NATIONAL REPORT: PALESTINE

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EURO-MEDITERRANEAN RESEARCH COOPERATION ON GENDER AND SCIENCE

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INTRODUCTION

This report aims to highlight some of the findings on gender imbalance in women’s careers in the academic and professional spheres in Palestine as part of a joint research project undertaken by the Institute of Women Studies (IWS) at Birzeit University in partnership with other Arab and European institutions within the SHEMERA project. The overall objective of the SHEMERA project is enhancing research cooperation on gender and science between the European Union and the Mediterranean countries. Research cooperation is intended to better the understanding of the roots of gender inequality in science in the Mediterranean area, by taking into account the cultural diversities and traditions, and analysing how the Mediterranean countries are addressing this specific issue.

The research project aims to produce national data in Mediterranean Arab countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia) that can form the basis for a comparative analysis on the current situation, with the objective of benchmarking future development in this area against a baseline that can guide researchers, policy makers, and strategists to areas that need to be addressed.

This research mirrors to a certain extent the joint venture by the European Commission and Statistical Correspondents of the Helsinki Group in their She Figures publications of 2003, 2006 and 2009. These reports monitor the performance of women in the European Union using a set of indicators and they record changes affected by policies and strategies aimed at advancing women’s careers.

The research focuses on three key themes that underpin the current situation of women in science in each country at the national level:

1. Compiling sex-disaggregated statistics covering women and men’s distribution in scientific fields and careers, seniority and influence;
2. Collating scientific literature on gender inequalities in science careers with a focus on horizontal and vertical segregation and the underlying causes and effects of these two aspects;
3. Reviewing available gender equality policies, legislations, national strategies and positive actions for women including equal opportunities legislations.

There is an imbalance in the number, seniority and influence of women and men in scientific fields and professions worldwide. The roots of gender imbalance lie deep within each society, each profession and each institution. Gender imbalance is not a self-correcting phenomenon and only concrete measures targeting specific aspects of its manifestations can lead to any significant change in this area.

Gender imbalance in the Palestinian Territories was particularly affected by the Occupation and its settlement policies that hindered the economic, political and social development of the Palestinian society. The geographic and political discontinuity of the territories, isolating the Gaza Strip from the West Bank, and Jerusalem from both areas, further accentuates the disparity between the different areas in terms of economic and social prosperity. Similar trends, albeit less acute, can be observed when comparing the north and south of the West Bank with the central area around Ramallah. The latter has emerged as the base for the government and the point of attraction for investment and business. The above shapes the view of gender imbalance in Palestine and strongly influences priority of political will and civil society to initiate change.

The following sections discuss the statistics pertaining to women and men’s distribution in scientific fields, seniority and influence, and the gender equality policies. The report concludes with recommendations.
1. STATISTICS ON WOMEN IN SCIENCE

Methodological and data issues

Main data sources:

- 2007 Population Census regarding Housing by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS).
- 2007 Population Census regarding Establishment by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS).
- Labor Force Survey - Raw Data and Public Use File, by the PCBS
- Research and Development Department of the PCBS
- Survey of Research and Development 2010, by the PCBS

The statistical expert judges that the data are accurate and reliable.

The main gaps in the Palestinian data concern researchers by age group and field of science. There are no data at all on research in the Business Enterprise Sector. Although there are data for the higher education, government and private non-profit sectors, these are not broken down neither by age nor by field of science. Moreover, data on researchers are available for just one year, 2010, so that no evolutions over time can be studied.

As there is an R&D survey, the category of researchers can be analysed in detail by distinguishing researchers from technicians and others. However, such an analysis is possible for the higher education and the government sectors but not for the business enterprise sector. The general data on researchers excludes other support staff working in research centres. From the R&D survey, we also have information on R&D expenditure (although only for 2010). Data on the gender pay gap in science and research are available from the Labor Force Survey but for some small occupational groups sample sizes are too small to yield significant results.

All data relative to research funding (number of applicants and recipients) are missing.

Data on PhD graduates are non-existent for Palestine as there is only one local university accredited to deliver a Ph.D. degree in just one field of science, chemistry. Therefore, for Palestine, it makes more sense to analyse PhD holders than PhD graduates. These data come from the 2007 Census which was published in 2009. They include only the population counted during the period of 1-16/12/2007 in the West Bank. They do not include those parts of Jerusalem which were annexed by Israel in 1967. These data are collected with a periodicity of 10 years.

