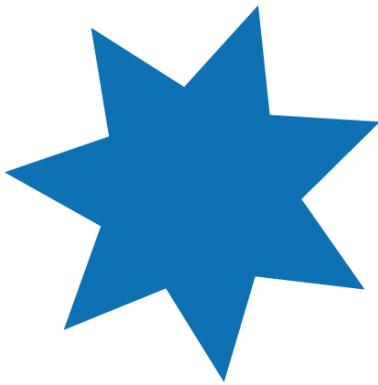




منتدى الاستراتيجيات الأردني  
JORDAN STRATEGY FORUM

## Females in Jordan: Do They Lack Opportunity?

October 2021



**#Policy\_Brief**

## 1. Background

The active promotion of equal rights and opportunities regardless of gender, should always be on top of any government's agenda. Indeed, no one should underestimate the importance of gender equality. For example, educating women and girls reduces the risk of infant mortality. When women have a say in household finances, the whole family realizes the benefits. When more women work, economies grow. For these reasons, and others, in 2015, member states of the UN adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to change the world to the better. Goal number 5 states "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls".

Within the context of the above-mentioned observations, it is interesting to note that the "**Female Opportunity Index**", was published by the German digital bank N26 in July 2021. This index assesses gender equality in 100 economies.

This Policy Brief, issued by the Jordan Strategy Forum (JSF), outlines where Jordan stands on the Female Opportunity Index, and provides some policy measures whose objective is to enhance gender equality in Jordan.

## 2. The Female Opportunity Index:

The Index "analyzes and compares 100 countries for their achievements in female leadership, management and entrepreneurship, as well as their advancements in female access to education and parental leave". The index is composed of **four** categories and **nine** factors.

**First Category: Political Leadership.** This category is composed of two factors.

1. Female heads of government (years, 1970 – 2020).
2. Total women in government (score).

**Second Category: Careers.** This category is composed of three factors.

1. Women in management positions.
2. Women in entrepreneurship.
3. Women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs.

**Third Category: Pay equality.** This category is composed of one factor.

1. Salary level and gender wage gap.

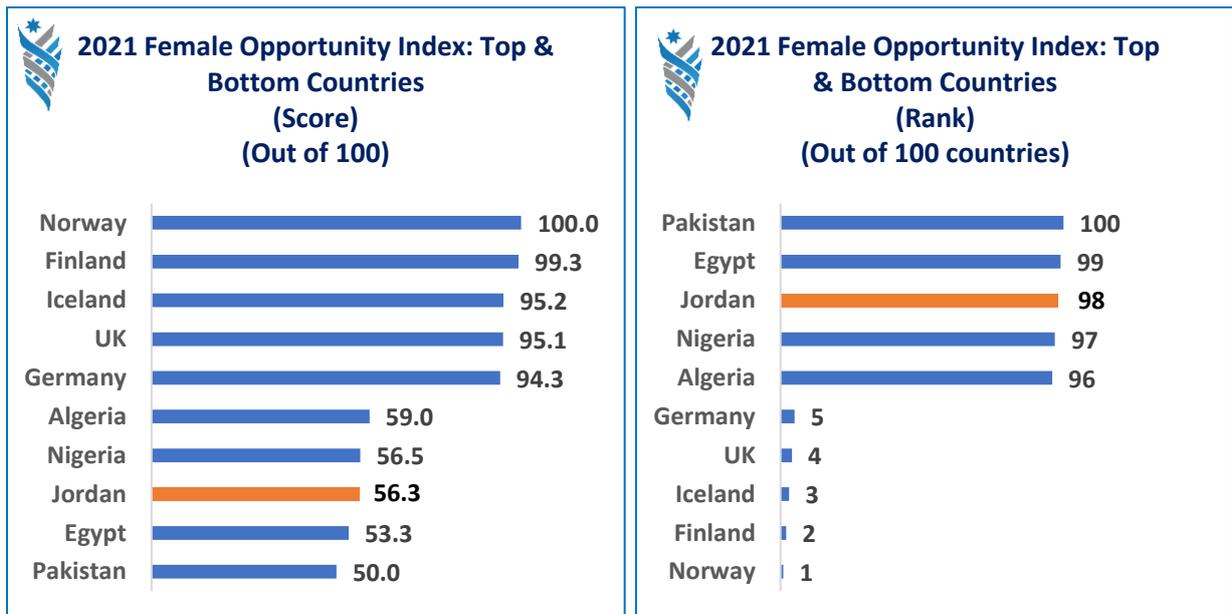
**Fourth Category: Support.** This category is composed of three factors.

