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Views on the Crisis

Women as Engine for Economic Recovery



General Introduction

ECES initiated a set of studies to analyze the implications of the Corona crisis on the various variables and sectors. Now it is time to move to the second stage, which is to put forth the strategic pillars for the post-corona phase in the Egyptian economy, taking into account the new global economic situation imposed by the crisis.

This series of new reports provides a detailed discussion of a set of drivers of change, i.e., issues that, if properly addressed, are expected to cause major developmental strides for the Egyptian economy. These issues may have been dealt with previously, but were not adopted in the required manner and therefore need revisiting, or they

may be issues that were not addressed in the first place despite their importance.

This series of reports follows a descriptive and quantitative analysis approach according to the nature of the topic.

Each report focuses on an issue through three main aspects, clarification of the importance of focusing on this issue and the rationale behind it, followed by a quick description of the current situation, a detailed discussion of the proposed change mechanism and timeframe, and any immediate / medium-term / long-term changes. Finally, it identifies the parties responsible for implementation, preconditions for success and the most important expected results.

“In the short term, it is critical to stabilize economic losses of women during the COVID-19 pandemic, protect their employment where possible and reconcile their work obligations with increased burden of care work at home. It is also vital to recognize the role of women in the immediate response as part of the economic solutions.

For the longer term, it is essential to establish and strengthen macroeconomic policies and accelerating gender inclusive decision making that channel resources to those most impacted by the crisis and provide social and economic recovery support in order to benefit women and girls. In policy making during such crises, the opportunity to eliminate discriminatory norms and laws on women’s equal participation should be seized, so that both men and women rebuild the economy”.

UN Women

First: Why are women viewed as an important engine for the recovery of the Egyptian economy?

Despite the fact that Egyptian women represent almost half of the society in terms of demographic composition, in addition to the high level of education among females at present, only slight progress has been made in women's participation in the labor market, as their participation does not exceed about 24% of the work force. This is a waste of an important human resource capable of a real contribution to the desired growth of the Egyptian economy.

According to a report issued by the McKinsey Institute, Egypt's GDP could increase by 34% over the next decade, if the number of men is equal to the number of women in the labor market.¹ The economic empowerment of women is considered a means to combat poverty, support social justice, and give an opportunity for a better path for future generations, thus making women a major actor in achieving economic recovery.

With the increasing economic and social pressures associated with the lockdown and social distancing measures due to the Covid-19

¹ Al-Mal Newspaper, <https://almalnews.com/%D%88%9D%8B%2D8%9A%D%8B%1D%8A9-%D%8A%7D%84%9D%8AA%D%8AE%D%8B%7D8%9A%D%8B7-%D%8AA%D%85%9D%83%9D8%9A%D86%9-%D%8A%7D%84%9D%85%9D%8B%1D%8A%3D%8A9-%D%8B%6D%8B%1D%88%9D%8B%1D%8A9-%D%88%9D8%9A%D%85%9D%83%9D> dated 4 March 2020, UN Women Egypt <https://egypt.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment>

pandemic, it has become necessary to focus on providing all mechanisms, including policies and procedures, to enable women to play their role as one of the main drivers of change for economic recovery in general and to exit the current crisis in particular.

In this context, this report gives a brief description of the most important features of the female labor market in Egypt, and presents proposals to empower women in a way that maximizes the utilization of their real potentials so as to overcome the difficulties they have been experiencing for many decades—and in particular as a result of the current crisis, especially in relation to the size of women's participation in the labor market.

Second: Brief overview of the most important features of the female labor market in Egypt

In the report issued by the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies entitled "The Egyptian Woman," repercussions of the Covid-19 crisis on the role of women in the Egyptian economy were studied in detail.² A comprehensive analysis was also made of the most important features of women's participation in the labor market.

² The hyperlink to download Issue No. 21 of Views on the Crisis on "The Egyptian Woman," dated 30/9/2020. https://mcusercontent.com/ba2fe687d21e2d193871a9d62/files/808b1e2b-f36e-4b58-a660-43f6cff93dc3/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A3%D8%A9_%D9%83%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%83_%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%8A_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A_12_8_2020.pdf

The following is a brief overview of the most important of these features (Table 1).

Table 1. Key features of the female labor market in Egypt³

| Feature | Evidence |
|--|--|
| <p>Low female participation in the labor market compared to males</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The rate of participation in the labor force⁴ among females compared to males decreased by about four times.⁵ ○ Females account for only about a fifth of the labor force (18% in 2019), compared to males (82% in 2019). ○ Decrease in the share of females to less than one-fifth of the total employed (15.3% in 2019). ○ Higher unemployment rate among females, reaching three to four times higher than that of males. ○ The ratio of female to male participation in the labor force in Egypt is weak compared to other countries with different levels of income. This percentage increased in Egypt in nearly twenty years by approximately 4%, from 27.4% in 2000 to only 31.2% in 2018.⁶ |
| <p>Females' preference for government work vs. the private sector</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Females enjoy advantages in the public sector compared to the private sector, as the public sector is obligated to give wages that are almost equal for both genders in exchange for performing the same work. The average wage of females may be slightly higher than that of males, in addition to other advantages in terms of departure time and childcare leave. ○ This does not apply to the private sector, as the average wage for females is 16% lower than that of males in 2019. |

³ According to statistics released until end of July 2020.