The fact that there is only one local university accredited to deliver a Ph.D. degree also affects the scissors diagram as there are only bachelor students in Palestinian universities and university colleges.

Moreover, it is not possible to have academic personnel disaggregated by sex and grade in the subfield of engineering and technology and the natural sciences.

Female underrepresentation in decision-making in science and research can be studied through two indicators: the share of female heads of universities and the proportion of women on scientific and research boards.
Data on the sex composition of boards cover:

- **Birzeit University** ([http://www.birzeit.edu](http://www.birzeit.edu)): The University is governed by an autonomous Board of Trustees composed of educators and professionals from the Palestinian community. The Board appoints the President of the University. It also confirms appointment to the posts of Vice-President and Dean upon the recommendation of the President. The Board approves the budget and general development plans presented to it by the University Council.

  The University is administered by the President of the University, who is assisted by the University Council, which is composed of the Vice-Presidents and the Deans.

- **An-Najah National University** ([http://www.najah.edu](http://www.najah.edu)): The University is governed by an autonomous Board of Trustees composed of educators and professionals from the Palestinian community. The Board appoints the President of the University. It also confirms the appointment of the Vice-Presidents and Deans upon the recommendation of the President. The Board approves the budget and general development plans presented to it by the University Council.

- **The Palestine Polytechnic University** ([http://www.ppu.edu](http://www.ppu.edu)): The University is governed by an autonomous Board of Trustees composed of educators and professionals from the Palestinian community. The Board appoints the President of the University. It also confirms the appointment of the Vice-Presidents and Deans upon the recommendation of the President. The Board approves the budget and general development plans presented to it by the University Council.

- **Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission** ([http://www.aqac.mohe.gov.ps](http://www.aqac.mohe.gov.ps)): The ultimate goal of AQAC is the improvement of the quality of Palestinian higher educational programs and institutions. It has the responsibility to accredit new academic programs, and license and accredit any new educational institutions, regardless of specialization and level of degree.


- **Riwaq** ([http://www.riwaq.org](http://www.riwaq.org)) establishes the National Register of Historic Buildings

*Introduction*

In Palestine, the male employment rate stood at 77.1% and the female rate at 73.6% in 2010. These figures contrast sharply with the World Development Indicators published by the World Bank according to which in 2010 the male employment rate in the West Bank and Gaza, not for the population aged 25-64 but for the larger population of people aged 15+, stood at 49.9% (50.3% in 2012) compared with a much lower female rate of just 11.9% (12.4% in 2012).

Low shares of men and women work part-time but the male part-time employment rate is higher than the female rate in 2010: 2.9% versus 2.1%.

In 2010, the gender pay gap stood at 16.1% in Palestine (compared with 15.7% in 2004). Palestine has 26 universities or other higher education institutions but there is just one university that delivers PhD degrees and only in chemistry. There are 13 universities and 13 university colleges. The three biggest universities are the Open University, the Islamic University / Gaza and the An-Najah National University.

In Palestine, in 2010, just 21% of women and men aged 30 to 34 years of age held a degree of higher education.

0.61% of GDP was spent on R&D in 2010.

*The presence of women in science*

Women form a minority among people who have successfully completed tertiary education in a Science & Technology (S&T) field of study and who are also occupied in such a field. These fields are natural sciences, engineering and technology, medical sciences, agricultural sciences,
social sciences, humanities, and others. In 2004, women represented 35% of this population and 41% in 2010.

The population of researchers in Palestine also remains male-dominated. In 2010, the share of women among researchers aged 25-64 stood at 25%. The situation was somewhat more equal in the government sector than in the higher education sector as the respective shares of female researchers stood at 31% and 20% in 2010. Only in the private non-profit sector is research very feminized with 75% of female researchers and 25% of male researchers. However, this sector represents just a small share of all research conducted in Palestine, 17% in 2010. There is no information on the business enterprise sector.

