



small
states
digest

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COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

What are small states?

The Commonwealth defines small states as sovereign states with a population size of 1.5 million people or less. Larger member countries – Botswana, Jamaica, The Gambia, Lesotho, Namibia and Papua New Guinea are designated as small states because they share many characteristics of small states. Thirty-two of the 54 member countries of the Commonwealth are small states.

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The Gambia
Lesotho
Mauritius
Namibia
Seychelles
Swaziland

ASIA

Brunei
Darussalam
Maldives

THE CARIBBEAN

Antigua and
Barbuda
The Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
Dominica

Grenada

Guyana
Jamaica
St Kitts and Nevis
St Lucia
St Vincent and the
Grenadines
Trinidad and Tobago

EUROPE

Cyprus
Malta

THE PACIFIC

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Nauru
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Guinea
Samoa
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Tuvalu
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Policy makers at national, regional and international levels, as well as academic researchers, are invited to contribute their views and perspectives to this quarterly publication which focuses on the opportunities and challenges faced by small states in the global economy.

Synopsis of policy research papers and analytical or descriptive reports on small states issues should be submitted to the Commissioning Editor as soon as possible for the next issue of this quarterly publication. Topics can cover international finance and capital markets, international trade, the environment, natural disasters, macroeconomic management, and economic and social development. **Submissions should not exceed 1,500 words.** Reader feedback, Publication announcements and Notices of Upcoming Events should reach the Editor two weeks ahead of publication.

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Contents

This issue: Female Employment in Small States



.....	
Small States and the Female Labour Market: focus on Malta	
<i>Rose Marie Azzopardi</i>	4
.....	
Female Employment and Unemployment in Namibia	
<i>Pempelani Mufune</i>	14
.....	
Female Employment in Mauritius	
<i>Sheila Bunwaree</i>	29
.....	
Women in Samoa's Civil Service	
<i>Asenati Liki Chan Tung</i>	
<i>Desmond Uelese Amosa</i>	
<i>Tuiloma Susana Taua'a</i>	46
.....	
Recent Publications	60
.....	
Commonwealth Small States: Economic Indicators	62
.....	

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Small States and the Female Labour Market: focus on Malta

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INTRODUCTION

Malta is the smallest state in the European Union (EU). It stands out as the EU state with the lowest rate of female participation in the labour force. Labour market studies generally focus on the reasons for this low participation; some refer to traditional and cultural factors, while others blame inadequate policies on issues such as flexi/reduced hours, childcare centres, tax rates and other family friendly measures (ILO, 2009; Baldacchino, 2003). Yet other studies relate this low rate to the lack of available jobs and poor wages, which are not enough to entice women to leave the comfort of their daily routine to be 'condemned' to follow rules and do menial jobs under supervision. Low participation rates are more likely to be found among the less educated segments of the female population.

Today, countries with higher GDP levels have a higher female employment rate and more women in the parliament than countries with lower levels. The causal relations are not absolutely clear. There is however much to suggest that the *skewed distribution of power between women and men*, evident in several member states' parliaments today, is not encouraging long-term gender equality, without which sustainable economic development cannot be achieved. (Lofstrom 2010: 5)

The aim of this paper is to look at female participation rates across different small states and to see them in the context of the economic development of the country. Do small states share similarities in the activity rates of women? Do regional factors influence participation? Is there a relationship between a high gross domestic product (GDP) per capita and the level of female participation? What type of jobs do women normally engage in? Does political power lead to more family friendly policy and thus increase female labour market participation? The focus will be on Malta, with comparisons made with other small states in Europe and other regions around the world. The analysis depends on the availability of micro-data, which tends to be a problem in by small states.

This paper is a preliminary analysis of an ongoing research project. The remainder of the paper is divided into four sections. The second section presents the literature on women, perceptions and values related to work, and the relevance of the cultural context. The third section compares Malta with other small states in Europe and around the world in terms of employment figures, economic development and political power. The analysis is based on existing official databases. The penultimate section presents the implications of policies which encourage female participation. The last section presents some conclusions.

WOMEN, WORK AND SOCIETY

In economic terms, a woman who does not render a paid service to the economy is considered to be inactive. In everyday language, to say a woman is inactive is more than an understatement, since women at home are 'on duty' round the clock, analysed in economics through the household production function (see, for example, Huffman (2010)). Being a housewife is like managing a small enterprise – involving making sure goods are not out of stock, providing the services of a restaurant, a laundry and cleaner, and also of a seamstress, care worker, child minder, teacher's assistant, nurse, driver and accountant, apart from being a caring mother and a loving wife. For career-based women some of these services are actually 'contracted out', if their salary is high enough to compensate for such everyday essentials. This has led to a renewal in the idea of maids and nannies, and has also seen an increase in ready-made dishes found in supermarkets or home deliveries of food.

Why do women work and what value do they put on a paid job as compared to the freedom of managing their own ménage?

The role of women in society has changed over the centuries. More recently, starting from the 1960s feminist movements, women (more so in the Western world) have seen more liberalism and acceptance

of equality between men and women (Allan and Coltrán, 1996). Such civil liberties, however, do not necessarily extend to the workplace, and whilst the distinction is less apparent in careers, pay gaps and gender segregation of jobs are still evident in a significant number of countries, and women continue to face such problems at work (Day-Hookoomsing, 2002). Segregation takes place in some careers, dominated by health and education, the former because of shift conditions and the latter because of holidays and relatively shorter working days. In manual and less skilled fields, in countries with a small manufacturing sector, like most small states, the job choice is normally between the retail trade, office work and the hospitality sector.

How women in the labour market are viewed generally reflects wider social perceptions. In societies where the dominant figure and main breadwinner is assumed to be the man, which are often sustained by strong religious values, people tend to extend this to project a negative picture of the working woman, who is seen to be 'abandoning' her primary role in the house and pursuing 'egotistic' needs. Religion is often found to be very influential in sustaining traditional views (Heineck, 2004). In societies where a large proportion of women work, women are viewed as having the same right to a career as their male counterparts. These societies are likely to have institutional structures in place which cater for this reality, including childcare centres, flexible working conditions, longer opening hours for shopping and the sharing of domestic responsibilities. Nevertheless, stereotyping and cultural norms still tend to permeate attitudes in a significant number of countries.

The World Values Surveys (WVS) provide information on perceptions about work and family trade-offs. What comes through is that values attached to work vary across different countries. Unfortunately data on small states are only partially available. The only three small states to have taken part in the latest survey (2005–2008), which looked at 57 countries, were Andorra, Cyprus, and Trinidad and Tobago. The following paragraphs give the views of over 70,000 people from around the world on work and housewives. The data on these three small states are presented to provide a comparison.

When asked if, when jobs were scarce, men should be preferred over women for a job, the answers varied. On average 48.1 per cent disagreed with this statement, but 36.2 per cent actually agreed, while 15.7 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed. Disagreement ranged from a high of 94.1 per cent in Sweden to 4.3 per cent in Egypt. In Cyprus, the disagreement was 46.4 per cent, while it was 65.7 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago and 89.9 per cent in Andorra, meaning that Cyprus is the most traditional of these three states. When taking into consideration the gender perspective, figures tend to be higher for females, that is, men are more conservative than women. Disagreement was found to be lower in developing countries (particularly in Asia, Africa and the Middle East), compared to developed ones in the West.

Respondents were asked about the importance of work in their lives. For 63.2 per cent work is very important and it is 'rather important' for 28 per cent, meaning that only 8.8 per cent did not see work as important in their lives. When segregated by gender and age, work was marginally more important for men than for women, and more important for the 30–49 age group than for the older and younger groups for both sexes. Work was more important for those with a lower level of education, and work's importance in life decreased the higher the educational level of the respondent. Work was 'very important' for respondents in Trinidad and Tobago, more so than in Cyprus and Andorra. In all cases, it was 'rather important' for more females than men.

When participants were asked what was the first thing they looked for in a job, 35.7 per cent said a good income, while 34.4 per cent said a safe job with no risk, followed by doing an important job at 19.7 per cent and working with people you like at 10.3 per cent. When segregated by age and gender, older women tended to be more in favour of a safe job, whilst younger men looked more for income. Those with a high level of education looked for an important job, whilst those with a lower level of education considered income as their prime motivator; this held true for both males and females. For the unemployed, students and self-employed females, income was the most important factor,

while for the employed and housewives, a safe job was the priority. Females in the three small states differed in their replies, with those in Cyprus leaning more towards a safe job and those in Andorra and Trinidad and Tobago stating that getting an important job was their main motivator.

The final comment on value presented here is the following statement: 'being a housewife is just as fulfilling'. From the global figure of 75,500 respondents, 61.3 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. The older the sample, the stronger was the agreement. Men also agreed with this statement more than women. Over half of female respondents agreed, even when disaggregated by level of education. Those at a higher level tended to agree less than those at a lower level. Respondents from Trinidad and Tobago were more conservative than those from Cyprus, with the more modern stance taken by Andorra, with 41 per cent of females agreeing, compared to 72.7 per cent for Trinidad and Tobago and 46.1 per cent for Cyprus.

Also using the WVS database, Fortin (2005) studied women in 25 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries and concluded that the idea of a 'woman's place is in the home' tends to persist over time, since such an idea is bred at a young age and then women feel 'guilty' if they go against it. Ng and Burke (2004) built on studies conducted by Vygotsky (1978; 1986) and Hofstede (1983) and confirm that history and culturally ingrained social processes continue to present themselves in perceptions of women in the workplace. Ng and Burke studied a large financial institution in Canada, which employed people from different ethnic backgrounds. Differing perceptions of equality between men and women in the workplace reflected the ethnicity of the respondents, with those from non-Caucasian and non-North American backgrounds showing less support for equality.

Corby and Stanworth (2009) conducted a study in the south-east region of the UK to see what drives women in their search for a job. It appears that there is one strategy in place, taking jobs that are available, weighing the negatives, in the form of less pay, exclusion from promotion and unfair practices, against the positives of flexible working conditions; in the view of these women, tolerating the negatives is balanced by the positives.

There are more studies from all around the world which point to various salient factors. Female participation has increased over time, but prejudices, inequality, culturally based stereotyping and lack of strategic policies continue to hinder women from full labour market activity.

FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN SMALL STATES

The economic rationale for increasing the number of women in the labour market is that they are an additional economic resource which is not being utilised in the most efficient way. An inactive resource translates into foregone production, foregone income and foregone tax revenues. This becomes more imperative for small states with their limited resources. In practically all countries the proportion of women who are in paid work is lower than the proportion of men. Table 1 shows the activity rate of both males and females in the five smallest states in Europe.

Malta stands out not only when it is compared with other small states, but also with the next lowest country, Italy (51.5%). Even though progress has been made in the past ten years, from 36.7 to 44.1 per cent, this 7.2 increase is similar to that experienced by Estonia and Luxembourg. The proportion of males in paid employment in Malta is no different from that in other countries and is marginally higher than the EU average. The type of work done by Maltese women remains traditional: for the more highly educated, teaching and health are the sectors which engage higher numbers of women, while the less well educated are concentrated in the hotel and catering industry and in retail. This segmentation of the labour market is based on accommodating working hours, the need for a shorter day corresponding to the school day and holidays which are the same as children's timeframes. For the other sectors, shifts are the most attractive characteristic.