⁴ Participation rate = labor force / population * 100

⁵ Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, press release for the annual consolidated bulletin of the results of labor force survey in 2019, version 2020.

⁶ The World Bank, Gender Data Portal.

| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Female labor participation in the private sector decreases as they approach the age of marriage and later during marriage, while employment in the public sector continues to rise with time and is not affected by marriage. Unpaid work for women also increases, even more after marriage; this work is often at home, when it is easier to reconcile with the responsibilities of marriage. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------|-------------------------------------|-----------|----|---------------------|------|-----------------------------------|------|--------------------------------|------|-------------|----|--------------|------|---------------------------------|------|
| <p>Sectors that are the most employing of women and most attractive to them</p> | <p>Table 2. Share of females in the sectors that employ the most females</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="435 651 1481 1151"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="435 651 1129 797">Sector</th> <th data-bbox="1137 651 1481 797">The share of females in all workers</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="435 801 1129 846">Education</td> <td data-bbox="1137 801 1481 846">68</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="435 851 1129 896">Ready-made clothing</td> <td data-bbox="1137 851 1481 896">49.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="435 900 1129 945">Health and social work activities</td> <td data-bbox="1137 900 1481 945">49.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="435 949 1129 994">Communications and information</td> <td data-bbox="1137 949 1481 994">32.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="435 999 1129 1043">Agriculture</td> <td data-bbox="1137 999 1481 1043">20</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="435 1048 1129 1093">Retail trade</td> <td data-bbox="1137 1048 1481 1093">18.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="435 1097 1129 1142">Food and accommodation services</td> <td data-bbox="1137 1097 1481 1142">13.5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source:</i> Calculation was done according to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics data, statistics of employment, wages and working hours, 2019 and 2020.</p> | Sector | The share of females in all workers | Education | 68 | Ready-made clothing | 49.4 | Health and social work activities | 49.3 | Communications and information | 32.7 | Agriculture | 20 | Retail trade | 18.5 | Food and accommodation services | 13.5 |
| Sector | The share of females in all workers | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Education | 68 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ready-made clothing | 49.4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Health and social work activities | 49.3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Agriculture | 20 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Retail trade | 18.5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Food and accommodation services | 13.5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Half of the female workforce is employed in paid jobs</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The percentage of females working for cash wages reaches about half of the total workforce in 2019, followed, but with a large difference, by unemployed women who have never worked (19%), then contributors to unpaid family projects (17%). As for the percentage of female entrepreneurs, it was about 8% in 2019. ○ There is an unequal distribution of family care work between men and women. In normal times, women and girls are responsible for pursuing productive household projects such as raising livestock and poultry, in addition to caring for the family, due to social norms. About 91% of women spend time on unpaid household activities compared to only 26% of men.⁷ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

⁷ OECD. The Covid-19 Crisis in Egypt. 20 April 2020.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Gender wage differential in a number of economic activities and occupations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Despite the equal average working hours between the two genders in many economic activities, for example, in the manufacturing activities, including beverages, in addition to food services, accommodation and education, and their being higher among females in a number of other sectors, especially ready-made garments and leather, ranging from 2% to 31%, the average female wage in these activities is lower than that of males by 1% to 48%. ○ The above also applies to a number of professions, where the working hours of females are higher than those of males, yet in which the wages of females are lower than those of males from about 17% to 53%. For example, workers in ordinary professions, factory operating workers, craftsmen, and workers in services, stores and markets. |
| <p>The largest percentage of unemployed women are among those with an intermediate technical, university and postgraduate education</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Female holders of higher university and postgraduate education represent the largest percentage of unemployed women, which is almost half. Then comes the second category of the most unemployed, which is the category of female graduates of technical intermediate education (34%), while the percentage is much lower among those with less than university education, and is lowest among those with less than intermediate school education in 2019. ○ As educational attainment increases, a higher overall participation of females is expected over time in the labor market. But this does not happen, as participation rates among educated women are decreasing dramatically over time. This is due to the decrease in job opportunities in the public sector, leaving many females to work in the private sector upon marriage, in addition to the presence of the so-called “glass ceiling,” which prevents educated females from joining some jobs and denies them a number of leadership positions. |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>More than half of female employed work in the informal sector⁸</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 53.2% of the total employed work in the informal sector,⁹ where women's jobs are mainly concentrated in informal, unsafe, low-wage and low-skilled jobs, or in areas where social protection and career advancement opportunities are not available. ○ The largest share of female informal employment is in agriculture (81%), followed with a large difference by services (16%). This contrasts with the distribution of informal male employment, which is characterized by a highly equal distribution between sectors. ○ 68.8% of female informal employment is engaged in family work and activities for the benefit of others and is often without pay, while this percentage decreases greatly among males (8.5% only). |
| <p>"Necessity" is the most motivating factor for female self-employment</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Necessity"¹⁰ is the most motivating factor for women to resort to entrepreneurship, as models of necessity entrepreneurs dominate among most women. ○ Most of the groups who joined the labor market out of necessity are those with an intermediate education or less and aged 45 years or more, especially if they happen to be in closed societies that do not encourage women's work, such as Upper Egypt or rural areas. ○ Civil work represents a professional turning point for many women to experience establishing projects, especially with the knowledge it avails about opportunities and relationships in the economically |