Scientific fields or horizontal segregation

In Palestine, 10% of PhD holders were women in 2010. These women were distributed across the different fields of science as shown by graph 1. Women form an absolute minority of PhD holders in all fields of science. In Education they represent 17% of PhD holders, 13% in the social sciences, business and law and in science, mathematics and computing and 10% in the humanities and arts and health and welfare. Their share stood at 8% of all PhD holders in agriculture and veterinary. Finally, women are almost absent from engineering, manufacturing and construction where just 5% of PhD holders were women in 2010.

Graph 1: Proportion of female PhD holders in the different fields of science, 2010

In total, in 2010, women represented 8% of PhD holders in natural science and engineering. Although they form one fifth of all PhD holders in the subfield of life science they represent just 3% in that of engineering and engineering trades (graph 2).

Graph 2: Proportion of female PhD holders in natural science and engineering by subfield, 2010
Seniority or vertical segregation

The scissors diagram in graph 3 is not complete, ISCED 6 or PhD students and graduates are missing given the particular Palestinian situation: there is just one university that is accredited to deliver a PhD degree and only in one field, chemistry. It shows that in 2010, roughly 60% of both ISCED 5A students and graduates were women. The share of women has been on the increase at this level as in 2004, there was almost a gender balance at the level of ISCED 5A students and there were 56% of women among ISCED 5A graduates.

In Palestine, the scissors open very rapidly, even at the first step in the academic career, at the lowest grade (grade D), the share of women falls back to 20% and it continues to steadily decrease as one moves up the academic ladder: in 2010, women represented 10% of academic staff at grade C, 6% at grade B and just 3% at grade A. At the highest level of the academic career, at grade A, we are thus left with just 3% of women. The glass ceiling is very strong in Palestine and situated very low, at the entrance into the academic career.

This is also illustrated by the glass ceiling index which is very high in Palestine, 5.4 in 2010 and 5.5 in 2004. It should be noted that compared with the total of academic staff, grade A staff represent only a very small share, female grade A staff represent 1% of all female academics and male grade A staff just 5% of all male academics.

Moreover, a comparison between 2004 and 2010 shows that there is no evolution in the gender composition of the different levels of the academic career. The situation has been completely stable between 2004 and 2010.

Graph 3: Proportions of men and women in a typical academic career, students and academic staff, 2004/2010

Unfortunately, there are currently no data allowing for an analysis of the hierarchical position of female scientists in the sectors other than the higher education sector. Available data refer to the distribution by sex of R&D staff within different occupations (researchers, technicians and others) in the higher education sector and the government sector (graph 4) in 2010. According to the Frascati manual, researchers are “professionals engaged in the conception or creation of new knowledge, products, processes, methods and systems and also in the management of the projects concerned”; technicians are “persons whose main tasks require technical knowledge and experience in one or more fields of engineering, physical and life sciences or social sciences and humanities. They participate in R&D by performing scientific and technical tasks involving the application of concepts and operational methods, normally under the supervision of researchers”; and other supporting staff includes “skilled and unskilled craftsmen, secretarial and clerical staff participating in R&D projects or directly associated with such projects”. For the only purpose of describing these indicators, a hierarchy can be defined with researchers placed highest, followed by technicians and other supporting R&D staff. In Palestine, there is no deep gender difference in these occupational groups. What is more striking is that the proportions of
female and male researchers are much higher in the higher education sector (81-83%) than in the government sector (52-53%).

Graph 4: Distribution of R&D personnel across occupations for the Higher Education Sector (HES) by sex, 2010

In Palestine, the total gender pay gap stood at 16% in 2004 and was still 16% in 2010. The gender pay gap was also computed for selected occupational groups in private enterprise (Table 1) and in the public sector (Table 2) for 2004 and 2010. Moreover, the breakdown of the gender pay gap in public and private enterprise by age group (15-34 years, 35-44 years, 45-54 years, and 55-64 years) for the years 2004 and 2010 is discussed (Table 3).

Table 1 focuses on the gender pay gap in Palestine for a selection of occupations in private enterprise. Three occupations were selected as most relevant.

The first group selected relates to decision-making occupations (ISCO 100 – Legislators, senior officials and managers). For corporate managers a gender wage gap of 46% was observed for the year 2010. The gap of -37% for managers of small enterprises suffers from small sample sizes (only 24 women compared to 787 men in this category). More importantly, these figures reflect a deterioration of the gender balance in the occupation of private-sector corporate managers over time, as in 2004, the wage gap stood at 41% in this occupation in Palestine.

