

Session 3: Impact of child-care and family-friendly policies on the empowerment of women and the economy

05 June 2024

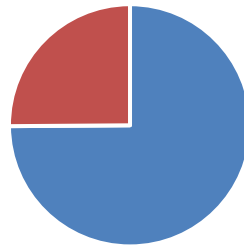


Why Women's Economic Empowerment?

- Women's economic empowerment has a **multiplier effect** that yields positive returns on the woman, her family, community, and the whole of society.
- **When more women work, economies grow.** Mounting evidence that gender equality in access to economic opportunities **benefits the economy** through increased productivity, consumption, and investment.
- **Women's economic equality is good for business.** Proven to enhance workforce capability by **attracting and retaining top talent**, addressing **skills shortages**, **increasing competitiveness** because diverse perspectives enhance innovation and by establishing the company as an employer of choice.

The Labor Force Participation

- Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) drop: From 48.8% (2018-2019) to **43.4%**.
- **Male LFPR: 66.2%. vs Female LFPR: < 22.2%** vs global average of approx. 50%.
- The global labor force participation rate for women is just over 50% compared to 80% for men.



■ Male LFP ■ Female LFP

Women's Labor Force Participation

- **Educated:** 47% of Lebanese women with higher education.
- **Sectors:** 15% of women in **public sector** (vs. 17% of men), > 50% of women in **services and education** (vs. 8%), < 15% in **manufacturing and construction sector**.
- Female-Head Households: 21% (MSNA 2023)
- Women are **over-represented in informal and vulnerable employment:** 56% of women in informal economy.
- Women are less likely to have access to social protection.
- Women's representation in managerial positions: approx. 4%

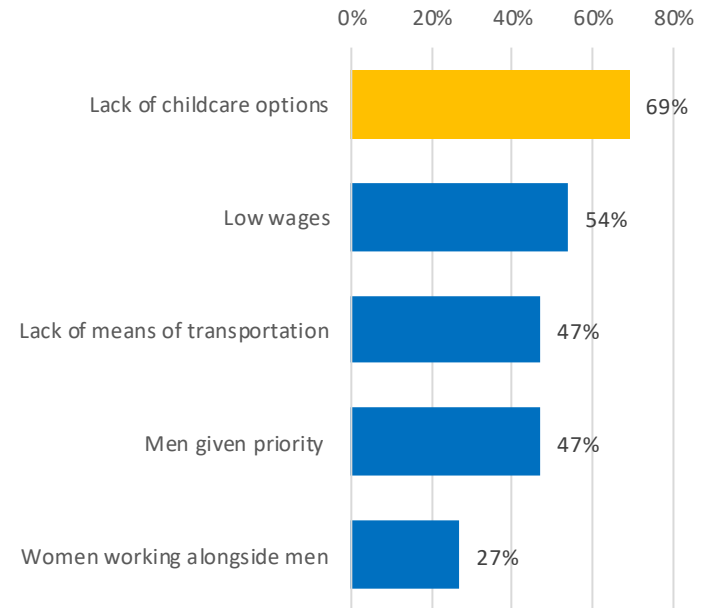
Barriers to Women's Labor Force Participation

- **Social and cultural norms:** limit market access & married women 1.7 times less likely to be employed.
- **Motherhood penalty:** Lack of childcare services hampers careers, 60% cite childcare as a barrier.
- **Safety and security concerns:** around 23% of households reported at least one safety and security concerns for women in their communities.
- **Digital skills gap:** Male-dominated STEM/ICT sectors, 29% of ICT students are women.
- Women are less likely than men to have **access to financial institutions** or have a bank account.
- The **digital divide:** globally 37% of women do not use the internet.
- **Discriminatory Family laws.**
- **Gender Pay Gap:** Wage gap reaches 71%.

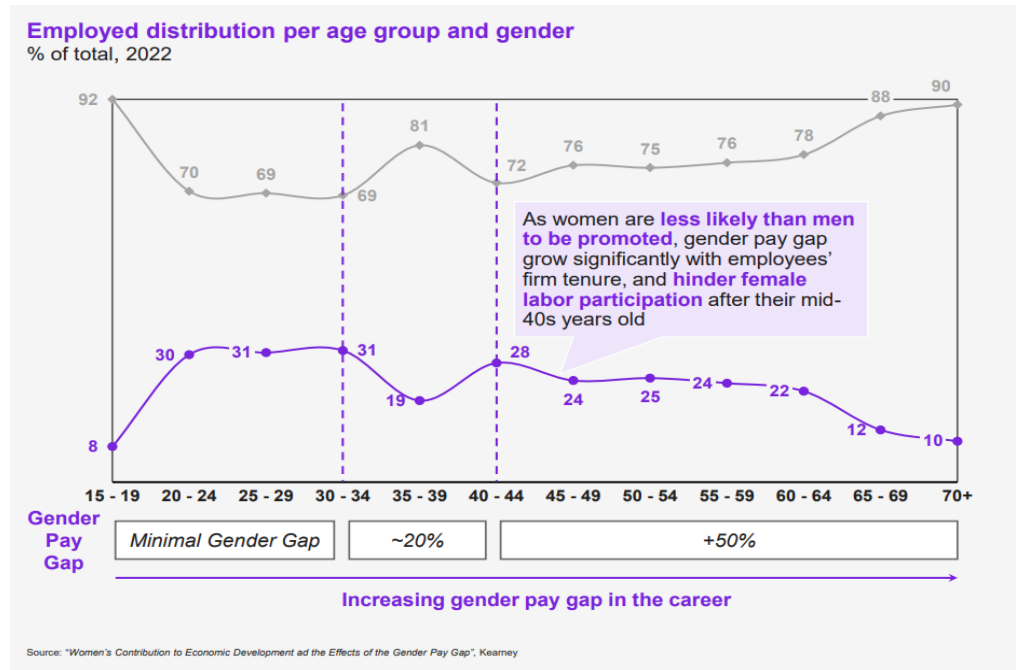
Childcare responsibilities

- Childcare responsibilities are a significant part of these care responsibilities: Women spend on an average, five hours a day on childcare, while men spend less than two (World Bank)
- Lack of childcare options cited as top barrier for women's economic participation (Arab Barometer)