Table 1. Male and female activity rates in selected European countries

Country	Females (2002)	Females (2011)	Males (2002)	Males (2011)
EU27	61.0	64.8	78.4	77.6
Cyprus	61.8	67.4	81.3	80.4
Estonia	64.4	71.5	74.6	78.1
Luxembourg	53.6	60.7	76.7	75.0
Malta	36.7	44.1	80.	78.5
Iceland	82.7 ^a	81.7	89.6	87.6
Highest in EU	75.8 Sweden	77.7 Sweden	84.5 Netherlands	83.5 Netherlands
Lowest in EU	36.7 Malta	44.1 Malta	66.4 Bulgaria	68.8 Hungary

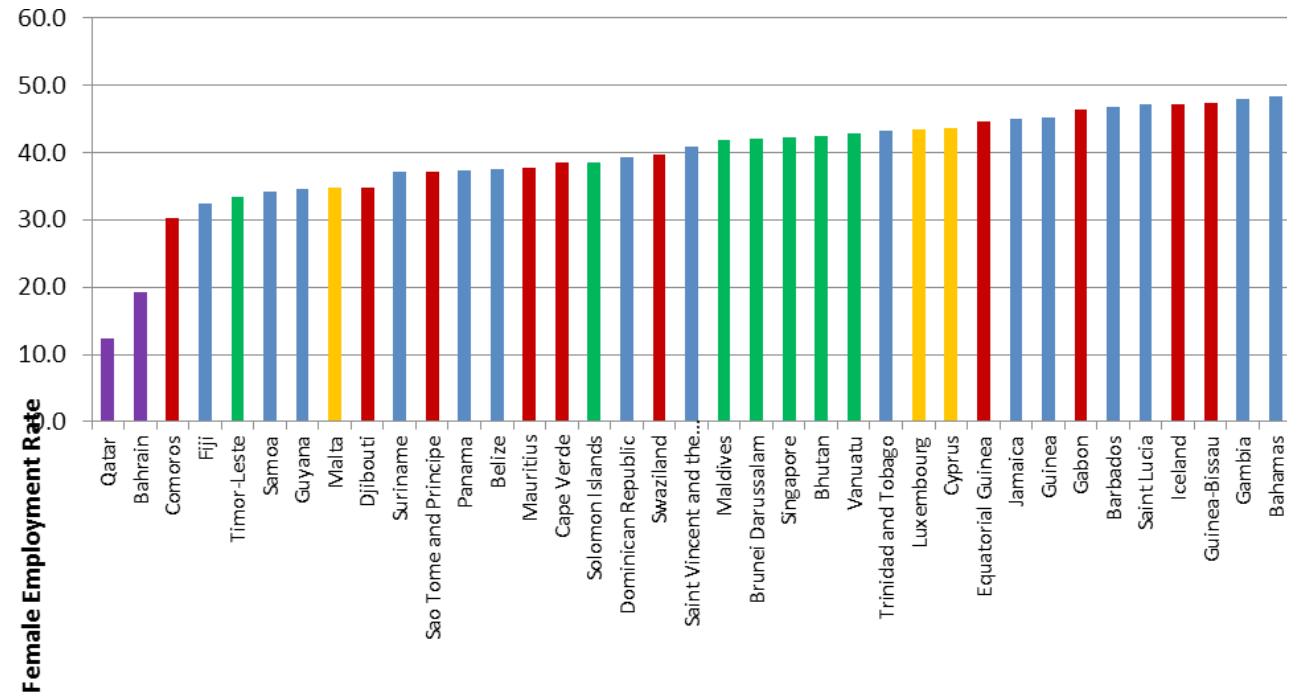
Source: Eurostat ^a 2003 figure

The participation rate of both females and males in relation to the level of development of countries across the world was evaluated in a recent ILO study of 162 countries, where a distinctive ‘U-shaped relationship’ was revealed. High participation rates are found in the poorest and the richest countries, but for different reasons. In the poor countries (especially in sub-Saharan Africa) participation is high because people cannot afford not to work, even though they may have precarious and dangerous working conditions. In the rich countries (mainly in developed states and in Europe), this high participation results from more highly educated people wishing to make use of their qualifications and skills. At both extremes, the high participation rate is due mainly to the increase in the number of women in the labour market (ILO, 2011: Figure 1a).

Another interesting result derived from this analysis is the fact that, with a few exceptions, female participation tends to be lower than that of males. In six sub-Saharan countries (Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, Benin, Burundi, Rwanda and Togo) and in Nepal, female participation is actually higher than that of males, while in two other countries (Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Sierra Leone) the rates are almost the same. Bigger differences in participation rates, with significantly lower rates for women, can be found in the Middle East and North Africa (this is also evident when comparing only small states in Figure 1 below) and also some countries in the south Asian region (see Timor-Leste below as an example). In these cases, barriers exist in various forms, which prohibit increased participation; these are cultural and even institutional in nature.

Figure 1 compares female participation in employment in Malta with that in other small states around the world. The figure shows different regions (Middle East (purple), European (yellow), Caribbean (blue), East Asia/Pacific (green) and Africa (red)). There does not appear to be a particular cluster based on region, except the two Middle Eastern countries, which have the lowest rate. The widest range is in the Caribbean and Africa.

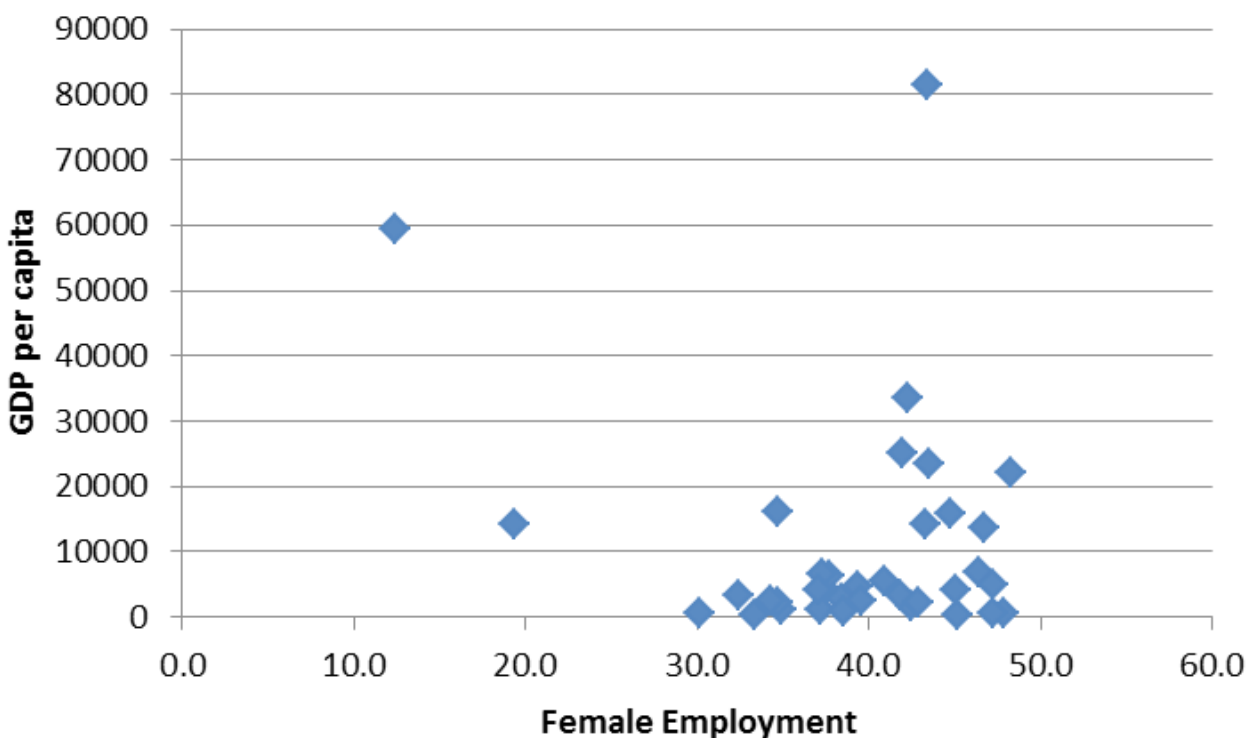
Figure 1. Female employment rate in 36 small states, 2010



Source: Based on UNCTAD data

Figure 2 shows the female employment rate and GDP per capita in small states, where the hypothesis is that if more females worked, this would have a positive impact on GDP. The figure shows a snapshot of the situation in 2010, including the 36 small states above. However, though a cluster appears in the lower right quadrant, the range remains wide. At low-income levels, the range varies from 30 to 50 per cent. At high income levels the range is even higher, from 10 to 45 per cent. Further research is needed to conduct an analysis based on a period of years to see if this shows a change in the relationship between the two variables and if over a period of years a trend is revealed.

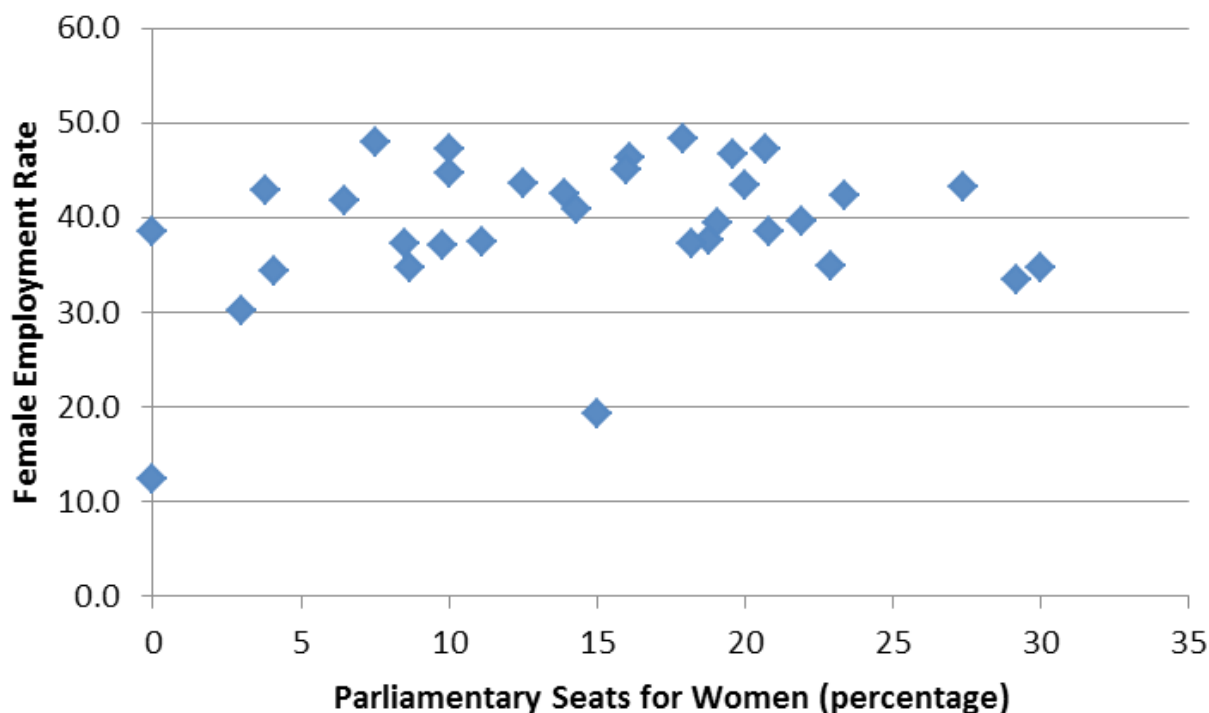
Figure 2. Female employment rate and GDP per capita in small states, 2010



Source: Based on UNCTAD data

Figure 3 evaluates whether there is a relationship between the number of seats in parliament (taken as a proxy for political power) occupied by women and the female employment rate. The hypothesis is that women in parliament are more likely to push for family friendly policies, encouraging more females to enter the labour market. A snapshot of 2010 is again shown. Parliamentary representation varies from 0 to 30 per cent, whilst labour market employment rates vary from 12 to 48 per cent. No cluster is evident.