⁸ A separate report from the "Views on the Crisis" series has been devoted to analyzing the informal sector:

[http://www.eces.org.eg/PublicationsDetails?Lang=EN&C=1&T=1&ID=1193&Views-On-News-\(Views-On-The-Crisis\)---Edition-7:-Informal-Economy](http://www.eces.org.eg/PublicationsDetails?Lang=EN&C=1&T=1&ID=1193&Views-On-News-(Views-On-The-Crisis)---Edition-7:-Informal-Economy)

⁹ International Labor Office. 2018. Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture (3rd edition).

¹⁰ Within the framework of the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies' collaboration with the National Council for Women in preparing a strategy for the economic empowerment of women in 2016, the Center conducted a field research that included fourteen in-depth focus groups that involved about 164 girls and women in 13 governorates. The sessions aimed to identify obstacles to the economic empowerment of Egyptian women, the most prominent factors that impede empowerment, and to highlight how these obstacles vary for different groups of women and their relevance to place of residence, age and social level, in addition to identifying the drivers of change that can have a radical impact on the reality of women. The research reached the following results regarding the most important features of females' resort to self-employment (for more details on this project, see Appendix 1).

- developed governorates (Cairo, Alexandria and Port Said).
- For women with limited or no income, microfinance is often the only option to obtain funds to start a business that can help support families, in addition to using savings or borrowing from individuals.
- Women’s resorting to self-employment, especially in non-urban governorates, is usually out of necessity. But with the development of the economic structure of the governorates, the increase in the educational level of women, and their ability to recognize economic opportunities, patterns of “Opportunity entrepreneurship” emerged.
- Women-owned businesses tend to be informal, home-based, and concentrated in the microenterprise and traditional sectors, which primarily include retail and services.¹¹

The limited role of women in decision-making

a) Weak political empowerment of women despite its improvement in recent years:

Table 3. The size of women's representation in Parliament

| Year | 2005 | 2013 | Current parliament | New constitutional amendments in 2019 |
|--|------|------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Representation of women in parliament | 2% | 2% | 90 seats | 25% |

Source: Al-Masry El-Youm <https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/1453818> & State Information Service <https://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/116462/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A3%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9?lang=ar>

- The constitution allocated a quarter of the seats for women in local councils, in accordance with Article 180 of its provisions. This is a positive step on the way to achieving better representation of women in parliament.

¹¹ Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Report, different issues.

| | |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The female share in ministerial positions is still limited, not exceeding a quarter. ○ Allocating at least 10% of Senate seats to women (Law No. 141 of 2020 promulgating the Senate Law). <p>b) Women are underrepresented in boards of directors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The presence of women among entrepreneurs and senior managers is very limited (2.4% and 4.9% of companies, respectively).¹² Banks lead the percentage of women’s representation on boards of directors, followed by companies listed on the stock exchange, and then public business sector companies. |
| <p>A large gender gap confirmed by international reports</p> | <p><u>For example:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Egypt is ranked 134 out of 153 countries according to the Global Gender Gap Index report issued by the World Economic Forum 2020, and is ranked sixth in the Arab world after the UAE, Kuwait, Tunisia, Algeria, Bahrain. ○ According to the Women, Business and the Law 2020 report issued by the World Bank, the average value of the index for Egypt was 45, which is much lower than the global average of the index (75.2), while a number of countries succeeded in achieving full scores. |

Source: Prepared by the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies based on multiple sources.

¹² WEF, The Global Gender Gap Report.

Third: Proposals to empower women to maximize the utilization of their real potential

3-1 Key determinants of the future of women in the labor market

- a) The extent of evolution of the Covid-19 virus, and its implications for schools and nurseries resuming their activities is a determining factor for the return of females to the labor market.
- b) The nature of women's participation in economic activity.