The second group selected refers to “Professional” occupations (ISCO 200) and the third to “Technical and Associate Professional” occupations (ISCO 300). Within the “professional” group, the gender pay gap for physical, mathematical and engineering science professionals stood at 31% in 2004 and it was almost halved by 2010 when it stood at 16%. It was much higher for technical and associate professionals in physical, mathematical and engineering science, at 45% (although it decreased from 60% in 2004). A much more time invariant gap was reported in the group of Life science, health, teaching and other professionals, at 25% in 2010 (having dropped only from 26% in 2004) and also in the group of Technical and Associate Professionals at 34% (down from 43% in 2004).
Comparing these findings with the gender pay gaps in public enterprise as shown in Table 2, we find that for most selected occupations, the gap is much smaller for corporate managers in the public sector than in the private sector: 7% compared with 46%. For the subcategory of physical, mathematical and engineering science professionals, the gap is double in the public sector compared with the private one. This finding can be surprising given that it is generally believed that the stronger regulation in the public sector better protects women against discrimination. This is thus not certified by our data which could tentatively lead towards a different explanation: could it be that private enterprise is more efficient than the public sector and as such cannot go without recruiting bright women and appreciate their true worth in their pay? For legislators, senior officials and managers in public enterprise, the gender pay gap is nevertheless only at one fifth of its level in private enterprise and for the subcategory of life science, health, teaching and other professionals, it is only half as big in the public compared with the private sector. Note that the category of legislators, senior officials and managers suffers from small sample sizes: this occupational group covers only 4 women and 42 men.

Table 2: Gender pay gap in % by selected occupations for employees in public enterprise, 2004/2010

Table 3 breaks down the gender pay gap into four different age groups and reveals that in Palestine, in 2010, the gender pay gap was greatest among 45 to 54-year-olds, at 26%, followed by the group of 55 to 64-year-olds, where the gap stood at 18% and the group of 35-44 year olds where it stood at 16%. The pay difference was roughly 10 percentage points lower among 15 to 34-year-olds, at 5%. Particularly for 45 to 54-year olds and for 35 to 44-year-olds, this suggests a significant widening of the gap as compared with 2004 (and there are no sample size issues that could be invoked to explain the increase in the pay gap).
Table 3: Gender pay gap in % by age group for employees in private and public enterprise for ISCO occupations 100, 200 and 300 combined, 2004/2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-34</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National expert

To sum up, the gender pay gap widens as the age of researchers increases. This illustrates the workings of a glass ceiling that women hit during their ascent in the academic hierarchy. It is important to highlight that there is no spontaneous reduction of the gender pay gap over time, on the contrary, the gap has widened over recent years.

Access to decision-making in science

The only university accredited to deliver a PhD degree in Palestine has a male rector. Of a total of 187 board members in 2010, just 14% were women.

2. GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES

2.1 POLICY CONTEXT

Legislative framework


The Palestinian Basic Law, which is the main constitutional document in the oPt (occupied Palestinian territory), ratified in 2002 and amended in 2003 and 2005, largely adheres to human rights standards. Article 9 states that “Palestinians shall be equal before the law and the judiciary, without distinction based upon race, sex, colour, religion, political views or disability”. Article 10 states that “basic human rights and liberties shall be protected and respected”. Taking into account that article 4 states that “the principles of Islamic Shari’a shall be a principal source of legislation”.

In a symbolic act, the Palestinian president signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in March 2009.

Institutions and policies

The Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) was established by a decision of the Council of Ministers in November 2003 in order to facilitate gender mainstreaming in different national sectors. MoWA is mandated to carry out monitoring and evaluation of programs and policies aimed at advancing women’s situation in cooperation and coordination with other stakeholders concerned with women’s issues. However, the ministry is on tight budget and its programs are limited to coordination with other ministries. Its main achievements are as follows:

- Endorsement of CEDAW by the Palestinian President in 2009
- The decision by the Council of Ministers to create a national committee on combating violence against women in 2007, chaired by MoWA.
- Development of the Palestinian Women’s Bill of Rights in 2008 (not ratified)

Since 2007, a second ministry, Ministry of Women and Family, has been operating in Gaza under the auspices of the Hamas government.
Women’s units were created in all ministries by a Council of Ministers’ decision in 2005. In 2008, the decision was amended to change the title of women’s units to gender units. The units are mandated to:

- Institutionalize gender issues in policy making and plans of action in the ministries
- Audit all plans and policies from gender perspective.