Figure 3. Parliamentary seats and the female employment rate



Source: Based on UNCTAD and UNDP data

The short preliminary analysis in this section does not appear to find strong relationships between the variables presented in the case of small states. Economic level, employment rates and parliamentary representation vary across countries and regions. The final section of this study evaluates the role of policies in encouraging and sustaining women’s engagement in the labour market.

THE ROLE OF POLICIES

There are different policies which can facilitate the increase and integration of women in the labour market. Among these are childcare services, taxation, family-friendly measures such as greater co-ordination of working and school hours, and flexible conditions in the workplace, including leave arrangements. However, it is not enough to actually have policies in place unless these are enforced and are effectively utilised by families. Policies themselves need to be flexibly tailored for diverse needs. For example the existence of a childcare centre does not guarantee its usage if charges are considered to be too high or if the parents prefer their child to be raised at home by the mother. Malta ranks fifth (of 27 EU member states) in a survey of countries where parents find difficulty in combining work and home responsibilities due mainly to inadequate childcare (European Foundation, 2009). Cyprus is tenth and Luxembourg is seventeenth, making Malta the more problematic of the three small states. Preliminary results from a study conducted by Azzopardi and Bezzina (forthcoming) show that home responsibilities remain the biggest problem for working females in Malta.

Women often leave the labour market because childcare facilities are unavailable, too expensive, inaccessible or inadequate. Indeed, women without children are more often employed than those with children. (European Foundation, 2009: 4)

Straub (2007) and Mallon and Cassell (1999) state that the effectiveness of policies can only be achieved through changes in perceptions of women. Lo (2002), in analysing married female professionals in traditional Hong Kong, says that women prefer policies which provide for more flexibility in working conditions to help them balance their family responsibilities and work.

Across the EU, more than six million women aged 25–49 years say that they are forced into not working, or can only work part time, because of their family responsibilities. For more than a quarter of them, a lack of childcare facilities – or their cost – is the main problem. (European Foundation, 2009: 7)

The EU's 2002 Barcelona targets were aimed at encouraging greater female participation. The targets include the provision of childcare centres for at least 90 per cent of children between three years old and the mandatory school age (which varies across countries) and for at least 33 per cent of children under three years of age by the end of 2010. This was aimed at providing equal opportunities in the labour market for both men and women. Data for 2006 showed big discrepancies across countries.

Change also needs to occur in the sharing of responsibilities at home, including child rearing. In an analysis of the role men and women play in the house, it transpired that in Austria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta and Portugal (Mediterranean countries plus Austria) there is a 60 per cent difference between the number of men and women who engage in daily housework. (European Foundation, 2009).

Taxation can also determine whether a woman works or stays at home. If take-home income does not compensate not only for the time spent at work but also for the opportunity cost of leaving children with others, feeling 'guilty' of abandoning the needs of the family and having to juggle between two realities, then the decision to remain at home becomes easier to make.

Tax incentives to split income – and thus work hours – between spouses can influence the choice of married women between inactivity and part-time participation. (Jaumotte, 2004: 69)

Other policy measures include a range of active labour market policies, which the EU is encouraging member states to focus on. These include, training programmes, job search assistance, forms of employments incentives or subsidies, job placements, and job creation programmes. A study by Bergemann and Van den Berg (2007) found positive effects of active labour market policies on female employment outcomes in several European countries, with the impact likely to be higher for those with low participation rates.

CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed issues related to the female labour market in small states, asking questions rather than providing answers. The level of participation varies across small states and size cannot be seen as a factor that influences the level of participation. This variance is evident when pairing variables and trying to understand whether a higher level of female participation leads to increased GDP, or whether the political power to introduce family friendly measures leads to higher female participation rates. However, using data for just one year can only provide a snapshot and does not explain developments which may be happening over time. This suggests further research looking at time series data which might uncover relationships that are not evident when taking a

cross-section view. In fact, comparing clusters of high income/high female participation, and low income/low female participation in 2010 with 1980 showed that such clusters did not exist in earlier years, which suggests changes have occurred over the 30-year gap.

Culture and conventional attitudes linger on in most countries, although they are stronger in some regions than others. Small states do not appear to share any similarities, with some countries being more conservative than others. Trying to attract women to the labour market will generally meet greater opposition in traditional societies, the dominant idea being that children need their mother at home, with some even suggesting that women who go out to work are exposed to temptation, thus leading to friction and possible disharmony in families.

A number of policies can work towards an increase in female participation in the economy. However, these need to be tailored towards a society eager to embrace more equality between men and women's role not only in the workplace, but also in the home and society in general. The support system can vary from informal kin structures of the extended family type and positive attitudes towards working women, to more formalised societal policy-based frameworks, such as structures extending from nurseries/childcare centres to after-school activities, taxation, training programmes and accommodating working conditions. The more resistance one finds in society and at home to this idea, the more difficult it will be to enforce such a change in attitudes at the workplace. But with the problems of ageing populations, the strengthening of global competitive forces and widening equalities, the need to make better use of existing and potential resources becomes more imperative. This is a research area which demands more attention to ensure that resources in small states, and in particular women, who form about half the population, are utilised in the most efficient way. The benefits are significant, the contribution being not only towards the country's economy but also as means of improving women's personal development and capabilities.

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Female Employment and Unemployment in Namibia

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important links between a person and the economy of a country is whether or not that individual has a job. Employment is a way of making a living and a source of identity, yet formal sector employment is a big problem, as Southern African countries experience low economic growth rates which cannot meet the employment demands of citizens. According to the Afrobarometer Survey (2008), Namibians consistently rank unemployment as one of their biggest problems. Women face particular hurdles when competing for employment. These include discrimination, lack of work experience and deficiencies in skill-specific training and education. In 2012 the Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum ranked Namibia 41st of 135 countries. Namibia ranked 43rd on women's economic participation and opportunity, 31st on women's educational attainment, 106th on health and survival of women, and 49th on women's political empowerment (Hausmann et al., 2012). Except for its ranking on women's educational attainment this is Namibia's worst ranking since 2006, when its position was 38th.

The Namibian government has committed itself to ensuring that economic policies are translated into job growth. Its labour law aims at 'regulating the conditions of employment of all employees in Namibia without discrimination on grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed, or social or economic status, in particular ensuring equality of opportunity and terms of employment, maternity leave and job security for women' (Republic of Namibia, 2007). The Affirmative Action (Employment) Act of 1998 requires firms to set annual targets to achieve equal representation of the different groups of employees (including women) in management. Thus Namibia's legislation supports women's right to work in all spheres and to receive equal benefits, including equal pay for equal work and maternity leave. In a sense this has been paying off. Thus according to Hausmann (2008: 19), 'Lesotho (26) and Namibia (29), which previously held 43rd and 38th positions, respectively, move up in the rankings, taking the 2nd and 3rd places in the region. ... In Namibia, labour force participation of women rose from 47 per cent to 48 per cent and wage equality for similar work went up by 0.10 points. Namibia also continues to be a strong performer on political empowerment.'

This study examines current labour market outcomes to gauge the likelihood of differential opportunities for females and males. It examines key trends in female labour force participation, employment and unemployment, mainly using the 2009/10 Namibia Household Income and Expenditure Survey (NHIES) and reports, laws and policies available in the public domain. It also uses information from individuals involved in employment issues in government, the private sector and civil society. It is important to recognise that this analysis can only provide a partial assessment of the extent of available opportunities.

2. BACKGROUND

Namibian economy: The economy has a dual economic structure divided by different levels of development, technology and patterns of demand. The more traditional sector is a subsistence economy, while the more modern export-driven sector consists of mining (diamonds, uranium and base metals), commercial agriculture (meat and karakul products), fishing and tourism. This structure was imposed during colonial times, when European colonists established cattle and small stock ranches in some of Namibia's best land. Africans were displaced and moved to reserves and were consequently forced to migrate and work in the modern sectors. Namibia is heavily dependent on South Africa for its imports and exports. In the 1980s, Namibia's economy experienced a recession because of the liberation war, drought and low prices for exports (Sparks, 2007). The economy picked up at independence in 1990 as the new SWAPO government committed to a free market economy to promote development and employment creation. From 1995 to 2004 Namibia's gross domestic product (GDP) increased in real terms by an average yearly rate of 3.4 per cent (Sparks, 2007). GDP grew by 5.4 per cent in 2007; 4.3 per cent in 2008; shrank by -1.7 per cent due to the world economic crisis in 2009; and rebounded with a 4.8 per cent growth rate in 2010 (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012).

From 2007 to 2011 GDP increased by 3.6 per cent (NPC, 2011). After independence the structure of GDP changed. Thus, whereas in 1980 mining accounted for 50 per cent of GDP, by 2004 it declined to 10.4 per cent (Sparks, 2007: 839). Despite the relative decline of mining it is critical as a major foreign exchange earner. The contribution of agriculture to GDP increased from 7.3 per cent in 1986 to 10.8 per cent in 2003 and 9 per cent in 2004 (Sparks, 2007). Fishing contributed about 5.5 per cent to GDP in 2010. In 2008 Tourism contributed about 14.5 per cent to GDP (US Commercial Service, 2012). Although the fisheries and mining sectors are important contributors to GDP they are capital intensive and do not substantially increase employment. According to the National Planning Commission (NPC) (2011), from 1990–95 to 2007 the Human Development Index (HDI) was virtually stagnant and barely increased until 2011. In 2011, Namibia's HDI was 0.625 (compared to the world average of 0.625) and it ranked 120 of 187 countries. This places 'Namibia seventh in Africa and third in the SADC region, behind Mauritius (ranked 72) and Botswana (ranked 98). Namibia's HDI improved from 0.553 in 1990 to 0.582 in 1995, 0.568 in 2000, 0.577 in 2005, 0.603 in 2009 and 0.606 by 2010' (Kanyenze and Lapeyre, 2012: 16). Namibia is classified as a middle-income country – a status obscuring the highly skewed income (with a Gini coefficient of 0.58). 'When adjusted for inequality Namibia's HDI falls to 0.338, losing 44.3 per cent of its 2010 value. This leaves Namibia in the low human development category' (Kanyenze and Lapeyre, 2012: 16). With middle-income status, aid flows declined steadily from US\$110 per capita in the 1990s to US\$60 per capita in 2005. In addition, the number of bilateral donors active in Namibia declined from 22 in the 1990s to 17 in 2006 (NPC, 2007) and 14 in 2008. According to the preliminary Namibia Census of Population and Housing (2011), Namibia's population increased from 1.41 million in 1991 to 2,104,900 in 2011. Of these, 1,083,600 (51%) were females and 1,021,300 (49%) were males; 58 per cent were rural, while 42 per cent were urban. Unemployment is increasing because of the combined effects of the growth in the labour force as a result of this population increase and the slow growth, or lack of any growth, in jobs (Third National Development Plan (NDP3) 2007/08–2011/2012: 39). Strong population growth (given that it is young) not only increases labour force participation, but may in future also lead to economies of scale and enlarge the Namibian market. Conversely, it may put pressure on limited resources and reduce capital formation. The government prioritises education and allocates a quarter of the budget to it (about 9 % of GDP), with 97 per cent of children aged 7–13 years old attending school. Namibia's adult literacy rate stood at 88 per cent in 2008 and it has there are more female than male learners enrolled in secondary and tertiary institutions (UNESCO, 2011). While education expenditure is high and significant and educational achievements have been realised, desired skills in the workforce are yet to be attained. Many women are heads of households and provide income, as well as other resources, for households and increased education bodes well for female labour participation. Increased female education may in the medium to long run reduce fertility and improve child health. Health receives the second biggest chunk of the budget. A social safety net is in place (for example social pensions and child maintenance, disability payments, drought assistance and food for work). There is some social security for those formerly employed.