According to these determinants, there are three possible scenarios for the future of females in the labor market in Egypt, as summed up in Figure 1:

Figure 1. Three possible scenarios for the future of female employment in Egypt

| Scenario (1) | Scenario (2) | Scenario (3) |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to previous levels of female employment before the outbreak of the crisis* <p>If urgent, appropriate interventions are taken, which will be referred to in the next section.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deterioration of the status of females, so that their participation in the labor market is lower than those achieved before the crisis • Because of the negative changes that have occurred in the labor market due to the current crisis, including, for example, layoffs in many sectors, and the return of a number of workers from the Gulf after their layoff. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A positive boom in women's economic and social conditions in the medium and long terms as a result of their strong entry into the labor market • If the necessary structural development is undertaken, some of its elements have already been initiated by the state, although more efforts are needed that have a greater and faster impact on the position of women in the labor market, most important elements of which will be indicated in the next section |

Source: Prepared by the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies.

* These levels are naturally below the desired levels.

Certainly, it is necessary to target the third scenario, which requires radical and urgent interventions, with the help of appropriate packages of policies and procedures to empower women at various levels. These proposed future actions and policies are based on a set of basic principles.

3-2 The basic principles underlying the proposed actions

- The need for policies and procedures to deal directly with the “causes” of the problems women have faced over the decades, not just the “symptoms” of these problems,¹³ the most important features of which were presented in the second part of this report.
- The state provides for policies and mechanisms that ensure that women are viewed by business owners as a real and main "asset" to achieve the desired economic and social development, and not as a "burden."
- Most of the difficulties faced by females are, in essence, not gender-biased, as they are related to the weakness of the institutional environment and the business climate in general, and thus eliminating these difficulties will automatically reflect positively on the status of women.
- A great deal of the obstacles faced by females are related to customs, traditions and cultural legacies about the fact that women are less capable and less productive than men and that their participation in the labor market is crowding out men and limiting their economic opportunities. This requires the adoption of policies and procedures that properly deal with these obstacles.

¹³ Two examples of this are noted in Table A2-1 in Appendix 2.

3-3 Proposals

The next part of the report presents the most important measures proposed to assist the Egyptian government in making a significant positive development in the role of women in economic activities in general, and addressing the negative effects of the current crisis in particular.

The proposals are divided into two sets: Horizontal and vertical proposals. As for the **horizontal proposals**, they have positive effects on both males and females, although they will have a more pronounced effect on females due to their weak position compared to males. Horizontal proposals vary according to their goals, some of which are related to stimulating investments and providing more diversified, decent and sustainable job opportunities, while others aim at achieving equal opportunities between different geographical regions. The latter aims at identifying the different needs of the target groups in order to be able to develop policies and procedures that respond to these needs.

As for the **vertical proposals**, they are directly related to women's problems. This set of proposals was extracted in light of five main drivers of change that directly affect the desire and ability of women to work, especially in the private sector, small and medium enterprises, and entrepreneurship.

The two sets of proposals are classified according to time horizons appropriate to the nature of each action, the circumstances surrounding it, and the period required for its implementation. They include an integrated set of: *immediate actions* (that can be implemented within six months), *short-term measures* (that can be initiated and implemented within a period not exceeding a year), *medium-term measures* (that require no more than three years), and *long-term measures* (that take more than three years to implement). Most of the time, long-term actions are a set of structural measures needed to reform the system in a sustainable manner.

3-3-1 Horizontal Proposals:

Most of the horizontal proposals are immediate proposals that can be completed within six months as they do not require significant human or financial resources or any legislative intervention. The following is a review of the most important horizontal proposals according to their objectives and time horizon.

- **Stimulating investments and providing more diversified, decent and sustainable job opportunities:**
 - Improving the business environment in Egypt in general to stimulate investment and thus create new job opportunities (in the medium term).

- Existence of detailed investment maps from which investment opportunities emerge, including available job opportunities and their requisites in general and those appropriate for females in particular, which provides a database on the size and type of demand for labor, including female employment (immediate).
- Establishing a unified comprehensive database that contains updated economic information and macro-statistical data related to the various economic activities in Egypt and analyzing them to find out the most important difficulties (in the short term).
- The proper completion of the digital transformation system, which saves women a lot of time and effort to carry out their work (in the medium term).
- Remedying the education system in a way that eliminates the gap between educational outcomes and the needs of the labor market, which will enable the desirable benefit from the real potential of both genders, furnish them with the required skills, reflect more positively on female employment, and achieve optimum utilization of many idle female potentials)¹⁴ (in the medium and long term)

¹⁴ For example, it is necessary to develop technical secondary education in its various specializations, especially the most enrolled by females - for example - nursing and commercial secondary education.

