

**FINAL REPORT ON IDRC GEM-MENA RESEARCH TRAINING WORKSHOP**

**AMMAN, JORDAN**

**OCTOBER 8-9, 2009**

**RAF Project: 105959**



### Background and introduction

In 2009, IDRC, through the Globalization, Growth and Poverty (GGP) Program, funded a Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) pilot project in seven Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries (IDRC Project 105213). GEM is an international research initiative to measure differences among countries in the level of entrepreneurial activity, uncover factors influencing entrepreneurship in different nations, and identify policy implications for enhancing entrepreneurship ([www.gemconsortium.org](http://www.gemconsortium.org)).

IDRC's objectives in funding the GEM-MENA pilot project were three-fold: 1) to address a significant gap in the lack of data regarding entrepreneurial activity in MENA countries, 2) to provide a stronger evidence base for policy to enhance the entrepreneurial performance of MENA countries (as a contributor to inclusive economic growth), and 3) to build regional research capacity in the field of entrepreneurship research and analysis of GEM data. IDRC's longer-term aim is to encourage the formation of full GEM National Teams in future years.

The GEM-MENA project involved the collection of adult population survey (APS) data on entrepreneurial activity levels and behaviour in seven MENA countries – Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, the West Bank & Gaza and Yemen. These surveys were conducted by the Nielsen Company (and associated sub-contracting firms) in June and July 2009. The survey database includes data from 14,154 surveys (2000+ from each of the seven countries). The data was processed by the GEM global team and returned to IDRC in a harmonized format consistent with data collected from a total of 54 countries worldwide. IDRC, through a competitive process, awarded the contract to conduct a regional analysis of the dataset and prepare a GEM-MENA regional report to the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS).

### Workshop Objectives

The goal of the Amman workshop (October 8-9, 2009) was to build capacity and transfer technical know-how to a group of MENA researchers on the GEM-MENA project and on how to approach country- and regional-level analysis of the APS data. The objectives of the workshop were to provide a detailed orientation on the GEM research project, including the theoretical framework, key entrepreneurship indicators, and types of analysis performed on GEM data, and to guide researchers through an examination of the SPSS data file for MENA countries. The workshop also offered an excellent opportunity to build and strengthen a regional network of entrepreneurship-related researchers across the MENA region. (See Annex 1 for Workshop Agenda.)

Prior to the workshop, participants were provided with a copy of the APS questionnaire, GEM dataset for each of the seven countries (in SPSS format), a copy of the data input map for the APS data and list of coded variables, and two published papers<sup>1</sup> offering a more in-depth understanding of the theoretical constructs and research analysis methodologies underpinning GEM research.

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<sup>1</sup> Reynolds, P., N. Bosma, E. Autio, S. Hunt, N. de Bono, I. Servais, P. Lopez-Garcia and N. Chin (2005), "Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: Data Collection Design and Implementation 1998-2003", *Small Business Economics*, 24: 205-231; and Levie J. and E. Autio (2008), "A Theoretical Grounding and Test of the GEM Model", *Small Business Economics*, 31: 235-263.

## Workshop Proceedings

Twenty-seven participants from nine MENA countries, GEM, and IDRC (MERO) attended the workshop (see Participants List in Annex 2).

### **Thursday 8 October 2009**

Susan Joekes, Senior Program Specialist, IDRC opened the session with a brief introduction to the IDRC GEM-MENA Project and the objectives for the workshop. This was followed by roundtable introductions and a full presentation by Dr. Neils Bosma, GEM Research Director, on the origins and development of the GEM Initiative. The GEM Project was founded in 1998 by Babson College and the London Business School and has evolved from 10 active countries in 1999 to 54 active countries in 2009. Over the years, GEM studies have been performed in over 75 countries. Niels also explained the annual GEM research cycle from the planning meeting for GEM National Teams in January of each year to the release of the GEM Executive Report in January of the following year.

The afternoon session of the first day was devoted to a presentation and discussion of data collection and processing phases of the GEM research. Niels explained the GEM procedures for approving proposals from National Teams regarding selection of nationally-representative population samples and sampling methodologies. Some of the specific issues related to the data collection process in the seven MENA countries were shared by Eman El-Hadary, Research Executive with the Nielsen Company.