Employment policies: The various national development plans (NDP 1, 2, 3 and 4) have given priority to employment creation. For example NDP2's targets were to: (a) Increase employment by 2.6 per cent a year over the period 1999–2006 (at the same rate as population growth); and (b) treble the number of jobs in manufacturing from 6.4 per cent of the country's total employment to 20 per cent. Namibia Labour Force Surveys (NLFS) of 2000 and 2004 show that employment had in fact declined by an average of 2.7 per cent per annum during 2000–2004. Data showed that the share of manufacturing employment fell from 6.4 per cent in 2000 to 6.2 per cent in 2004. NDP2 was also supposed to boost employment in agriculture through the Green scheme. 'The experience on job creation has been disappointing with a significant decline in employment in agriculture and in the rural areas' (NDP3: 10). Between 2000 and 2004, employment in the rural areas declined by 28.1 per cent and employment in agriculture declined by 18.8 per cent, from 126,459 to 102,636. The introduction and enforcement of a minimum wage in agriculture may have contributed to the decline in agricultural employment, especially on commercial farms (NDP3: 19–20). During

NDP2, the government established about 23 small and medium enterprise (SME) modules, two industrial parks, three slaughterhouses and five common facility centres, with an asset value of N\$173 million. In addition, the government promoted strategies aimed at ensuring that small businesses could access finance. One of this was the Small Business Credit Guarantee Trust (SBCGT), which extended credit to SMEs. From 1999–2006, 493 SMEs received loans valued at N\$42.0 million. Unfortunately, SMEs only generated about 3,555 jobs (NDP3: 19). The government also sought to create employment through Export Processing Zones (EPZs). The EPZ Act of 1995 provided incentives such as tax holidays, exemption from import duties, factory facilities at economic rates, guaranteed free repatriation of capital and profits, and withdrawal of the right to strike for an initial period of five years. Since 2000 though, EPZ workers enjoy the same legal rights as other workers. Investment levels in EPZs are far lower than anticipated (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012) and the outcome of the establishment of EPZs was disappointing as ‘this avenue did not contribute significantly to job creation and retention, especially after the closure of Ramatex, the largest EPZ firm’ (Kanyenze and Lapeyre, 2012: 42). EPZ companies engaged in low skill cheap labour production and employed more women who performed monotonous, repetitive work. Such women are seen as docile and cheap workers with nimble fingers (Jauch, 2002: 103). When Ramatex closed, most of those affected were women. Concerned by persistent high unemployment figures, the government launched the three-year Targeted Intervention Programme for Employment and Economic Growth (TIPEEG) in 2011. It focuses on agriculture, transport, tourism, and housing and sanitation – all considered to have high potential to generate fast economic growth and jobs. TIPEEG’s cost over the first three years, excluding the public works programme and investment by state-owned enterprises, was estimated at N\$9.1 billion. With public works programmes included, it was estimated at N\$14.7 billion and at N\$18.7 billion with the inclusion of state-owned enterprise investment. It is estimated that TIPEEG will directly and indirectly produce 104,000 jobs and will reduce unemployment to 12 per cent by 2030. TIPEEG had created 33,965 new jobs by early 2013 despite absorbing N\$5.2 billion (i.e. 56% of the total allocated budget). Thus it is behind schedule. This is because TIPEEG tackles cyclical unemployment, but Namibia’s main challenge is structural unemployment (Mwinga, 2013). TIPEEG has been criticised by the National Employers’ Federation (NEF): ‘TIPEEG has been a disaster – they could not even create jobs that could absorb school leavers in one year’ (NEF representative).

Realising that slow economic growth and unemployment was partly the result of skill shortages, the government enacted the National Training Act of 1994, the National Vocational Training of Act 1994 and Vocational Education and Training Act, Act 1 of 2008, that established the Namibian Training Authority (NTA), responsible for ensuring that vocational education and training (VET) programmes and services meet the needs of industry and business. The NTA also oversees the country’s 12 vocational training centres (VTCs). There are also six community skills development centres (COSDECs) in five locations that provide non-formal short-term training for youth and adults in skills such as welding and sheet metal work. Representatives of the NEF interviewed for this study complained that lack of skills hamper job creation: ‘The skills new employees bring to work determine the extent to which creating new jobs is rewarding. As they say, one skilled job can create up to 15 unskilled jobs.’ They complain that obtaining work permits for skilled people is a nightmare.

Employment law: The government has sought to promote equitable employment practices through the Labour Act of 2007, Public Service Act of 1995, Affirmative Action Act of 1995, Social Security Act of 1994, Marriage Persons Equality Act of 1996, Public Service Act of 1995 and the National Gender Policy. The Married Persons Equality Act 1 of 1996 eliminated the concept of marital power that defined women in civil marriages as minors without rights to administer property. Under this law wives, like husbands, can enter contractual obligations without asking their spouses. They can also be employers. The Affirmative Action (Employment) Act 29 of 1998 aims to redress inequalities in employment and bring about equal opportunities in employment in accordance with Articles 10 and 23 of the constitution. It is a set of measures and procedures for eliminating discrimination arising from past apartheid laws and practices for firms with 25 or more staff. Among the designated groups

of persons to benefit from the affirmative action (AA) law are women. The Affirmative Action Plan is in part aimed at achieving gender balance in decision-making and fostering fairness in recruitment, selection, appointment, training and promotion, and equitable remuneration for women. The Act provides for the Employment Equity Commission (EEC) that oversees the design and implementation of the affirmative action plans. Research carried out by the Namibian Labour Resource and Research Institute (LaRRI) (2005) shows that although there is strong support for affirmative action, it is seen more in terms of race than gender. Thus employers who hire or promote black men rather than black women meet affirmative action requirements. Interviews at the EEC indicated that there are no clear incentives for firms that achieve employment equity. The EEC recognises those that do with trophies and certificates. They hope that this recognition and the media publicity will motivate others to do the same. Those that apply for tenders must also show an AA compliance certificate. Although penalties for non-compliance include payment of fines and imprisonment, no one has been imprisoned for non-compliance. The EEC hopes the shame of appearing in court and its annual report can deter non-compliant organisations. The national gender policy's objective is to guide gender mainstreaming activities in the country as a way of redressing the inequalities between men and women. Several gender committees have been established in line ministries, some private institutions and state enterprises to ensure gender balance in decision-making and economic empowerment. The Labour Act No.11 of 2007 prohibits employers from policies and practices that discriminate on the basis of colour, sex, race or marital status. This includes harassment at work. It provides for affirmative action measures to ensure that racially disadvantaged persons, women and people living with disabilities have equal opportunities in employment. According to the Ministry of Labour officials interviewed for this study, employers claim that it is difficult to find suitably qualified people in jobs that require highly educated people. Many women are rejected on this basis. Men who benefit from the status quo tailor advertisements in such a way that they target the specific people they want.

The Social Security Act provides some safeguards against loss of income due to sickness, pregnancy, injury and old age. It is financed by contributions from employers and employees. Participation is compulsory for employees and employers. Female employees can accrue maternity leave benefit equal to 80 per cent of their income, ranging from a minimum of N\$240 to a maximum of N\$2 400 per month. Many women do not benefit from social security because only 29 per cent are registered (Mwilima, 2004). Women prefer taking accumulated annual leave rather than maternity leave because of the stringent rule that maternity leave must start in the eighth month of pregnancy and because once the women are on leave employers no longer pay salaries, but the women have to rely on social security benefits. Thus women with good jobs (earning more than N\$2,400) lose out. Women complain that maternity leave is too short and they risk forfeiting their jobs and salaries if they extend it. According to representatives of the NEF, the inflexible labour laws affect job creation negatively. 'The red tape and rigmarole required to terminate non-productive workers is too much. Why hire more staff if it's so difficult to dismiss non-performers?' According to NEF representatives interviewed for this study, Namibia is not conducive to business as there are too many procedures associated with affirmative action and firms strategically keep their work force below 25 to avoid them. Our interviews at the EEC confirm that the EEC does not have a good database on companies that employ 25 people or less and therefore finds it difficult to prosecute. The NEF also complains that costs (i.e. the minimum wage, market rates and administrative costs) are too high. Labour leaders take the opposite view and complain that privatisation is leading to lay-offs and it is often work performed by women that is outsourced. None of the labour laws provide for childcare, baby-friendly corners or childcare compensation at workplaces, yet such facilities may help single mothers and women in low-income families retain employment. A gender researcher interviewed for this study indicated that, 'women who are still in their reproductive age with young children are not likely to take on additional workloads at the workplace thus stalling their chances to move up the corporate ladder'. It must be pointed out that few women in Namibia are unionised. Male union leaders tend to consider women's issues in employment, such as equal wages, maternity leave or childcare facilities, as secondary. They seem to be interested in female membership only when it

increases union rank and file membership (Jauch, 2002). Interviews at the EEC and the Ministry of Gender confirmed culture-based discrimination as contributing to 'few women employee promotions in Namibia'. Workplaces and labour market institutions adopt the gender values and social norms of society that give lower value to women in work and denigrate their contributions. Stereotypes that women are not good or assertive enough are still strong among both whites and blacks. They talked of a 'prejudiced mindset that always finds excuses not to promote women. Even female dominated interview panels are not immune to this mindset'. The gender researcher gave the following example of the persistence of discrimination, "Women's Action for Development Executive Director, Ms Veronica de Klerk, fired women who fell pregnant out of wedlock, claiming that it was immoral and her feminist organisation cannot promote such ill practices'. She also claimed that 'the majority of women still suffer from low self-confidence and do not easily speak in public or want to take on leadership roles as they find it too cumbersome to balance this with household responsibilities'. Cultural attitudes prevent men from taking on household responsibilities.

3. THE SECTORAL LABOUR MARKET STRUCTURE

Labour and employment surveys in Namibia include the Namibia Labour Force Surveys (NLFS) of 1997, 2000, 2004 and 2008. There is also the Namibia Household Income and Expenditure Survey of 2009/2010. They all indicate that Namibia has experienced an increase in the participation of women in the labour force since independence. The number of women in the labour force increased by 13 per cent between 2004 and 2008, compared to 2 per cent for men (Mwinga, 2012). This increase is related to improvements in women's education and independence, and to affirmative action laws. According to the of 2009/10 NHIES, there are 918,459 people working or seeking work in Namibia (Table 1). This represents a labour force participation rate of 70.8 per cent. Whereas 68.1 per cent (474,406) of females participate in the labour force, 73.9 per cent (444,044) of males participate. The formal labour market employs about 388,233 people (63.9%), while the informal sector employs 213,537 (35.1%) people (Table 2). The majority (294 011 or 48.4%) of workers in formal employment are in the private sector. This is followed by employees of the government or state enterprises (15.5%). Fewer females than males in the formal sector are employers. Substantially more males than females are employed in the private sector. Slightly more females than males are employed in government and/or state enterprises (Table 2). The majority (85,154 or 14%) of those employed in the informal sector are own-account workers. They are followed by subsistence farmers (18.6%), whose 'labour mainly ensures household food supply and does not provide them with cash income' (Jauch et al., 2009: 32). Only 2.5 per cent are in paid or unpaid family work. Most of those employed in the informal sector are females (Table 2). Women's involvement in the informal sector reflects the fact that such jobs require little working capital, are compatible with the time women have and provide income which they control. The Ministry of Labour (2001) found that in both rural and urban areas Namibians engage in the informal sector because their family needed additional income or could not find other work.

