

A Gender Perspective on Measuring Asset Ownership and Entrepreneurship as a Step to Sustainable Development in Jordan

**Manal Sweidan, Head of Gender Statistics Division
Department of Statistics, Jordan**

Abstract:

Achieving gender equality requires measures to compensate for existing disadvantages which prevent equal opportunities being presented to both men and women. This is essential in order to facilitate women's economic empowerment and sustainable progress towards gender equality in Jordan. Women's empowerment is one of the pressing issues in developing countries. Although women are a fundamental part of society, their status and participation in decision making as well as economic activities are very limited. Microfinance played a major role in many gender and development strategies due to its direct relationship to both poverty alleviation and women's empowerment, which are the main elements of the social fabric, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This paper attempts to explore the role of microfinance interventions in promoting women economic empowerment as a tool for fostering gender equality and sustainable development in Jordan.

Furthermore, this paper aims to explore the relationship between access to microfinance and women's empowerment and tries to explain the ability of a woman to transform her life through access to financial services. This is done by studying the effect of microfinance on women's domestic role and decision making within the household and its impact on women's participation in the domestic and public sphere. The methodology used in this paper will rely on quantitative data collected by the Gender Statistics Unit at the Department of Statistics. In addition, the paper will try to shed light on the definition of women's empowerment and attempts to explore the impact and effect of microfinance services in empowering Jordanian women.

Overall, this paper examines if microfinance can promote empowerment of women in Jordan. The position of Jordanian women has enhanced significantly over the past decade, but gender discrimination is present in some parts of society. The main question this paper aims to answer is: does microfinance empower women in Jordan? This paper contributes to present the results in two ways. First, it introduces new data on the topic. Second it will show whether access to financial services empower women to challenge gender discriminations or not.