- Systematic treatment of credit restrictions that hinder attempts to start and grow a business (immediate).
- **Achieving equal opportunities among different groups of society and geographic regions:**
 - Adopting policies and taking measures that achieve geographical justice in various fields (immediate).
 - Activating the local administration law, as decentralization enhances everyone's ability to participate politically and contribute more to the labor market, especially females (immediate).
 - Designing and implementing policies that allow females to join the formal sector, which leads to their economic empowerment, as this is linked to increased ability to control their incomes, unlike what they face in the informal sector (in the short and medium terms).
- **Identifying the different needs of the target groups to be able to develop policies and procedures that respond to all needs:**
 - Follow-up and evaluation of all relevant measures taken by the state aimed at reducing the negative repercussions of the Corona pandemic, assessing their effectiveness in achieving goals, correcting their deficiencies and maximizing the benefit from their results to help later inform crisis response plans if the crisis recurs or other similar crises occur (immediate).

- Measuring and monitoring the performance of the entities related to small, medium and micro enterprises and improving their performance according to the extent of their customers' satisfaction. The aim is to eliminate the centralization of approvals, focus on supporting startups in self-employment, and train and educate human resources (employees in these agencies) to understand the needs of their customers, and to ensure the suitability of projects to governorates, which is sometimes absent (immediate).

3-3-2 Vertical proposals:

The set of vertical proposals was reached in light of five main drivers of change needed to achieve and maximize women's economic empowerment, namely:

- Providing information to females and enabling them to handle them: This is intended to provide various procedural and economic information with the ability to handle these data and make sound economic decisions.
- Availing communication technology to females: that is, the availability of all means and techniques necessary for women to carry out their work and the ability to use these technologies.
- Creating the supportive environment for women such as infrastructure, support services, incentives and training: This means availing all conditions that ensure the improvement of female performance in the labor market.

- Carrying out structural reforms, provided these reforms include all aspects of institutional, legislative and other reforms that directly benefit women.¹⁵
- Exposing females to other experiences and cultures, and the ability to adapt to the changes they witness.

These drivers were deduced in light of what was reported by field research and studies conducted by the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in cooperation with the National Council for Women to identify obstacles to the economic empowerment of Egyptian women (more details can be found in Appendix 1). Also, by analyzing various successful international practices and their implications for enabling women to successfully grow their businesses and create job opportunities and hence develop their local economies.¹⁶ This is in addition to the detailed study “The Egyptian Woman” prepared by ECES as part of the “Views on the Crisis” series to analyze the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women in the labor market in Egypt.¹⁷

¹⁵ The Covid-19 crisis revealed a number of structural imbalances that have existed for many decades with regard to the economic and social situation of females in Egypt, which if addressed, will have a great impact on the advancement of the role of women in Egypt in general, not only at the time of the current crisis, as they become a major driver for recovery and growing the economy. Hence, in the following Table (4), we present a number of proposals to eliminate the existing weaknesses.

¹⁶ Ehlermann, Nicola and Romano. 2020. Women Economic Empowerment through Entrepreneurship: Insights of Policy Reforms from International Experience, Working Paper No. 209, ECES.

¹⁷ “Views on the Crisis” series, Egyptian Woman, Issue 21, 30/9/2020.

The following is a detailed presentation of the main vertical proposals, categorized according to drivers of change and the different time periods for their implementation, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Vertical proposals for achieving decent economic empowerment for Egyptian women according to the five drivers of change

| Drivers of Change | Proposals | Time frame for proposals | | | |
|--|---|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | | Immediate (within six months) ¹⁸ | Short-term (within one year) | Medium term (within three years) | Long term (more than three years) |
| 1. Driver of Change | | | | | |
| Providing information to females and enabling them to handle them | Create a database with continuous advertising of its contents through campaigns, provided that it includes all: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information on establishment procedures, legal requirements and investment opportunities to help females set | | | | |

¹⁸ The government announced a number of decisions and procedures, which are in the interest of Egyptian women and provide them with the necessary support, although the details and mechanisms for implementing some of these decisions are not clear enough, and we suggest taking the following measures urgently.

up their projects, specifically in the ideation stage. In this respect, it is possible to use, for example, the "Egyptian Women Entrepreneurship Guide,"¹⁹ prepared by ECES in collaboration with the National Council for Women in 2018.²⁰

- The support services that females need to facilitate their work, such as nurseries near their place of work, transportation, prices of basic products and production inputs

¹⁹ The Guide can be found on the center's website at the following link: <http://www.eces.org.eg/PublicationsDetails?Lang=AR&C=13&T=1&ID=787&%D8%AF%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A3%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84>

²⁰ The Egyptian Women Entrepreneurship Guide is a complete reference for any woman wishing to start a private business or expand an existing one.