1. Female access to education.
2. Women's legislation.
3. Maternity leave (days).

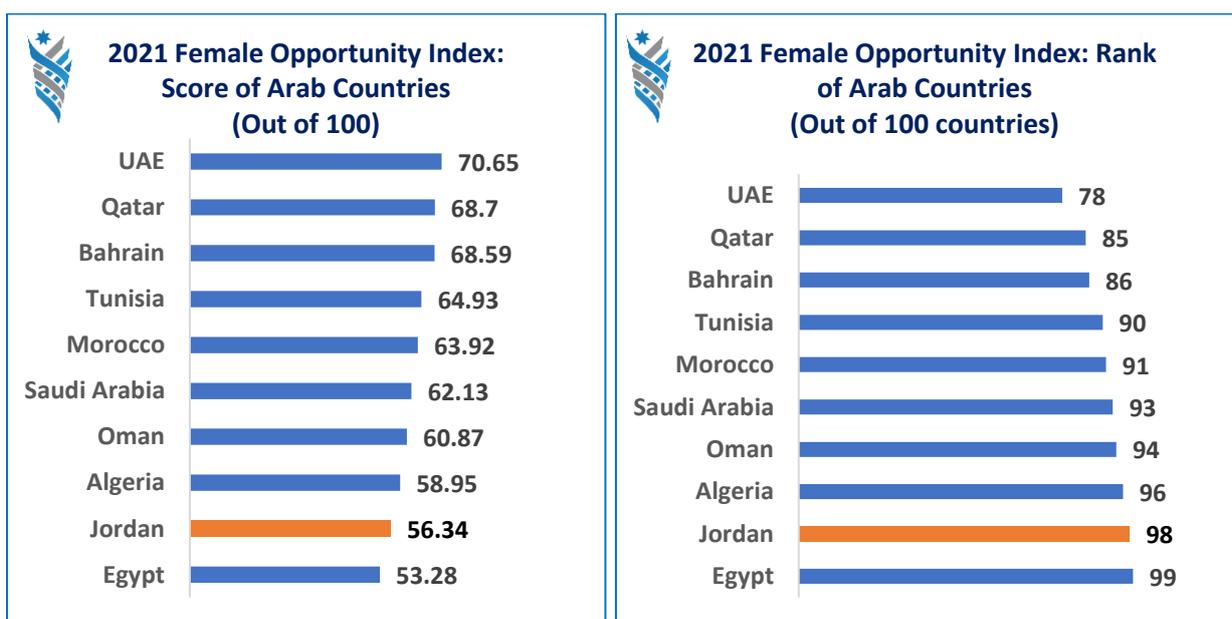
### 3. The Female Opportunity Index: Where Do Females in Jordan Stand?

Below, we outline a number of observations about Jordan’s standing on the female opportunity index.

- A. Norway tops the world on the female opportunity index. Pakistan ranks last. With a score of 56.3/100 and a rank of 98/100, Jordan’s performance leaves a lot to be desired.