**Niels Bosma, GEM and Yousef Daoud, Birzeit University discuss data issues**

There was considerable discussion among participants concerning the sampling methodologies used in the seven MENA countries. This was in light of evidence that entrepreneurial activity levels appear to be exceptionally high in Morocco compared to the other MENA countries. Tunisia expressed particular concerns about comparing Tunisian data to that in the other MENA countries if different sampling methodologies were used. Niels explained that total entrepreneurial activity (TEA) levels do vary considerably across GEM countries for a number of reasons, such as differing levels of economic development, socio-economic structures, culture and tradition, political orientation, etc. However, he reported that GEM is currently investigating the Morocco data to ensure that the high TEA rate is not due to data collection or sampling issues in that country. A conclusion from this investigation is expected within two weeks. For the time being, the Morocco results stand. If a sampling error is detected, options include conducting a sub-sample survey or deleting Morocco data in the 2009 cycle. IDRC affirmed with participants that the sampling methodologies used in the seven MENA countries were approved by GEM after careful scrutiny of Nielsen's sampling methodology proposals (to ensure data was collected from nationally-representative population samples). Quality control is very important to GEM because data from all GEM countries has to be comparable at the national level in order to be included in the global rankings of the global executive report.

***IDRC agreed to send GEM-MENA researchers the sampling frames used in each of the GEM-MENA countries.***

The second session in the afternoon continued with a presentation by Niels on the guidelines for GEM research, key GEM indicators and their interpretation, examples of GEM analysis, and a basic introduction to the SPSS database and use of statistical techniques and measures. This included a full discussion of participants' questions and comments. Niels introduced the working group assignment for Day 2, where teams would work with the SPSS database to produce analysis of key

questions regarding characteristics of entrepreneurial attitudes and entrepreneurial activity between countries.



**Alaa Tartir, MAS and Matthias Huehn, BUE discuss GEM over dinner**



**Adel Bino, University of Jordan with Chris Aylett, GEM**

### **Friday 9 October 2009**

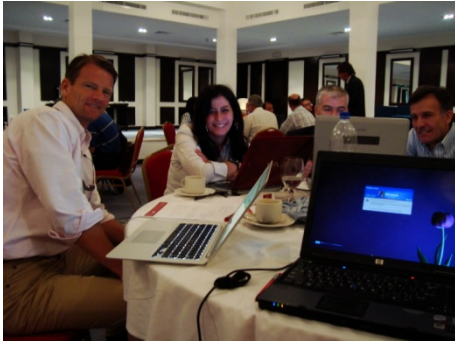
During the morning session, teams in small working groups gained hands-on experience with manipulating and analyzing the SPSS database, each attempting to answer a key question they had identified for analysis.



**Palestine team members Tareq Sadeq and Ruba Shanti work on the GEM-MENA database while Yousef Daoud and Alaa Tartir (right) tackle another problem**

At the end of this session, each working group presented their findings to the whole group, followed by a highly interactive session of comments and discussion.





**Egypt team from BUE, Matthias Huehn and Hala Hattab with Jordan team, Adel Bino and Ghassan Omet**



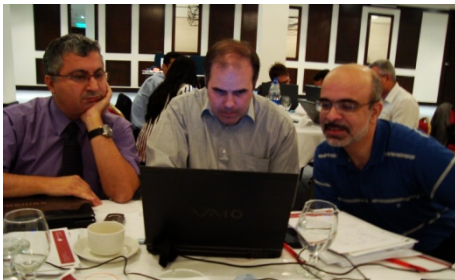
**Taha Fussail, Sana'a University works with Ghassan Omet and Hassan Al-Nour from Jordan**



**Algeria team members Ahmed Bouyacoub and Aberrahmane Abedou work with Lotfi Belkacem from Tunisia**



**Lamia Dandoune and Mohamed Derrabi, Al Alhawayn Univesity, Morocco with Faycal Mansouri, University of Sousse, Tunisia**



**Tony Feghali and Yusuf Sidani, AUB Lebanon with Nader Kabbani, Syria Trust for Development**

In the afternoon, Niels discussed the “look and feel” of a GEM report and the quality standards to be met, showing many examples from other GEM countries and the outlines used for national reports. The beginning of national reports always highlight the global picture (obtained from the GEM Global Executive Report to be provided by GEM), followed by a description of the indicators for entrepreneurial attitudes, aspirations and activities in the country, a discussion of the environment for entrepreneurship, conclusions and policy implications.