4. FEMALE EMPLOYMENT

In which industries are workers employed? The proportion of women to total employees is shown in Figures 1 and 2. At 29 per cent, agriculture is the biggest employer, followed by real estate, renting and business activities (11.7 %); wholesale and retail trade, and repair of motor vehicles (8.2%); and private households with employed persons (7.8%). Table 1 shows that 291,935 women constituted 48 per cent of the total number of 608,003 employees.

Table 1. Labour force participation

	Total (percentage in labour force)	Female (percentage in labour force)	Male (percentage in labour force)
Labour force participation	918,450 (70.8)	474,406 (68.1)	444 044 (73.9)
Unemployed as percentage of labour force (broad)	310,447 (33.8)	182,471 (38.5)	127 976 (28.8)
Employed as percentage of labour force	608,003 (66.2)	291,935 (61.5)	316 068 (71.2)

Source: Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2009/10.

Although most women are in these industries, they only dominate employment in health and social work (76.4%); private households (74.9%); education (62.6%); hotels and restaurants (59.8%); and financial intermediation (59.6%). More women than men are also employed in real estate, renting and business activities (57.4%) and wholesale and retail trade, and repair of motor vehicles (53.8%). This picture is quite similar to that in Botswana, where women's share in paid employment was 'highest in health and social work (65%), followed by other community services and finance/insurance (both 62%), restaurants and hotels (59%), and education (54%)' (Klaveren et al., 2009: 27). These industries are considered as 'feminised' in Namibia. LaRRi (2004) found that 40 per cent of workers believe that women are concentrated in 'typical women's' jobs. Thus almost all domestic workers in private households are female. Most people employed in the health sector are nurses, who are overwhelmingly women. Similarly, most social workers are women. During colonial times these occupations were only open to women. Similarly, most people employed in the education sector are teachers. There are more women (60.6%) teaching in Namibia than men (NANTU, 2009). Real estate, renting and business activities, and wholesale and retail trade mostly involve clerical and sales work and these are the occupations where most women are likely to get jobs.

Very few women work as legislators, senior officials and managers. Thus only 36.5 per cent of the 21,419 people working in these occupations are women. The situation is more balanced among those working as professionals, technicians and associate professionals. Thus 54.8 per cent of professionals and 49.9 per cent of technicians and associate professionals in Namibia are women. This is not surprising as professionals and associate professionals include nurses and teachers. Women clearly dominate as clerks (76%) and service shops and market sales workers (57.9%). On the other hand, men dominate in crafts, plant and machine operators and assemblers, and the armed forces (Table 4).

Again, this picture is not unique in southern Africa. In Botswana, for example, female-dominated occupations are clerical and related (about 70%), service and sales workers (65%), and technicians and associate professionals (63%). Females in Botswana constitute 30.5 per cent of the administrative and managerial category (Klaveren et al., 2009).

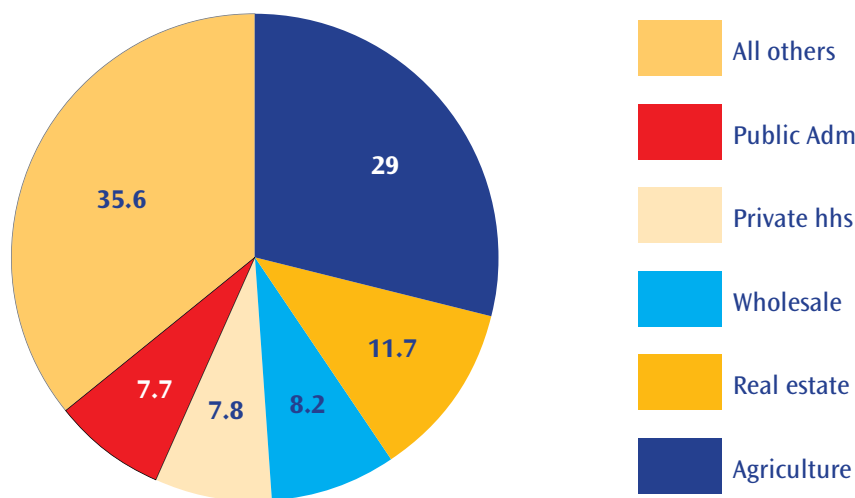
Table 2. Type of employment (total employment)

	Total Number %	Female Number %	Male Number %
Formal labour market in percentage employed (63.9%)			
Government employee or state enterprise	94,222 (15.5)	48,297 (16.5)	45, 925 (14.5)
As an employer	4,285 (0.7)	1,045 (0.4)	3,240 (1.0)
Private sector employee	294,011 (48.4)	117, 582 (40.3)	176, 483 (55.8)
Informal labour market in % employed (35.1%)			
Self-employed or own account worker	85,154 (14.0)	47,704 (16.3)	37,450 (11.8)
Family worker (paid/unpaid)	15,310 (2.5)	87,14 (3.0)	6,595 (2.1)
Subsistence farming	113,073 (18.6)	67,866 (23.2)	45,207 (14.3)
Not stated	1,949 (0.3)	781 (0.3)	1,168 (0.4)

Source: Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2009/10

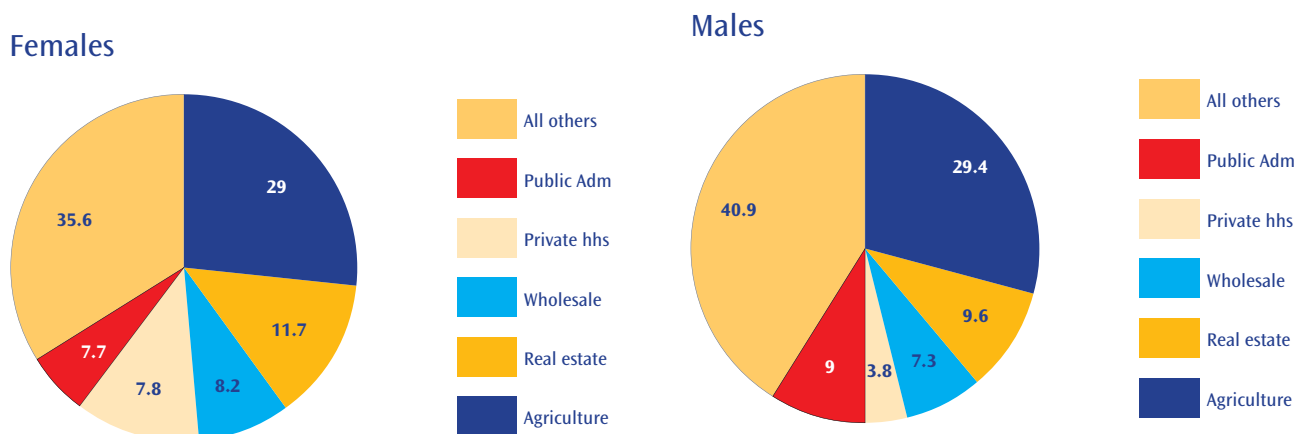
Figure 1. Employment by industry

All Workers



Source: Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2009/10

Figure 2. Employment by industry and gender, Namibia



Source: Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2009/10

Table 4. Women's share of employment by occupational group and education

Occupational group	All workers	Women (% share)	Percentage of women in given occupations with			
			No formal education	Primary school	Secondary school	Tertiary education
Legislators, senior officials and managers	21,419	7,831 (36.5)	171 (2.1)	687 (8.3)	4,328 (55.2)	2,490 (31.7)
Professionals	43,830	24,036 (54.8)	132 (0.5)	600 (2.4)	6,102 (25.3)	16,325 (67.9)
Technicians and associate professionals	27,579	13,763 (49.9)	80 (0.5)	633 (4.5)	7,791 (56.6)	4,588 (33.3)
Clerks	33,921	24,743 (72.9)	220 (0.8)	1,087 (4.3)	19,420 (78.4)	3,768 (15.2)
Service shops and market sales workers	84,230	49,375 (57.9)	2,415 (4.8)	8,142 (16.4)	37,421 (75.7)	1,479 (2.9)
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	137,207	72,492 (52.8)	20,161 (27.8)	33,270 (45.8)	22,513 (31.0)	211 (0.2)
Craft trade workers	64,755	12,967 (20.0)	1,156 (8.9)	3,717 (28.6)	7,583 (58.4)	532 (4.1)
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	24,628	1,127 (4.5)	184 (16.3)	319 (28.3)	624 (55.3)	0 (0)
Elementary occupations	152,465	78,550 (51.5)	8,677 (11.0)	21,474 (27.3)	47,658 (60.6)	841 (1.0)
Armed forces	6,806	1,804 (26.5)	63 (3.4)	121 (6.7)	1,547 (85.7)	74 (4.1)
Not recorded	11,163	5,248 (47.0)	532 (10.1)	1,406 (26.7)	2,931 (55.8)	297 (5.6)

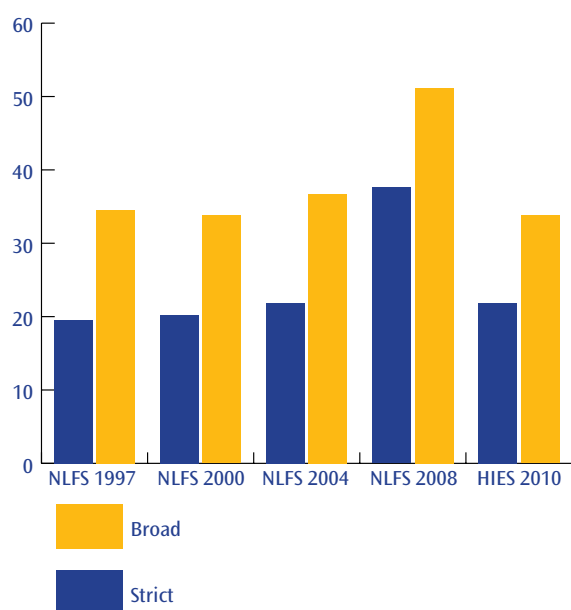
Source: Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2009/10

The likelihood of a woman being in employment varies with age. Thus, according to the NHIES 2009/10 data, 16 per cent of those aged 15–24 years are employed, while 32.6 per cent of those aged 25–34 years are employed. Among men the comparable figures are 17.2 per cent and 31.4 per cent. The likelihood of a woman being in a given occupation also varies with education. Thus among legislators, senior officials and managers, 87 per cent have secondary or tertiary education and among professionals 68 per cent have tertiary education. On the other hand, 74 per cent of skilled agricultural and fishery workers have primary education or less (Table 4). Unfortunately, NLFS and NHIES data do not show earnings. LaRRi (2004) found that most respondents in its sample considered that there was no gender pay gap. The majority of the 12.5 per cent who believed that there was a gender pay gap thought women were discriminated against. Ekström (1998) found differences in gross wages between males and females suggesting that females are discriminated against. However, public sector female workers suffered less discrimination than those in manufacturing and services.