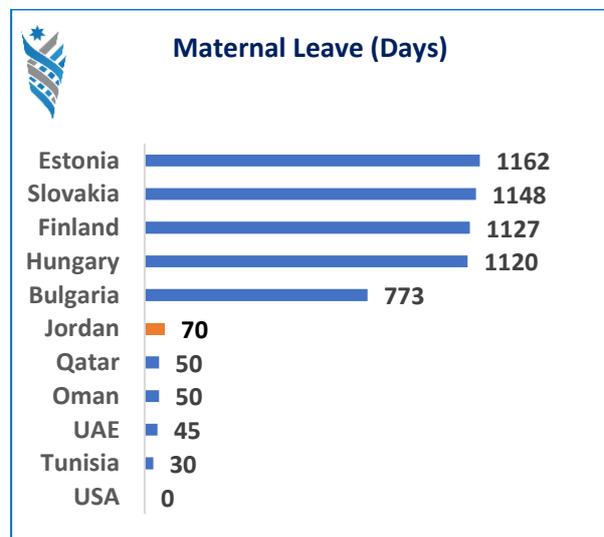
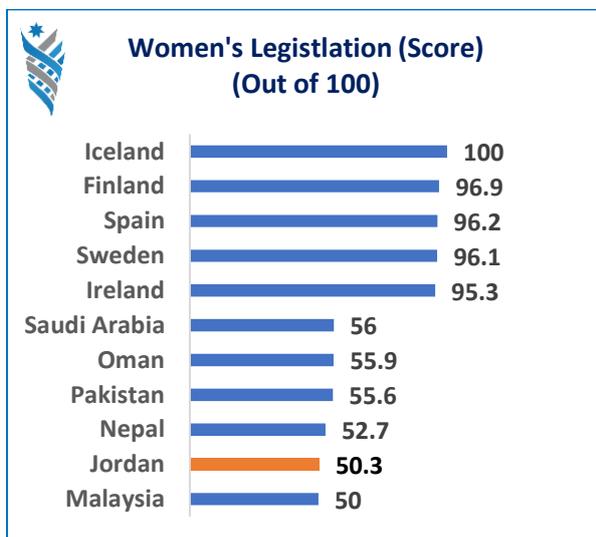
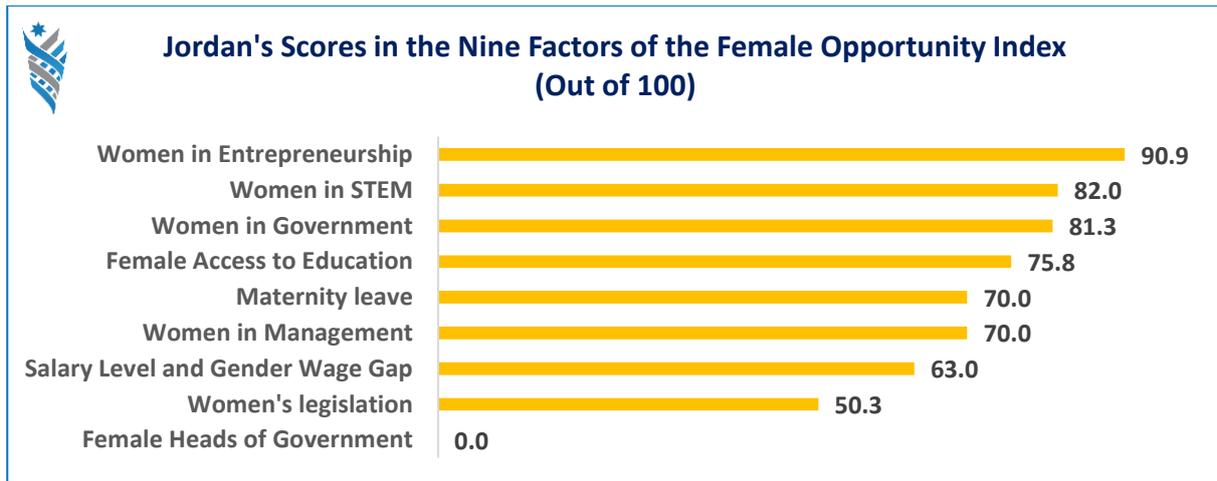


- B. At the regional level, The United Arab Emirates (UAE) tops the Arab countries. Jordan comes in 9<sup>th</sup> out of 10 countries.



Based on the above-mentioned two observations, no one can argue that females in Jordan do not suffer from “lack of opportunity”. Indeed, the ranking of Jordan on the female opportunity index, to say the least, leaves a lot to be desired. In a Nutshell, to understand why Jordan’s score is relatively low, one needs to look at the measures in which Jordan scores low.

It is clear that Jordan, like in many other countries, scores zero in the “female head of the government”. However, Jordan’s scores are relatively low in “women legislation”, and in “salary level and gender wage gap”.



To improve Jordan’s score in “women legislation”, stakeholders should look at divorce legality (OECD), women in power according to the Political Empowerment Score (WEF), presence of paternity leave (World Policy Analysis Center), presence of legislative prohibition of workplace discrimination based on sex (World Policy Analysis Center), and the percentage of wages paid in a covered period of maternity leave (UN). In addition, stakeholders should look at the total number of days of paid parental leave available to mothers in a country.

## 4. IN A NUTSHELL

It is unfortunate to note that the female unemployment rate during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2021 is equal to 28.5%. Females with an undergraduate (or higher) degree is equal to 79.6%. For this, and other, reasons, the female economic participation rate is equal to 14.0% only. In addition, and based on the employment figures (2020) published by the Department of Statistics (DOS), about 70% of the Jordanian working females work for only three sector (education, health services, and public administration). For male Jordanians, this ratio is much lower (around 43%). Within this context, the UNICEF projects that an increase in the female participation rate by 25% over the next seven years, would help Jordan achieve an annual 5% GDP growth (UNICEF: Opportunities for Youth in Jordan – 2019). It is necessary that all relevant stakeholders look into the political and economic empowerment of females in Jordan.



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