In the closing session, Susan Joekes, IDRC shared more detailed information on next steps in the GEM-MENA project. Specifically, IDRC will host another research workshop to enable researchers from the MENA countries to comment on the preliminary findings of the GEM-MENA regional report being prepared by the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) and to provide contextual input which might help to explain cross-country similarities and differences and reflections on policy implications. ***It was agreed by the group that this workshop would be held December 4-5, 2009 in Cairo.***



Susan Joekes, IDRC

The final GEM-MENA regional report will be released in English, Arabic and French in April 2010 at an IDRC-hosted regional Policy Forum to be held in Cairo. Government officials, researchers, donors, other relevant stakeholders from MENA countries and the media will be invited to attend this event.

In the meantime, GEM requires that countries submit one-page country summaries of the highlights of the GEM key results for posting on the GEM website. The deadline for these summaries to be submitted to IDRC is October 19, 2009 in order to meet the GEM deadline. ***It was agreed that MAS will provide each country with the main entrepreneurial activity level indicators for the first section of the country summary template (provided by GEM), and that each country will then complete the sections dealing with 1) the impact of the recent global economic crisis and how it has affected entrepreneurial activity (e.g. are particular industries and /or business types doing better or worse than others and why, and what measures have been taken that will impact entrepreneurship (e.g. credit and lending policies, government intervention), 2) how GEM will be used in the country (e.g. who will use the data and how), and 3) how GEM results might contribute to the most important challenges in the country (e.g. mention latest/forthcoming new government initiatives and /or legislation, other key issues from other published research).***

Susan further explained that IDRC will provide a grant of CDN\$10,000 to each research institution participating in this workshop from the seven countries in the IDRC GEM-MENA project (plus the Egypt GEM team) to enable them to prepare an analytical country-level GEM research report using the GEM APS dataset for their country or to prepare papers for publication dealing with thematic issues from analysis of GEM data. IDRC will prepare the specific guidelines for the research grant on the basis of draft proposals to be submitted by country teams on the content of the research they will produce. The aim will be to have all the paperwork done by the end of November 2009. In the meantime, Susan encouraged country teams to prepare draft proposals. Researchers who have their analysis ready by April 2010 will be asked to present their papers/ reports at the Policy Forum where the regional report will be released.

Finally, Susan reminded the group that the 2009 IDRC project was a pilot geared to respond to the demands for a stronger evidence base to support entrepreneurship policy efforts in the region. IDRC is planning to support future GEM research studies (pending the outcome of its efforts to secure co-funders for its four-year regional project), but in the future, it will be necessary for countries to have full GEM National Teams approved by GEM that will become partners for IDRC in each country. This will involve country-level research institutes/centres concluding formal Participation Agreements with GEM (which requires payment of an annual Participation Fee of 7500

British Pounds). Although payment is not due until May 2010, commitments to GEM have to be made prior to January 2010 so proposed teams can participate in the 2010 GEM Annual Planning Meeting that is scheduled for mid-January in Santiago, Chile. Susan encouraged research institutes to pursue discussions with GEM and to approach country-level sponsors to secure the funding for Participation Agreements.

## Workshop Evaluation

The Amman entrepreneurship research training workshop provided an indispensable, authoritative introduction to the characteristics and analytical potential of the GEM datasets. Results of the workshop evaluation were highly favourable (see Annex 3 for numeric ratings). The most highly rated sessions were the introductory session to the GEM research and the data analysis exercise and presentations (over 86% of participants gave these sessions a rating of 1 or 2 indicating they were “very helpful”).

Participants cited the most useful things learned at the workshop as: an understanding of the GEM research project and the requirements for GEM data analysis; how to work with the GEM dataset; and how to approach the writing of a country report. They particularly appreciated the opportunity to work with the data and to have their questions about variables answered in “real time”.

What they liked most about the workshop included: the methodology and analysis discussion; discussions of cross-country data comparisons; the opportunity to meet members of the GEM research teams from other countries and to share cross-country experiences; and working in teams for the exercise to produce and present data analysis results. Specifically, several participants liked the interaction of participants and the motivation, cooperative spirit, and collective efforts of the researchers that evolved over the two days.