5. FEMALE UNEMPLOYMENT

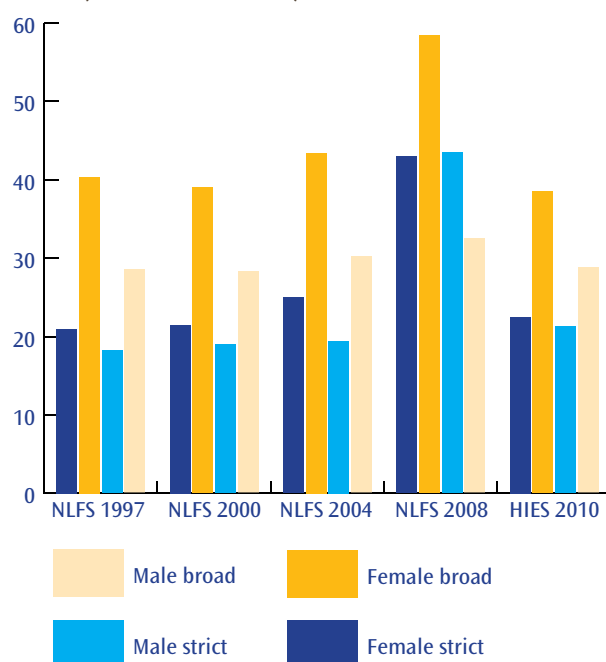
Over the years there has been little change in the unemployment figures (Figure 3) and the spatial differences in unemployment seem small. The exception is with the 2008 NLFS figures, which the government was reluctant to accept. The high unemployment rate shown in the 2008 NLFS can be attributed to poor data quality (Mwinga, 2012). The 2009/10 NHIES indicates that 86,841 people (21.9%) were unemployed. The urban unemployment rate was 22.4 per cent, while the corresponding rural unemployment rate was 22.1 per cent. Although more rural than urban people are unemployed, spatial differences seem smaller than in most sub-Saharan African countries. For instance, unemployment in Botswana was 20 per cent in urban areas and 13 per cent in rural areas (Klaveren et al., 2009). Female unemployment has always been higher than male unemployment and the 2009/10 NHIES indicates that gender differences in unemployment are substantial (Figure 4). The youth unemployment rate remained one of the highest in Africa, with the rate among female young people higher than that among males (NDP3: 19).

Figure 3. General unemployment rates (strict and broad)



2008 and 2009/10

Figure 4. Female and male unemployment rates (strict and broad), 1997, 2000, 2004,



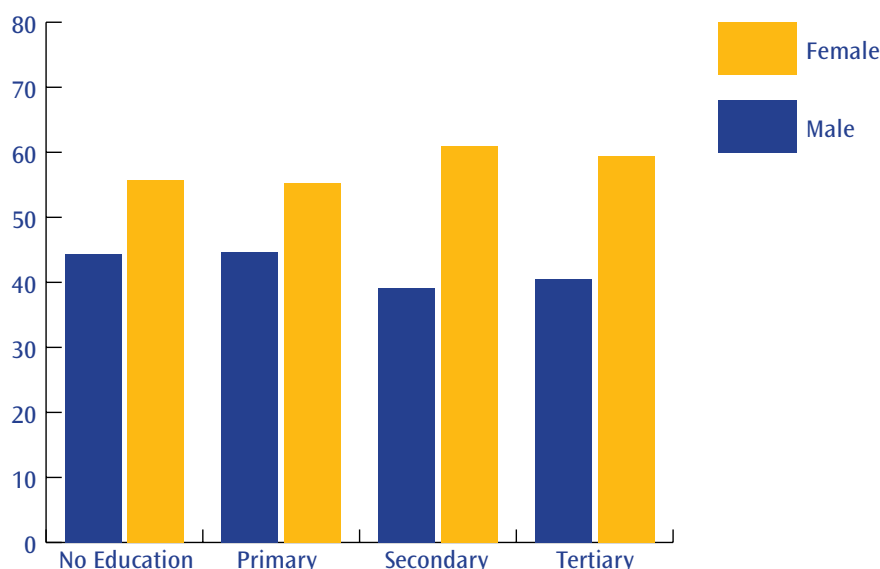
It seems that lack of educational credentials plays a role in the labour force, but it is not overwhelming (Table 5). People with secondary school education suffer the highest unemployment rates. Part of the reason for this is that many of them do not accept menial jobs, such as cleaning, yet vocational training facilities for secondary school leavers and credit for starting a business are lacking. Among people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate is below 8 per cent. This reflects the low level of unemployment in the professional, managerial and technical occupation categories (Mwinga, 2012) which employ those with tertiary education. Females with tertiary education experience a higher unemployment rate (7.4%) than their male counterparts (5.8%). On the whole, women are more affected by lack of educational credentials than men. Thus the female share of unemployment is greater at every level of educational attainment in Namibia (Figure 5).

Table 5. Unemployment rates by sex and educational attainment

Educational attainment	Total unemployed (rate)	Female unemployed (rate)	Male unemployed (rate)
No formal education	14,273 (16.2)	7,249 (18.4)	7,025 (14.5)
Primary school	40,171 (20.7)	19,371 (22.0)	20,801 (19.6)
Secondary school	110 429 (26.3)	60,955 (27.9)	49,474 (24.6)
Tertiary education	3,863 (5.8)	2,386 (7.4)	1,476 (4.3)
Not stated	3,258 (30.8)	1,804 (40.0)	1,454 (23.9)
Total	171,995 (22.1)	91,765 (23.9)	80,230 (20.3)

Source: Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2009/10

Figure 5. Share of unemployment by level of education and gender



Source: Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2009/10

CONCLUSIONS

There have been changes in the labour market over the years. During the colonial period women were excluded from many types of economic activities and thus from the labour market (Ekström, 1998). While men still have higher employment participation rates, in all age groups, than females, the picture has been changing. More women have been entering the labour market. The participation of women in Namibia's labour force 'increased by 13% between 2004 and 2008, compared to an increase of 2% growth in labour force for men' (Mwinga, 2012: 41). These changes reflect post-independence policies and affirmative action laws that have led to improvements in women's educational attainments and independence. One lesson is that in a society that is just emerging from apartheid colonialism, legislation (the law on affirmative action and the labour law, and the national gender policy) and increased female education are important in increasing women's participation in the labour force. While Namibian women's participation in the labour force has increased, they still have less employment than men and formal jobs for women seem to be concentrated in services and sales. Few women are employers. Few women are legislators, senior officials or managers. There are more women than men in professional and clerical jobs and more women are employed in the informal sector than men. There are also more unemployed women than unemployed men. Although educational credentials are important in securing jobs, people with secondary school education suffer the highest unemployment. It seems that secondary education is a necessary but not sufficient condition for employment and consequently unemployment tends to be higher in this category. Those with tertiary education have the lowest levels of unemployment, although females with tertiary education are less likely to be employed than their male counterparts. Namibia seems to be failing to live up to its legislation supporting women's equal right to work, equal benefits, including equal pay for equal work, and increased numbers of women in various industries and occupations. Another important lesson is that it is not enough to legislate for greater equality in female employment. The legislation has 'set the national tone and put in place parameters of acceptable behavior' (Brzuzy, 1998: 328), but it is not well enforced or it is disregarded; hence it is of limited importance in hiring staff (LaRRi, 2004). While legislation has gone some way to preventing discrimination, more enforcement might help it to have an impact on the hiring and promotion of women.

If the current employment initiative, TIPEEG, succeeds, it may not specifically change the picture of female unemployment, as it is designed to deal with general unemployment. Affirmative action has played a critical role in opening up employment opportunities for women. But equal opportunity for women is still a long way off. One trend is that many companies will continue seeing AA in terms of race rather than gender and disability (the other designated groups), and women will continue being undervalued in terms of jobs. AA that promotes women to high level jobs will continue to be circumvented until companies feel it is likely to benefit them, i.e. believe that women will bring in knowledge, skills, and experience that can help companies prosper. To make affirmative action work for women there is a need for more education to make employers understand the objectives and value of equitable workplaces beyond race and to alter cultural attitudes. There is also a need to strengthen AA legislation and close the loopholes that enable companies to circumvent it. Namibia does not have an affirmative action educational programme to help women move into non-traditional fields such as engineering, maths and the physical sciences. This must be rectified if women are to move into workplaces dominated by men in greater numbers. AA could include laws and programmes encouraging the public sector to target qualified women-owned companies, as well as offering them financial, management and technical support. This could improve the number of female employers in the formal sector. Another likely trend is that women will continue to be over-represented in the informal sector. These jobs typically lack social protection such as the health insurance, disability allowances or maternity leave that the labour law affords. Policy measures should extend protection to these workers. Mainstreaming gender perspective in all policies and programmes will create conditions that are more likely to increase equality of outcome in the labour market.

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APPENDIX 1:

List of Organisations Interested in Women's Employment

1. Employers

- i. Namibian Employers' Federation (NEF)
- ii. Agricultural Employers Association
- iii. Bankers' Association of Namibia
- iv. Construction Industries
- v. Federation Hospitality Association (HAN and FENATA)
- vi. Confederation of Namibian Fishing Associations
- vii. Security Association of Namibia
- viii. Chamber of Mines of Namibia

2. Unions

- i. National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW)
- ii. Trade Union Congress of Namibia (TUCNA)

3. Government agencies

- i. Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare
- ii. Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
- iii. Ministry of Youth
- iv. National Planning Commission
- v. Employment Equity Commission
- vi. Namibia Statistics Agency
- vii. Employment Equity Commission
- viii. Office of the Labour Commissioner

4. NGOs and research organizations

- i. Labour Resource and Research Institute (LaRRi)
- ii. Women's Action for Development (WAD)
- iii. Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR)

5. Employment agencies

- i. African Personnel Services (labour hire)
- ii. Jobs Unlimited
- iii. Potential

APPENDIX 2.

Confidential interviews with:

- 1. Commissioner, Employment Equity Commission
- 2. Head, Gender Section, Multidisciplinary Research Centre, University of Namibia
- 3. Secretary General, Namibia Employers' Federation
- 4. Deputy Director, Research and Policy, Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare
- 5. Ministry of Labour and Social Services (researchers)
- 6. National Statistics Agency (researcher)
- 7. Director, LaRRi
- 8. Social Security Commission (researcher)

A close-up, monochromatic blue-toned photograph of a woman in a white lab coat looking through the eyepiece of a microscope. Her hands are visible, adjusting the microscope's stage. The background is dark and out of focus.

Female Employment in Mauritius

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INTRODUCTION

The *World Development Report* (World Bank, 2012) draws our attention to the ‘missed opportunity’ that gender inequality constitutes. Women have a huge potential and if this is left unutilised it is wasted. No doubt, a small resource-poor state such as Mauritius, whose people are its main resource, has an even greater obligation to optimise its human capital. Policies and programmes should therefore be formulated with a gender lens.

Mauritius is a small multi-ethnic state lying in the south-western Indian Ocean with a population of some 1.2 million. Its constitution states that all its citizens are treated as equal, irrespective of sex, ethnicity, creed and colour, but in fact women continue to be discriminated against in various subtle and sometimes not so subtle ways (Patten, 2013). The labour market is certainly one of the arenas where discrimination exists. Women make up only 35 per cent of the country’s labour force. They remain predominantly concentrated in low paid, low skilled and low status jobs. Moreover, the vast majority of women remain in the private sphere of reproductive, unpaid work, as well as in the informal sector with diverse vulnerabilities and risks (Bunwaree, 2010). Various policies and schemes have been put into place to diversify the economy, but very little effort has been put into making the macro- and micro-economy more gender sensitive, with the overall result that female labour is underutilised, causing both inefficiency and inequity.