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | <p>needed to set up their projects, and the appropriate financial services for each project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiatives and various supporting bodies and any changes therein, to support small and micro enterprises. | | | | |
| | <p>Using the branches of the National Council for Women, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the National Bank and the post offices to provide all the information that females need when establishing and operating their projects, and to assist them in facing difficulties, especially during the pandemic, and to take appropriate and necessary policies to address the deficiencies.</p> | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | Providing legal advice services on a balanced geographical basis and for a suitable remuneration to help women learn about their legal rights, especially in the field of self-employment. | | | | |
| | Working towards correcting the concepts of women's legal rights and identifying methods of claiming rights. | | | | |

2. Driver of Change

| | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| Providing females with communication technology and associated requirements | Availing the necessary electronic devices and services for a suitable fee | | | | |
| | Organizing training courses to learn how to use it, paying attention to the lowest income social groups and unprivileged areas. | | | | |
| | Developing and promoting digital literacy in rural | | | | |

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| | institutions and societies. | | | | |
| | Introducing businesswomen, especially in rural areas, to the services available electronically, such as financial services, training, and others. | | | | |

3. Driver of Change

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| Creating a supportive environment for women such as infrastructure, support services, incentives, innovative ideas and training | Availing transportation and important services, especially health and education services, throughout the country, as women are the most affected by distance. | | | | |
| | State support for social services supporting women's work at a reasonable cost and with high quality, such as nurseries for children, taking into account geographical | | | | |

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| | distribution and financial capacity. | | | | |
| | Providing incentives ²¹ to the private sector to provide flexible conditions for work that take into account the family responsibilities of female workers through, for example, part-time work or work from home with flexible hours to give women the opportunity to balance their work with their family role. | | | | |
| | Coordination between entities concerned with children and others related to mother's work before making decisions related to vacations and work dates, with the need to discuss alternatives available. For | | | | |

²¹ It is necessary to encourage the private sector to provide these benefits to females in a way that motivates it to do so, without representing an additional that may prevent it from providing these flexible conditions.

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| | <p>example, work in government agencies ends at 2 o'clock while in the private sector it extends to 5, while schools end at 2.</p> | | | | |
| | <p>Providing subsidies to institutions with a large representation of female workers or that are female-owned and that give workers paid leave²² during the Covid-19 crisis.</p> | | | | |
| | <p>Motivating the private sector to employ women through adopting innovative ideas, most important of which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spreading the initiative "Your job is next to your home"²³ as it is a successful model that can be replicated throughout the | | | | |

²² Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare announced support for companies setting up paid leave systems for workers affected by school closures in exchange for continued payment of salaries to those on leave.

²³ Under the "Your Job Next to Your Home" initiative, Qalyubia Governorate, in the first stage of the initiative, established 13 factories, in which the citizens of the province work with factories that export their products of ready-made garments.

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| | <p>country for various industries, thus contributing to solving the problem of unemployment and the scarcity of trained workers in the private sector.</p> <p>Females particularly benefit from this initiative, as it is based on the fact that work places are close to places of residence, which enables them to undertake home affairs in addition to their work.</p> <p>- Provide incentives to female-headed or female-intensive enterprises across the value chains, while ensuring that suppliers who rely heavily on female labor receive concessions (credit benefits, for example).</p> | | | | |
| | <p>The geographical distribution of appropriate training programs for</p> | | | | |

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| | <p>females in all regions of the country, with diversification of age requirements in the training courses offered, especially programs related to different professional fields, which calls for the need to maximize the use of all branches of the National Council for Women.</p> | | | | |
| | <p>Focusing on better qualification of females for the labor market through programs prepared by the Ministry of Social Solidarity and implemented by the National Council for Women and the private sector.</p> | | | | |

4. Driver of Change

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| <p>Carrying out structural reforms that directly benefit women</p> | <p>Monitor and follow up on all policies and procedures directed at supporting females</p> | | | | |
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| | <p>and the degree of benefit thereof, both before and after the outbreak of the Covid-19 crisis, and measuring the degree of their impact on different groups of females.</p> | | | | |
| | <p>Activating "equal opportunities" units in each ministry, provided that one of its tasks is to ensure the availability of services that support the family, such as nurseries close to work, places for activities for children after school, and others.</p> | | | | |
| | <p>Evaluate the programs and initiatives currently provided to empower women, such as the Takaful and Karama program, to ensure the eligibility of the beneficiaries, assess the impact on the beneficiary</p> | | | | |

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| | families and identify the disadvantaged groups. | | | | |
| | Maximize utilization of women-related institutions drawing on the powers already available to them in the service and empowerment of women, ²⁴ especially the National Council for Women. ²⁵ | | | | |
| | Establishing women's contact points at business associations and similar organizations with the aim of developing an open platform for microfinance business organizations to enhance financial inclusion as well as | | | | |

²⁴ Nazra for Feminist Studies. What happens after the amendment of its powers: A feminist comment on the new law for the work of the National Council for Women, 9 December 2018.