Gender units have been established in different ministries: Justice, Education, Labour, Media and Social Affairs. Although they are supposed to coordinate with the Ministry of Women Affairs in practice there is little coordination amongst them.

Governmental commitment towards gender issues was also reflected in the Council of Ministers’ decision requiring the adoption of gender-sensitive budgets in 2009.

In terms of official policies and main discourse, gender issues and gender mainstreaming is on top of the agenda at ministerial levels. However, most of the mainstreaming efforts are tied to donor funding and a gap still exists between the government’s political will and the actual implementation of the Council of Ministers’ decisions. On the ground, less is being done to affect and influence the social norms, traditional roles and division of labour within the Palestinian communities that set women and men apart. This role has been largely left to organizations of civil society and even there the work remains sporadic and fragmented.

In the field of education, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has tried to reform the inherited system since its establishment in 1994. Strict laws against children dropping out of schools were adopted and women were encouraged to join adult learning education centres. The education system has shown clear achievements following the assuming of responsibility for education, particularly in relation to student access and participation rates, infrastructure and curriculum of the Palestinian authority. Indicators reflecting access to primary, secondary and higher education for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are high by regional and often international standards and are generally considered highly equitable with respect to gender, location, refugee status and household income.

In the field of employment, labour rights are set out in three key pieces of legislation enacted by the Palestinian Legislative Council in the years 1998-2005: the Civil Service Law of 1998, the Labour Law of 2000 and the Public Pension Law of 2005, which was extended in 2007 to private sector workers. Broadly speaking, the Labour Law conforms to international human rights standards and establishes a set of basic rights for women. While Palestinian labour legislation is in many respects advanced, the exclusion of domestic workers and individuals who work or relatives – a large proportion of whom are women – from the protections of the Labour Law seriously undermines its ability to advance gender justice for women in the workplace. The absence of an effective inspection and enforcement regime also limits the impact of the Labour Law. There are no clear policies to encourage women’s participation in the labour market. Initiatives to empower women and female entrepreneurship are related mainly to donor projects and civil society institutions programmes. Segregation and non-equal pay are existing challenges that are not tackled by the responsible authorities.

### 2.2 Gender Equality Policies in Science

**Structures for gender equality in science**

In 2000, The Ministry of Higher Education established a steering committee for developing a national committee on science and technology. The strategy devoted a whole chapter to women in science but was never finalized. In general, there has been no pressure to have such a committee from women’s organizations or academic institutions. The Ministry has a unit of scientific research, mostly involved in information collection and reporting, and a council for scientific research but no specific agenda for women and science.
Statistics and indicators

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) produces regular statistics on all aspects of Palestinian activities and most of the data is sex-disaggregated. The Bureau has a strong commitment to gender equity in data.

However, performance in science per se is not covered but rather statistics on academia, on employment and other economic activities. There is an R&D survey in the country, but sex-disaggregated statistics in the field of science are very incomplete.

Gender balance measures

There is no specific regulation aimed at fostering a gender balance on public committees, with the exception of elections.

The Elections Law of 2005 for both local councils and general elections stipulated a minimum quota of 12% for women in the electoral lists. Women organizations have criticized the quota for being too low and many are calling for a minimum quota of 20%. The quota was not observed in many electoral lists in the recent local council elections of 2012, showing that there is no law enforcement to ensure compliance with the quota.

In the field of science, gender balance in decision-making bodies or committees is not officially promoted. There is no measure in place to implement quotas or targets in universities or research institutions.

Equality plans and related gender equality measures

Universities and research institutions are not required to set up gender equality plans or related gender equality measures (gender units, gender observatories, etc) by the government or by civil society organizations. However, the Institute of Women Studies at Birzeit University, after exerting serious pressure on the university administration, is starting a gender task force to address existing disparities.

Mentoring

Mentoring is not an institutionalised practice as regards junior scientists of either sex.

There are no formal mentoring programs in HEI and research centres for women and science. Rather, there are institutes and centres that dedicate resources and funding for research on women such as the Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Centre (PWRDC), PARC and the Institute of Women Studies amongst others.

