from assuming leadership positions was medium, with an arithmetic average of 2.766 and a standard deviation of 0.499.

<sup>29</sup> Basma Al-Habahbeh, former President of the Feminine in Ma'an Governorate and Jamila Al-Jazy, Head of Nashmeyat Al-Badia and former official in Al-Ash'ari Municipality, also described similar experiences.

Al-Hussein<sup>30</sup> summarized the personal barriers that women face from the perspective of subordinates, superiors and leaders. These barriers included women’s personalities, their lack of ambition and self-confidence, and discontinuity of work.

The arithmetic average of some of these personal barriers ranged from 2.5 to less than 3.5, which means that these barriers were of a medium level. The following barriers are listed from the highest to the lowest impact: women’s physical capacities, lack of competent and trained women, in addition to excessive emotions that hinder women from assuming higher leadership positions and prevent them from making rational decisions. Personal barriers included as well women’s poor capabilities to resist emotional pressure and to face challenges, and lack of drive and motivation among women to assume higher positions.

**Table 5.** Arithmetic averages of statements that measure political and legislative barriers preventing women from assuming leadership positions

<b>Legislative and political barriers</b>	<b>Arithmetic Average</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Limited involvement of the media in shedding light on women’s issues and success stories	3.5	1.3	High
Failure of political parties and civil society institutions to recruit women in leadership positions	3.3	1.6	Medium
Women are unaware of laws and legislations, particularly those related to them	3.1	1.0	Medium
Women’s poor political participation leads to lower chances at assuming leadership positions	2.6	1.4	Medium
Political parties’ poor support to women holds them back from assuming leadership positions	2.5	1.3	Medium
Women are unaware of their rights and obligations, which causes them to be exploited	2.3	1.5	Low
Lack in demanding rights of women to assume leadership positions	2.3	0.8	Low

<sup>30</sup> AL HUSSEIN, Iman (2011). Attributes and Skills of Leading Jordanian Women and Obstacles They Face, Damascus University Journal, Volume 27, Issue No. 3+4, P. 413-473

Legislative and political barriers	Arithmetic Average	Standard Deviation	Assessment
Some laws prevent women from attaining leadership positions	1.8	0.9	Low
The Constitution of Jordan limits gender equality, thus reducing women's chances at assuming leadership roles	1.5	0.7	Low
Current Jordanian electoral law prevents women from assuming leadership positions	1.4	0.8	Very low
The Decentralization Law hinders women from assuming leadership positions	1.3	0.8	Very low
<b>Legislative and political barriers</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>Low</b>

Table 5 shows that the level of political and legislative barriers hindering women from assuming leadership positions was low, with an arithmetic average of 2.379 and standard deviation of 0.432. This reflects the political and legislative situation in Jordan, whether in the articles of the Constitution, National Charter or electoral laws. The Constitution of Jordan stipulates that Jordanians shall be equal before the law, and confirms the principle of equality in assuming public functions. Moreover, electoral laws allowed men and women to equally participate in voting or candidacy, and introduced the women's quota<sup>31</sup>.

The table also shows that the limited media role in shedding light on women's issues and success stories is one of the major political and legislative barriers, with a high level and an arithmetic average of 3.5. This is followed by the failure of political parties and civil society institutions to recruit women in higher leadership positions, women being unaware of laws and legislations, particularly those related to them, and women's poor political participation. Jordanian laws and legislations, such as the legislative election law, the Decentralization Law and the Constitution, have little impact on women assuming leadership positions. Some authorities blame successive cabinets and legislations for women's incapability of assuming leadership positions, but without mentioning any examples<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> Al Ahmad, Wassim (2016), Op. cit.

<sup>32</sup> Adla Al-Tweisi, President of Wadi Mousa Widows Association and Educational Families; Jameela Al-Jazy, Head of Nashmeyat Al-Badia and former official in Al-Ash'ari Municipality; Ola Thiyabat, Head of Southern Badia Women Association

**Table 6.** T-test results to determine the differences between men and women in estimating the level of social acceptance of women assuming leadership positions, and barriers thereto

Barriers	Gender	Number	Arithmetic Average	T <sup>33</sup>	Significance level
Social acceptance of women assuming leadership positions					
	Male	171	2.2	13.9	0.000
	Female	248	2.6		
Social and cultural barriers that hinder women from attaining leadership positions					
	Male	171	3.5	2.4	0.015
	Female	248	3.6		
Personal barriers hindering women from assuming leadership positions					
	Male	171	2.4	4.5	0.000
	Female	248	2.3		
Political and legislative barriers hindering women from assuming leadership positions					
	Male	171	2.8	3.5	0.000
	Female	248	2.6		
Degree of Freedom <sup>34</sup> = 417					

Table 6 shows a difference between men and women in estimating the acceptance of women assuming leadership positions, with a t-test value of 13.998 at a significance level of  $\leq 0.05$ . In fact, women believed more than men that society did not accept women in higher leadership positions, with an arithmetic average of 2.623 for females and 2.214 for males.

There was also a difference between men and women in estimating the level of social and cultural barriers that hinder women from assuming leadership positions, with a t-test value of 2.240 at a significance level of  $\leq 0.05$ . Women believed that there are social and cultural barriers more than men, with an arithmetic average of 3.658 and 3.537 respectively.

Personal, and legislative and political barriers were also statistically indicative, with a t-test value of 4.568 and 3.568 respectively. Actually, men considered more than women that these barriers hindered women from assuming leadership positions.

<sup>33</sup> The T-value measures the size of the difference relative to the variation in the perceptions of the women and men in the sample.

<sup>34</sup> The degree of freedom (dof) refers to the number of random variables that cannot be determined or fixed by an equation.

## D. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

Following the literature review, the focus groups, and the results of the survey, the following recommendations have been elaborated:

- Demand electoral laws that promote alliances and create new opportunities for women to compete in parliamentary elections, thus accelerating social change in Jordan in general and in Ma'an Governorate in particular.
- Encourage cooperation between official and unofficial media, CSOs and education institutions, such as schools and higher education institutions, to raise social awareness of gender stereotypes, providing the appropriate conditions to improve women's situation, and resist cultural and social traditions that hinder women's advancement.
- Engage political, partisan and social male leaders in raising awareness to change stereotypes about women and enable women politically, economically and socially.
- Assess women's image in school and university books, and modify the content to introduce values that highlight women's capacity to assume leadership and their role in societies' development.
- Involve women in international and social events and hold purposeful meetings with school and university students to demonstrate women's capabilities and competencies in various aspects of life
- Engage women in the development process and improve their lives and their families' lives through programs supported by international CSOs and government institutions. This would enhance the quality of services in Ma'an Governorate, ensure local development, improve the financial situation of the population, and consequently allow women to enjoy their rights.

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### **Interviews**

**LANA KRISHAN**, Head of Al-Anwar Society

**OLA THIYABAT**, Head of Southern Badia Women Association

**RABIA KHRISHAN**, Teaching staff member at the Center for Languages and Cultural Communication, Al-Hussein Bin Talal University

**BASMA AL-HABAHBEH**, Former President of the Union of Women in Ma'an Governorate

**JAMILA AL-JAZY**, Head of Nashmeyat Al-Badia and former official in Al-Ash'ari Municipality

**ADLA AL-TWEISI**, President of Wadi Mousa Widows Association and Educational Families



## مؤسسة نساء الأورو-متوسط

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