²⁵ For example, many powers have been provided to the National Council for Women under the National Council for Women Organization Law No. 30 of 2018, including, for example, the power to collect data and statistics that enable it to perform its role, and to call on government agencies that have stopped or failed to perform their role in data and information collection, preparing and publishing reports to comply with its responsibilities and issuing and publishing updated data.

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| | business development services for female entrepreneurs. | | | | |
| | <p>Activating or amending relevant laws / implementing regulations / decisions to include a gender perspective and to deal with women as a worker or employer, not from the perspective of their reproductive role, with the aim of achieving the following goals:²⁶</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activating the articles of the constitution and the legal articles that stipulate equality between males and females. - Allowing family care for both the mother and the father, not just the mother. | | | | |

²⁶ Abu Al-Qumsan, Nihad. 2017. Women empowerment between the constitution and the law. Working Paper No. 185. The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amending definitions related to work to include a discourse for both genders in the laws regulating the labor market. - Ensure that laws contain sufficient guarantees to prevent discrimination against working women. - Ensuring that laws refer to social services or infrastructure supporting women in reconciling their work with their other social roles (providing nurseries or family care as one of the requirements for obtaining a license, provided that this is done in the form of an incentive for the | | | | |
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| | <p>private sector and not an obstacle to the progress of work).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One of the prerequisites for obtaining quality certificates should be the degree of gender diversity in the board of directors and the number of male and female workers. - Revisiting the fields of work that females may be denied entry to. | | | | |
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5. Driver of Change

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| <p>More female openness to different experiences and cultures, and the ability to adapt to the changes they witness</p> | <p>Conducting awareness campaigns involving the entire community to correct cultural legacies and ancient customs and raise awareness of the importance of the role of women. The aim is to highlight the</p> | | | | |
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| | <p>importance of educating females and making use of their capabilities in the labor market, targeting particularly rural and border areas.²⁷</p> | | | | |
| | <p>Study of successful international practices in the field of women's empowerment and the use of mechanisms appropriate to local conditions.</p> | | | | |
| | <p>Removing the social and cultural barriers that limit women's potential for entrepreneurship, by addressing stereotypes on many levels: within families, communities, the education system and the business environment.</p> | | | | |

²⁷ Abdel Mawla, Somaya. 2009. Strengthening Education as a Tool for Women's Economic Empowerment, Policy Paper (2), Social Research Center, the American University in Cairo.

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| | Eliminate old habits that give males control over the financial resources and assets of the females. | | | | |
| | Celebrating successful models in self-employment and taking care of first female applicants for funding or training programs, especially in rural and tribal societies. This could spread knowledge and encourage others to join. | | | | |

Source: Prepared by the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies.

Appendix 1

- The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies prepared a study entitled “Towards a gender-responsive economic policy in Egypt” in 2016 within the framework of joint cooperation between the National Council for Women and the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies.
- In this context, the Center held fourteen in-depth discussion sessions with 164 women from thirteen governorates during the period October - December 2016. The sessions aimed to identify obstacles to the economic empowerment of Egyptian women, the main factors that impede empowerment, and highlight the extent of these differences among the different groups of women and their relevance to place of residence, age and social level, in addition to identifying the drivers of change that can effect a radical change in the reality of women.
- The study highlighted a number of factors supporting economic empowerment (drivers of change), which the study considers necessary to rely on to bring about empowerment over the coming period. The drivers of change that the study highlighted are as follows:
 1. Openness to experiences and cultures
 2. Availability of information and the ability to deal therewith.
 3. Availing technology.
 4. Supportive environment in the form of education, infrastructure and the economic structure of the governorate.
- The figure below, No. A1-1, attempts to illustrate the differences between the factors / drivers of change according to geographical location, age group, and social segment.

Figure A1-1. Differences between drivers of change

| | Openness to other experiences and cultures | | | | Availability of information | | | | The availability of communication technology | | | | Supporting environment | | | |
|-----------------------|--|----|-----|----|-----------------------------|----|-----|----|--|----|-----|----|------------------------|----|-----|----|
| Geographical distance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Age group | i | ii | iii | iv | i | ii | iii | iv | i | ii | iii | iv | i | ii | iii | iv |
| Social segment | a | b | c | a | b | c | a | b | c | a | b | c | a | b | c | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|-----------------------|
| Border governorates | (4) | Upper Egypt governorates | (3) | Lower Egypt governorates | (2) | Urban governorates | (1) | Geographical distance |
|---------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|-----------------------|