The notion of work and employment for women is complex. Fewer women than men participate in employment. While economic factors determine men’s participation in employment, women’s participation depends on diverse factors and is often rooted in a complex interplay of economic, cultural, social and personal factors. This paper will first examine the evolution and structure of the Mauritian economy, and in so doing it will discuss employment trends, from a gender perspective, in the Mauritian labour market. First, it engages in a brief discussion of the factors impacting on women’s entry into the labour market.

The second part of the paper discusses some of the country’s gender-sensitive legislation. It shows how labour laws have evolved and argues that although Mauritian women benefit from maternity leave and some other benefits, they are still vulnerable and at risk. The third part of the paper examines some of the issues and challenges confronted by women in Mauritius and how these affect their potential for work. This section also discusses some of the measures and policies adopted by the government to promote the economic empowerment and employment of women. The paper concludes by pointing to some possible areas of intervention in order to consolidate women’s employment and economic empowerment.

1. FACTORS IMPACTING ON WOMEN’S EMPLOYMENT

THE STRUCTURE AND EVOLUTION OF THE ECONOMY

From a depressed and sluggish economy which was on ‘the verge of disaster’ (Kearney, 1990) in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Mauritius turned into an economic success story, an African miracle in the 1980s with growth rates averaging over 6.2 per cent a year from 1980 to 1990 and over 5.1 per cent from 1990 to 1999 (Alladin, 1993). However, massive unemployment, a huge trade deficit, soaring debts and rising inflation were the hallmarks of the country when it became independent in 1968. The situation was so bad that it led people such as Meade (1968) to have an apocalyptic vision of the island state. But the ‘visible’ hands of the Mauritian state, resulting in a wide set of policies and programmes, led to a dramatic shift in the economy. The setting up of the export processing zone (EPZ) was one such policy (Meiselhelder, 1997).

The moribund economy diversified into a textile-dominated EPZ and a tourism economy. These two sectors became the new pillars of the economy and assisted not only in making the economy more buoyant, but also in creating jobs for both men and women. By the 1990s, Mauritius had full employment. GDP per capita has increased from around US\$1,000 to nearly US\$4,000 in 1999, more than tripling in 20 years. The country's level of human development is also significant: 67th out of 173 countries (UNDP, 2002).

The country's economic and social progress is now under threat from three external trade shocks. The first of these was the dismantling of the Multifibre Agreement in 2005. The second was the decision by the European Union (EU) to cut its guaranteed price and hence reduce the price of sugar imported from Mauritius by 36 per cent over the four-year period 2006–2009. The third shock was the recent rise in world energy prices. These developments have led to a period of low growth, high and persistent fiscal and current account deficit, rising public debt and high unemployment – much more pronounced among women. These three shocks cannot be interpreted in isolation. The multiplicity of crises – the food crisis, climate change crisis and global financial crisis are having an impact in various parts of the world. Mauritius has not been spared. Ramlall and Mohamudally-Boolakay (2010) note:

The crisis has strained hard on the exporting sector of Mauritius with the textile and tourism sectors being the most badly hit ones. An appreciation of the Mauritian rupee vis a vis the Euro has further squeezed on the profit margins of the exporters and impacted on its creation.

In addition to textiles and tourism, Mauritius has developed other pillars such as the information and communications technology (ICT) and business process outsourcing (BPO) sector, offshore financial services, real estate and the sea food hub.

The ICT and BPO industry is a new emerging industry across the globe. The expansion of this pillar can be attributed to the fact that the country has worked hard to earn a good ranking on the 'ease of doing business' index in Africa. The country offers a friendly business environment, with government support and investment advice. See below for further discussion of this and the other pillars.

Table 1 highlights sectoral employment as a percentage of total employment, while Table 2 provides a gender perspective, showing gender-disaggregated sectoral employment. Table 2 assists in understanding the trends of female employment.

Table 1. Sectoral employment as a percentage of total employment

Items	1995	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009
Agriculture and Fishing	14.66	12.14	9.30	9.03	8.51	8.46
Sugar Cane	7.49	6.05	3.53	3.38	2.95	2.84
Agriculture (non-sugar)	7.17	6.09	5.76	5.63	5.56	5.62
Mining and Quarrying	0.35	0.27	0.08	0.04	0.04	0.04
Manufacturing	29.51	28.65	25.73	23.49	22.71	21.22
Sugar	1.28	0.68	0.39	0.38	0.31	0.33
EPZ	17.57	18.48	12.46	12.55	11.84	10.28
Manufacturing (non-EPZ and non sugar)	10.66	9.49	10.62	10.75	10.55	10.64
Electricity, Gas and Water	0.74	0.62	0.58	0.57	0.57	0.60
Construction	9.27	9.28	9.39	9.45	9.48	9.58

Items	1995	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009
Wholesale/Rental Trade, Repair of Motor Vehicles, Motorcycles, Personal and Household Goods	12.49	12.92	14.81	14.97	15.03	15.54
Hotels and Restaurants	3.65	4.86	6.13	6.11	6.69	6.56
Transport, Storage and Communications	6.51	6.48	7.16	7.14	7.18	7.33
Financial Intermediation	1.43	1.48	1.82	2.00	2.19	2.31
Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	1.74	3.00	4.09	4.72	5.23	5.75
Public Administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security	7.10	7.22	7.68	7.47	7.29	7.22
Education	4.69	4.53	5.51	5.50	5.41	5.51
Health and Social Work	2.54	2.74	2.91	2.96	3.02	3.06
Other Services	5.32	5.80	6.60	6.57	6.67	6.78

Source: Central Statistics Office, Mauritius

The following can be observed from Table 1:

1. The share of agriculture (sugar cane) and fishing has declined considerably over time. It contributed 12.14 per cent of total employment in 2000 and 8.46 per cent in 2009.
2. The manufacturing sector is still the driving force in terms of employment generation. It contributed 21.2 per cent of the total employment. However, compared to previous years its share has experienced a general decline.
3. Within the broad manufacturing sector, the EPZ contributed 10.28 per cent and manufacturing (non-EPZ and sugar) amounts to 10.64 per cent. The share of the EPZ sector as a generator of employment has declined over the past few years. This decline meant a major loss in female employment.
4. From 2009 onwards, the following sectors have expanded in terms of employment generation: construction, wholesale and retail trade, financial intermediation, real estate and business activities, ICT/BPO and the sea food hub.

Before looking at more recent figures and how the development of the new pillars of the economy impact on employment, it is important to understand the factors impacting on women's entry into the EPZ, since this was the first principal absorber of female labour in the country.

THE EPZ AND WOMEN'S ENTRY INTO THE LABOUR MARKET

Several factors explain women's strong presence in EPZ factories. Elson and Pearson (1981) and Mitter (1986) note that women possess the characteristics that are generally required by this sector. Nimble fingers, female dexterity, docility, little inclination towards unionisation and readiness to accept lower wages than men are some of the characteristics that the literature allude to in explaining the predominant presence of women in the sector.

Mauritian women may well have possessed these characteristics, but there are certain other factors that have facilitated the entry of Mauritian women into the EPZ. These factors include changing fertility patterns, the dispersed/non-enclave nature of the Mauritian EPZ, existing family support

systems, relevant engineering, and the pool of readily available and fairly literate female labour. Changing fertility patterns made it possible for women to enter the formal labour market. While the conventional explanations for fertility decline have been the success of family planning programmes and improvement in women's health and educational status, economic conditions may have played a more important part in triggering such dramatic changes in fertility behaviour (Burn, 1996). The coping mechanisms and survival strategies of women in the face of worsening economic conditions in the 1960s, which led them to defy the norms of gender propriety, morality and identity to risk gender conflict over fertility, bear striking parallels with the later entry of women into the export manufacturing factories in the 1970s. In fact, the first phase of the expansion of the EPZ in the early 1970s coincides with the most rapid period of fertility decline, between 1962 and 1972. Birth control and factory employment were adjustments to increasing poverty in the context of rising social aspirations (Burn, 1996).

The 'dispersed/non-enclave' nature of the Mauritian EPZ makes it quite atypical. That the EPZ is not localised in one particular region, but rather scattered around the towns and villages of Mauritius, reflects a conscious policy choice of taking 'work to the worker' rather than 'the worker to the work' Bunwaree (2007). Women's entry into the EPZ was facilitated. This formed part of a deliberate strategy of dispersal of rural industrialisation, which started in 1983.

Contrary to many other EPZs across the world, where women often have to leave home and their families behind to go in search of a livelihood, Mauritian women working in the EPZ stayed at home and worked on a daily basis. The very fact that they did not have to sleep outside their homes meant that they had the possibility of juggling their reproductive and reproductive roles. Traditional and conservative gender ideologies concerning the role of men as breadwinners and women as homemakers were also challenged by the massive entry of women into the labour market, particularly in paid factory work.

Nevertheless, very few men took up reproductive work, while women working in the factories depended largely on other women for help with their reproductive tasks. Although the extended family has been replaced by the nuclear family, the fact that families often live in the same compound, especially in the rural areas, provides the possibility of exchange and interdependence, thus easing women's multiple burdens and responsibilities. Despite nuclearisation of families, support systems, although they are now different from what they used to be, still exist.

The establishment of the Mauritian Export Processing Zone Welfare Fund (MEPZWF), a body created in the 1980s to improve the welfare of women workers, can also be seen as part of the institutional engineering that was going on in different spheres of the Mauritian economy. The MEPZWF helped to provide women with soft loans to purchase labour-saving domestic appliances. The MEPZWF and the private sector worked closely together to set up crèches/nurseries in the vicinity of some factories.

Free education and relatively high literacy rates have also helped to make available a pool of readily available and adaptable labour. Most of the women in the EPZ have completed primary schooling, with some having a few years of secondary schooling. The type of industries in the EPZ in the 1980s and early 1990s needed this level of skills, but the more capital-intensive - and technology-oriented industries of today demand more sophisticated skills and qualifications, which many of the women do not possess. In addition to skills and qualifications, the new industries demand commitment, hard work and high productivity. It is often argued that Mauritian women do not possess these qualities and this is used to justify the growing numbers of foreign workers in the country, as pointed out by well-known trade unionist Jane Ragoo.

ANALYSIS FROM CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE FIGURES IN 2010

The CSO figures reveal the following:

1. Total employment in the manufacturing sector exclusive of sugar milling decreased from 82,635 employees (14% of the total labour force) in March 2009 to 80,217 (13.2% of the labour force) in March 2010. This is mainly due to lay-offs in the textile industry.
2. The latest employment figures for export-oriented enterprises indicate a decrease from 57,107 in September 2009 to 56,624 in September 2010.
3. One of the sectors that has expanded in terms of job creation is the ICT sector. The employment figure has increased by more than 60 per cent during the last five years, showing the vitality of this sector. In 2010 there were 138 large companies in the ICT industry employing a total of 12,826 people or 4.2 per cent of total employment.
4. Total employment in the large establishments of the 'hotels and restaurants' sector increased by only 1.8 per cent from 22,909 in March 2009 to 23,311 in March 2010. As for employment in large establishments, it has been constantly increasing – from 6,800 in March 2000 to 11,387 in March 2010, reflecting the dynamism of this sector.

