



Palestinian Businesswomen's Association
الجمعية الفلسطينية لصاحبات الأعمال

Policy paper:

Women's Opportunities to Access Finance in Palestine: Challenges and Problems

**October
2020**

**Prepared by: Abdalaziz Al-Salhi
Social and Economic Policies Monitor
"Al-Marsad"**

This paper outlines the reality of funding, opportunities offered to women in Palestine, associated policies, objectives, the different sectors through which women obtain financing, as well as, the methods and mechanisms for women to acquire proper financing. In addition, this paper highlights the difficulties & obstacles women face in acquiring financing, illustrated by the conditions related to the financing mechanism and the applicability of conditions to women in terms of guarantees, the project date and the permissible age group. The paper also underlines the obstacles women face later in meeting their obligations, in terms of the high interest on loans and how this affects their profit margin. Furthermore, the paper refers to social difficulties women face under a system of exploitation either by their spouses, or other household male figures, in terms of forcing them to take loans to be used by them, or in controlling property that deprives women of guarantees that they may provide to the banks.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a state of emergency was declared, causing all facilities to close as a precaution, during the preparation of this paper. This has exacerbated the crisis of small and medium enterprises, without any real official contingency plans nor interventions, with the exception of talking about loans directed to certain sectors. This came without indicating the most affected groups among these sectors, or prioritizing families headed by women or women borrowers. Women entrepreneurs face various challenges when it comes to establishing and starting their projects, in addition to difficulties retaining their projects. This indicates that women supporting themselves and their families, through small and micro enterprises, have a compounding burden now.

The paper on which the researcher relied, revealed indicators of the Palestinian general context, a set of financial statements of case studies from banks, lending companies, institutions, and individual filed interviews conducted with specialists in this field. In addition, the paper revealed a range of challenges and conclusions, some of which are related to the general Palestinian context, in terms of the higher unemployment rates among females.

This means that there is a need for women to be targeted, in terms of empowerment through access to finance for their project. Nonetheless, difficulties are evident in the program conditions of banks, some lending companies and institutions in regards of minimum age, project age, income, income requirement through profits, guarantees and other impediments. The paper also revealed that there are gaps among decision-makers and official bodies, in reference to facilitating financial opportunities to empower women.

Thus, the paper presents a set of recommendations after explaining and describing the challenges that lie ahead for women, in terms of economic and social empowerment, through access to finance.

To view the full study, please contact us via e-mail: : info@asala-pal.org,
Or, via phone number: 02-2413035