Some participants would like to have received more detailed instruction on the full range of GEM entrepreneurship indicators and key questions for data analysis. In this respect, it was suggested that GEM prepare a manual for new research teams. Some participants also indicated that the first day of the workshop repeated knowledge they already had and that some of that time could have been used more wisely to focus on detailed analysis of the data. (However, it should be noted that participants came to the workshop with varying levels of knowledge about the GEM research project.)

For the next workshop in December, participants recommended:

- Focusing on data discussion, leaving lots of time for presentation of findings at the country-level;
- Including time for discussion and fine-tuning of country reports;
- Leaving time to work more with the data (if necessary at that point);
- Circulating presentation material prior to the meeting; and
- Providing simultaneous translation.



## Annex 1: Final Program

### Entrepreneurship Research Training Workshop

**Ramada Hotel & Suites  
28 Abdulla Bin Omar St, Shemesani  
Amman, Jordan**

**Thursday and Friday, 8-9 October 2009**

#### Final Agenda

#### Wednesday 7 October 2009

Arrivals and hotel check-in

#### Thursday 8 October 2009

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 09:30 – 10:00        | Welcome, introductory remarks and objectives for the workshop - Susan Joekes, IDRC<br><br>Roundtable introduction of participants  |
| 10:00 – 11:30        | This session will provide an introduction to the GEM Research project and briefly explain the annual GEM cycle (from the annual GEM meeting in January to publication of the Global Report one year later) – Niels Bosma, Research Director, GEM   |
| 11:30 – 12:00 (noon) | Discussion and questions   |
| 12:00 – 13:15        | Buffet Lunch (Main restaurant)   |
| 13:15 – 15:15        | This session will emphasize data collection and processing. Niels Bosma will explain the general GEM procedures. Some of the specific issues related to the data collection process in MENA countries are discussed by Eman El-Hadary, Research Executive, The Nielsen Company<br><br>This session will continue by presenting more in-depth information on the guidelines for GEM research; interpretation of key GEM indicators; examples of GEM analysis; working with the SPSS database; statistical techniques and measures, etc. |
| 15:15– 15:45         | Refreshment break  |
| 15:45 – 17:00        | This session will be dedicated to a full discussion to answer questions and address comments on the information shared during the day. Niels Bosma will then introduce the assignment for Day 2. The assignments relate to exploring significant differences in characteristics of entrepreneurial attitudes and entrepreneurial activity between two countries.   |
| 16.30 -              | Workshop ends for the day  |
| 19.30                | Group will arrange for dinner together in a local restaurant   |

**Friday 9 October 2009**

8:30 – 11:30 Participants work in groups of 3-4 on analysis of SPSS database (moderated by Niels Bosma).

11:30 – 12:45 Buffet Lunch (main restaurant) (and prayer)

12:45 – 15:15 In this session, each group will present its results from the morning exercise, followed by participant feedback and full discussion

15:15 – 15:45 In this session, Niels Bosma will discuss the “look and feel” of a GEM report and the quality standards to be met

15:45 – 16:30 In this session, Susan Joekes and Lois Stevenson, IDRC will provide information on IDRC support for the production of country-specific papers/reports, and make concluding remarks. The group will also set tentative dates for the November workshop to discuss preliminary findings from the regional analysis.

Workshop ends

## Annex 2: List of participants

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### Annex 3. Workshop Evaluation Results

**Entrepreneurship Research Training Workshop  
Amman, Jordan  
8-9 October 2009**

1= very helpful;      7 = not helpful at all

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Day One:</b>							
Introduction of the GEM research	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
N=21	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>			
Afternoon session on data collection	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
N=21	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>		
Afternoon session on approaches to analysis	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
N=21	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>			
<b>Day Two:</b>							
Morning exercise	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
N=21	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>			
Team presentations and discussion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
N=21	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>				
Pre-reading material	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
N=18	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>			
Travel and logistics arrangements provided by IDRC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
N=20	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>1</b>			

What was the most useful thing you learned during the workshop?

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What did you like most about the workshop?  
See main report

What did you like least about the workshop?

See main report \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any recommendations for the organization/ agenda of the November workshop?

See main report \_\_\_\_\_