Perceived barriers Lebanese women face entering the labour force
(% saying the issue poses a barrier to a medium or great extent)



Female Labour Force Participation in Lebanon Drops Inversely to Women's Care Responsibilities



Care responsibilities and women's economic empowerment

Disproportionate care responsibilities lead to:

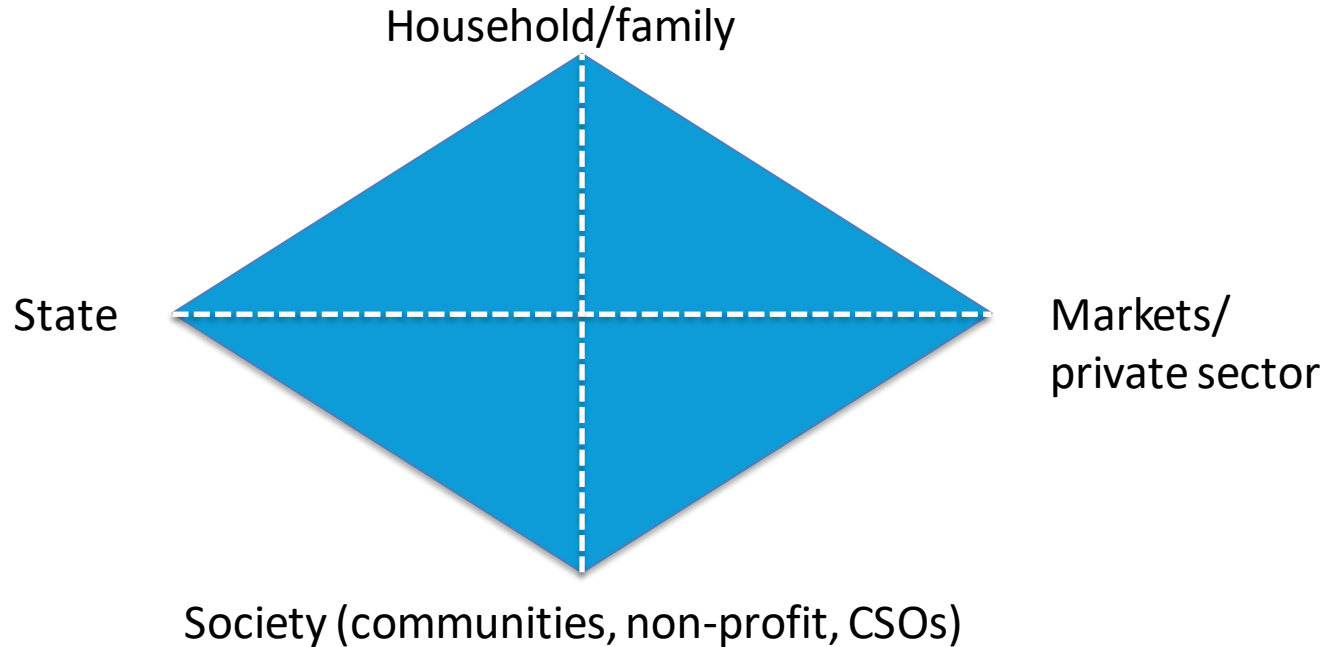
- Women dropping out of the labour force
- Women's under-employment
- Higher informality, no social protection
- Limited vertical mobility
- Lower wages

→ Vicious cycle



Photo: UN Women Moldova

Who cares?



Childcare and family-friendly policies

- Absence of adequate and appropriate care leave hinders the redistribution of care responsibilities (within family and with the state/society and private sector)
- Access to institutional childcare and family-friendly policies improve maternal labour market outcomes (World Bank, 2021)
- Quality childcare is linked to better short-term and longer-term child development outcomes (Various sources)



Photo: Marwan Tahtah/UN Women

Childcare policies

- ✓ Quality and affordable childcare
- ✓ No ‘one solution fits all’ – blend of government and private sector provided childcare, community-based childcare, social entrepreneurship, etc.



Photo: UN Women supported childcare, UN Women

Family-friendly work policies

- Parental leave
 - ✓ Paid maternal leave
 - ✓ Paternity leave: “Take it or leave it” paid leave to promote uptake. Effective segue for redistributing care responsibilities within the household.
- Breastfeeding breaks
- Flexible work policies
 - ✓ Diversification of work modalities (hours and location) - institutionalization opens up options for women and men

Investment in care has returns

- One main barrier is the lack of “fiscal space” to finance investment in care.
- However, according to the ILO Care Policy Investment simulator (includes early-childhood care and education, family-friendly work policies and long-term care) an annual investment of 6.31% of GDP would yield by 2030...

174,254
direct jobs
created

303,616
direct jobs
+ induced
jobs

5%
reduction in
gender
employment
gap

GDP
increase per
dollar spent
\$4.08



THANK YOU