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----|------|-----------------|-------|-----------------|------|-----------------|-----|-----------|
| 60+ | (iv) | 46-60 years old | (iii) | 30-45 years old | (ii) | 18-29 years old | (i) | Age group |
|-----|------|-----------------|-------|-----------------|------|-----------------|-----|-----------|

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------|---|----------------------|---|--------------------|
| Poor-Modest segment | C | Modest-Medium segment | B | Medium-Upper segment | A | The social segment |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------|---|----------------------|---|--------------------|

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|-----------------|--|---------------------|--|-------------------|--|------------|
| Weak appearance | | Moderate appearance | | Strong appearance | | Color code |
|-----------------|--|---------------------|--|-------------------|--|------------|

Geographical differences

In general, urban governorates are the most fortunate in terms of availability of the four factors, followed by the governorates of Lower Egypt. The governorates of Upper Egypt and border governorates are the least fortunate, as follows:

- Participants from most urban governorates enjoyed good areas of exposure and good availability of information due to the development of the governorates, the diverse economic structure and the multiplicity of areas of expertise.
- The governorates of Lower Egypt generally have good infrastructure and good access to technology. However, it is not possible to generalize across all governorates of Lower

Egypt in terms of openness to experiences and access to information.

- The border and Upper Egypt governorates suffer from long distances and the difficulty of moving internally and between governorates, which affects the areas of exposure of women.

Age differences

The differences between the age groups of the participants appear either because of the different responsibilities according to the age group, or because of the availability of new opportunities for the younger participants that were not available before, as well as the geographical differences and cultural differences that older age groups were most affected by, as follows:

- There are two age groups for which increased exposure has been observed. The first group is 30-45 years old and the second is for those over 60 years old. The first group was probably helped by the dynamics of the labor market with relatively less family burden in terms of caring for children after reaching ages where they can support themselves. As for the latter group, it depended on the accumulated life experience.
- As for the two groups that are less open to experiences, they are: First, the 18-29 age group, which was students or women at the beginning of their working lives, or whose children are still in their early years that need intensive care. Hence, the most open models in this category were an exception. Technology has contributed to increasing awareness of this age group compared to this stage among previous generations. Due to the neglect of many initiatives of the technological side, this age group did not follow these initiatives. As for the age group of 46-60 years, it is the main

reason for the inequality of openness in the geographical differences that this group suffered from at the beginning of their lives, and lack of a source to overcome this deficiency.

Social differences

The division of social segments was based on observation of the research team during the interviews due to the lack of data on the income of the participants, while making sure the division is realistic through the nature of work and place of residence of the participant. In sum, it can be said that the higher the social segment of the participant, the higher the availability of the four factors. The level of income has a direct and indirect effect on drivers of change. Despite the fact that limited income presents a challenge for both women and men, women are more likely to be negatively affected in obtaining resources either by choice (altruism) or against their will (discrimination). The impact of the social level on the drivers of change in empowering women can be monitored through the supportive environment factor, from education services to infrastructure, which then affects areas of knowledge and exposure. The availability of technology also depends on the ability to purchase modern electronic devices, which may not be affordable in the case of low-income people

Appendix 2

Table A2-1. Correct measures targeting the real causes of female economic and political problems - examples from real life

| Symptoms of the problem | Seeming reason | Real reason | Insufficient current procedure to solve the problem | Necessary action |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Females' preference for government work versus the private sector | Unwillingness or insufficiency of females to work in the private sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexibility of working conditions in the public sector, where they are able to reconcile work and family care. - The average wage for females is lower than that of males in many private sector jobs. - The private sector does not favor female employment for several reasons, including the fact that an employer who employs 100 workers or more in one place must establish a nursery or commission a nursery to take care of the workers' children. - The decline in working conditions | The provisions of the legislative framework regarding maternity leave and childcare and the presence of nurseries for children in the private sector. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The state to provide appropriate incentives to the private sector to encourage more female employment in decent conditions so that it sees women as a resource for its activities (for example, tax benefits). - Providing flexible conditions for work in the private sector that take into account family responsibilities (part-time work, work from home and flexible hours). |

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| | | for women, especially in the informal private sector, in which women are denied contractual protection, work rights and special benefits. | | |
| Weak political participation of women in Egypt despite the large number of appointments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The low number of women who are willing and able to assume political offices. - Females' reluctance to run for both Houses of Representatives, and being satisfied with their presence through the quota set for women. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of adequate training for women to play their politically appropriate role over successive years, which made them lose confidence in their competence to play this role. | Allocating a quota for women of 25% for the house of representatives and 10% for the senate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training women on correct political action by finding an effective role for local governments. This requires activating the local administration law and the associated constitutional requirements. - Consequently, women will have sufficient qualification to run for the House of Representatives and Senate elections on their merit and not only for the legislatively prescribed quotas, and to play the desired political role. |

Source: Prepared by the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies.

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