



# Research culture project

Mena Regional Network



# The Research culture project in Mena region

2 webinars were organized :

- 09<sup>th</sup> of April, 2022 : Actual situation regarding the ranking of the region countries in the Global Innovation Index, the contribution of women in R&I and barriers facing women participation in STEM research
- 11<sup>th</sup> of June, 2022 : Initiatives, policies and projects undertaken to enhance impact of women participation in STEM research



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Findings from the 1<sup>st</sup> webinar :

- Actual situation in the region :
  1. The rate of R&D spending (in the GDP) in some countries of the region, is low
  2. Women are present in the university and in R&D fields with high ratios (>50% in some countries/fields)
  3. However they are not present consequently in the workplace and don't contribute in an appropriate way in research outputs (publications, etc.)
  4. Also, the ratio of startups owned by women is still low



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- Barriers facing women in STEM :
  1. Cultural barriers: stereotypes: Women are expected to work in professions with a high rate of empathy and are not destined for scientific positions. Also, women prefer stable positions, for example in the administration
  2. Problem of trust and fear of failure : women only answer recruiting calls only when they are sure of being retained
  3. Lack of family support especially if the wife is away for a while. Even if accepted by the family, a feeling of guilt is felt
  4. Working hours
  5. Women have more difficulties to develop a strong network
  6. In some countries of the region, women are asked to immigrate abroad due to political problems in order to continue studying ⇒ work on facilitating access to e-learning platforms
  7. Lack of mentorship: Support and awareness work is required



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Discussed Policies/Projects/Initiatives :

- National level policies/projects :
  - Startup act launched by Tunisia
  - initiatives undertaken by UAE in order to encourage women entrepreneurship (e-trader license, Home visa, business women councils, etc.)
  - STEM schools and Koudwatek in Egypt
  - Awards managed by the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology in Egypt, to encourage women in STEM research
- Initiatives driven by companies :
  - Initiatives undertaken by Oracle in KSA in order to provide coding, AI and cloud trainings and to support African Tech startups
  - Initiatives driven by L'Oreal Unesco, Vodafone and Pepsico in Egypt, in order to encourage STEM women R&I



# Future Actions for the project in Mena region

- It was proposed to :
  - Share initiatives undertaken in different countries and discuss the way of their implementation in other countries
  - Create a group to go through and continue the discussions between the participants in order to propose initiatives that can be launched by different countries of the region and can be measured afterwards
  - Build a community of allies and a support network of people who can advise and sustain a woman throughout her career
  - Share results of different projects in order to promote their impacts (Ex : created startups) and create synergies



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Registered impact on the network :

- Involvement, collaboration and rich exchanges between representatives from different countries of the region (Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Palestine)
- Potential opportunities of collaboration already identified