Funding

The limited funding for research available in universities and research centres are usually awarded based on application merit with no special provisions for women researchers’ vis-à-vis their male counterparts. However, many of the foreign grants do have gender requirements and sometimes even give explicit preferences for women researchers per se.

There are some initiatives of partial scholarships for young women at bachelor and master levels at Birzeit University and other local charitable societies and development agencies.

Work and family balance

The Labour Law grants 10 weeks of fully paid maternity leave, the right to resume employment after giving birth, the right to breastfeed at work and protection against long working hours during pregnancy and for six months after giving birth.

There is no special scheme for scientists and researchers. Specific resources for supporting returnees after career breaks in science are absent.
Women’s and gender studies

Birzeit University has a Women’s Studies Program since 1994 that offers free elective courses to undergraduate students. The program offers a minor in women studies since 2012.

There is also a Master program in gender and development at Birzeit University since 1996 and another in Al-Quds University since 2002.

Networking

In spite of a strong women’s movement, there is no awareness yet about the importance of networking on gender and science issues. This could be due to the limited number of women working in high-ranking positions in universities and research centres.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

This report surveys the findings on gender imbalance in women careers in the academic and professional fields in Palestine. Women’s careers remain strongly characterized by horizontal and vertical segregation. In general, study fields choices remain gendered especially in disciplines deemed as masculine like science and engineering. Women’s academic and professional careers are largely influenced by many factors that prevent their natural advancement and progression to leadership positions. Policies and initiatives by the government and civil society to address the gender imbalance remain limited in their influence and impact as the under-presentation of women across scientific fields, research and decision-making spheres has not yet been targeted as a national priority.

Recommendations:

• There should be an emphasis on data collection that presents the academic personnel by gender and grade in all fields of study and especially for the subfields of engineering and technology and the natural sciences. This data can be used in the discussions to change institutional policies.

• Further research is needed to highlight and promote the advantages of women’s empowerment in scientific careers and leadership to steer policy-making on gender and science in the years to come in Palestine.

• Further initiatives to improve women scientists networking and promote role models and mentoring programs are needed. Furthermore, mainstream media should be engaged in promoting gender related issues and improve public awareness of gender imbalance in research and its negative influence. This is important to create the will for change.

• The target groups to fight the gender imbalance are academic institutions, industry and private sector, and government. There is an evident need for these groups to cooperate for a better gender mainstreaming.

It is of interest to highlight a good practice identified in Birzeit University, where the Institute of Women Studies, after exerting pressure on the university administration, is starting a gender task force to address existing gender disparities within academic and non-academic staff in order to suggest change in institutional policies.
This report aims to highlight some of the findings on gender imbalance in scientific careers in academic and non-academic sectors in Palestine that have evolved from a joint research project undertaken by the the Institute of Women Studies (IWS) at Birzeit University in collaboration with other Arab and European institutions within the SHEMERA project. The overall objective of the SHEMERA project is enhancing research cooperation on gender and science between the European Union and the Arab Mediterranean countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia. Research cooperation is intended to improve the understanding of the roots of gender inequality in science in the area, by taking into account cultural diversities and traditions, and analysing how the Arab Mediterranean countries are addressing this specific issue.

The research project aimed to collect national data in the Arab Mediterranean countries to form the basis for a comparative analysis of the current situation of gender equality in science in order to benchmark future development in this field and guide researchers, policy makers and other strategic players in identifying and addressing the key problem areas.

This report focuses on two key domains to map the situation of women in science in Palestine:

- The compilation of sex-disaggregated statistics covering women’s and men’s distribution across scientific fields and careers, their seniority and participation in decision-making in science;
- The description of gender equality policies, legislations, national strategies and positive actions for women including equal opportunities legislation – with a special focus on gender equality policies and initiatives in the field of science.

There is an imbalance in the representation, seniority and participation of women and men in scientific fields and professions worldwide. The roots of this gender imbalance are deeply embedded in each society, profession and institution. Gender imbalance is not a self-correcting phenomenon and only concrete measures targeting specific aspects of its manifestations can lead to significant change in this area. The final section of this report provides a set of national recommendations to strengthen the position of women in science and promote gender equality in this field.