TRENDS IN EMPLOYMENT – A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

The way that the economy evolves and the emergence of the impact of the new sectors on the absorption of labour are discussed below. The EPZ, which contributed to the absorbing of female labour in the 1980s, has shed much of this labour in the 1990s. Many women have found themselves on the street with no alternative livelihoods. Tables 2 and 3 show sectoral male and female employment rate over the period 1995 to 2009. The 2010 census, referred to earlier, provides us with gender-disaggregated data on employment situation, as seen in Table 3 below.

Table 2. Sectoral male and female employment as a percentage of total employment

	1995		2000		2006		2007		2008		2009	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agriculture and fishing	15.95	11.89	12.93	10.57	10.34	7.31	10.14	6.85	9.39	6.83	9.34	6.82
- Sugarcane	7.80	6.83	6.71	4.73	4.43	1.78	4.29	1.59	3.82	1.28	3.72	1.21
- Agriculture (non-sugar)	8.15	5.06	6.22	5.84	5.90	5.52	5.82	5.27	5.57	5.55	5.63	5.62
Mining and quarrying	0.48	0.07	0.37	0.06	0.06	0.12	0.06	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.06	0.00
Manufacturing	21.80	46.07	21.63	42.59	19.47	38.15	19.91	30.52	19.68	28.46	18.89	25.56
- Sugar	1.85	0.07	1.02	0.00	0.59	0.00	0.58	0.00	0.48	0.00	0.51	0.00
- EPZ	7.57	39.02	9.00	37.31	7.52	22.21	7.95	21.57	7.79	19.54	6.87	16.64
- Manufacturing (non-EPZ and non-sugar)	12.38	6.98	11.60	5.29	11.37	9.21	11.38	9.51	11.41	8.92	11.57	8.92
Electricity, gas and water	1.02	0.14	0.87	0.12	0.82	0.12	0.81	0.11	0.82	0.11	0.87	0.10
Construction	13.49	0.21	13.77	0.37	13.92	0.46	14.00	0.51	14.25	0.43	14.49	0.42
Wholesale and retail trade: repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles, personal and household goods	12.95	11.48	13.30	12.17	13.98	16.51	14.46	15.97	14.25	16.50	14.52	17.43
Hotels and restaurants	4.04	2.80	5.29	4.00	6.55	5.35	6.48	5.38	7.00	6.09	6.87	5.98
Transport, storage and communication	8.72	1.78	8.82	1.84	9.49	2.65	9.42	2.66	9.53	2.72	9.60	3.10
Financial intermediation	1.34	1.64	1.33	1.78	1.50	2.47	1.61	2.77	1.80	2.94	1.86	3.15

	1995		2000		2006		2007		2008		2009	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Real estate, renting and business activities	1.97	1.23	3.34	2.34	4.14	4.03	4.49	5.15	4.95	5.77	5.21	6.77
Public administration and defence: compulsory social security	8.82	3.42	8.76	4.18	8.99	5.18	8.70	5.04	8.60	4.81	8.53	4.78
Education	3.60	7.04	3.50	6.58	3.73	9.03	3.72	9.00	3.51	9.02	3.55	9.19
Health and social work	2.07	3.55	2.17	3.87	2.20	4.32	2.25	4.36	2.25	4.48	2.22	4.62
Other services	3.76	8.69	3.93	9.53	4.02	11.68	3.98	11.66	3.94	11.85	3.94	12.07

Source: Central Statistics Office, Mauritius

Several sectors have expanded in terms of male employment generation, namely the construction sector, wholesale and retail trade, financial intermediation, and transport, storage and communication. However, the traditional sectors, such as manufacturing and agriculture and fishing, have contracted. In 2009, the share of agriculture and fishing was 9.34 per cent (15.95% in 1995) and the share of the manufacturing sector was 18.89 per cent (21.8% in 1995). We observe that the manufacturing sector remains the driving force of female employment, although its share declined from 46 per cent of female employment in 1995 to 25.6 per cent in 2009.

Large numbers of women are also employed in services, including financial intermediation, wholesale and retail trade, education, and real estate, renting and business activities. In these sectors, the female share of employment exceeds the male share. Table 3 shows the labour force and employment by gender as of 2010.

Table 3: Labour force and employment by age and sex, 2010

Age Group	Labour force			Employment		
	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes
16-19	10,700	6,600	17,300	7,900	3,500	11,400
20-24	35,100	26,200	61,300	29,000	19,700	48,700
25-29	45,400	28,800	74,200	42,300	24,300	66,600
30-34	51,100	33,200	84,300	49,900	28,400	78,300
35-39	43,900	28,800	72,700	42,800	25,800	68,600
40-44	45,900	29,200	75,100	45,300	26,600	71,900
45-49	46,500	25,600	72,700	46,000	23,400	69,400
50-54	39,200	19,200	58,400	38,500	18,000	56,500
55-59	28,800	13,600	42,400	28,500	13,100	41,600
60-64	9,900	5,000	14,900	9,600	4,900	14,500
65 and over	5,900	2,700	8,600	5,900	2,700	8,600
Total	362,400	218,900	581,300	345,700	190,400	536,100

Source: Central Statistical Office

On average, the workforce comprised around twice as many men as women and was concentrated in the 30–49 age group. The mean age of a worker was 40.4 years for males and 39.4 years for females. In 2010, the workforce was mainly made up of married persons (68.1%), followed by single people (24.5%). A small proportion of those employed were widowed, divorced or separated. Compared to the male workforce, the female workforce consisted of a higher proportion of widowed, divorced and separated persons (14.8% compared to 3.4% (CSO, 2010)).

While Table 2 does not provide figures for sectors such as IT/BPO, it is a well-known fact that this new pillar of the economy, together with the seafood hub, has been a major absorber of female labour.

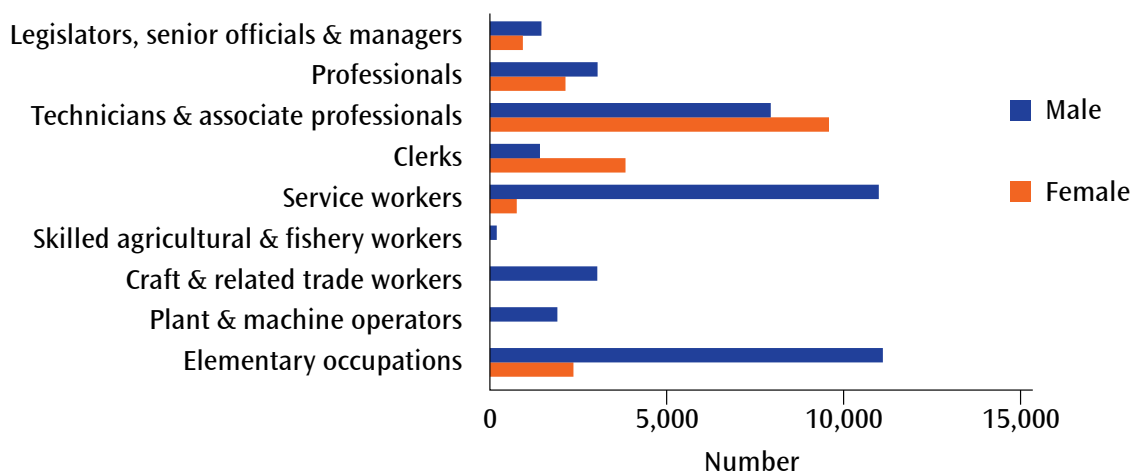
Expansion in Mauritius's IT/BPO sector started in 2005, with value added estimated at 5.3 per cent and employment at 3,800 people. In 2009 it was estimated that the sector employed 12,000 people.

The sector is dominated by companies that provide BPO and call centre services. According to the 2008 Mauritius ICT/BPO survey, 52 per cent of the participants provide services as IT service providers, 32 per cent as BPO (other than call centres) and 20 per cent as call centres. The survey also revealed that 54 per cent of the workforce was female. However, female workers are concentrated at the low end of the line with 88 per cent working as data entry operators and 69 per cent as call centre agents.

Further, 52 per cent of the workforce had a secondary education certificate, 45 per cent a graduate degree and 3 per cent a post-graduate degree. However, in most cases the higher the academic level, the higher the proportion of male employees. For example, in jobs for which only secondary education is required, the female workforce is estimated at around 78 per cent (School Certificate) and around 63 per cent (Higher School Certificate).

While there is no discrimination in men’s and women’s wages in the public sector, wage discrimination exists in certain sectors within the private sector. Figure 1 shows employment by occupational group and sex in government services.

Figure 1. Employment by occupational group and sex in government services, 2011



Source: Gender Statistics, 2011

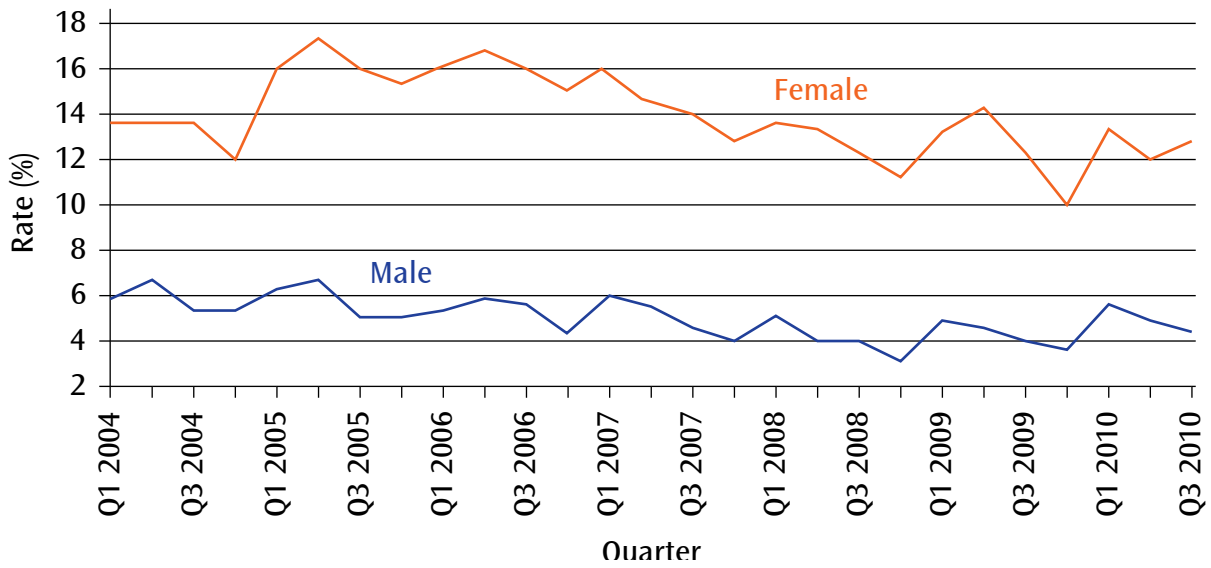
Another part of the government’s plan is to develop and consolidate a ‘seafood hub’. The purpose of this project is to develop Mauritius into a regional centre for the storage, processing and distribution of seafood and to offer repair and servicing facilities. While it has been difficult to obtain accurate data on the sector, the industry is said to be largely female dominated, with foreign and local workers (Ramooah, 2013).

Other sectors, such as the integrated resort scheme and real estate, are also given increased attention since they attract a lot of foreign direct investment (FDI), but they remain poor labour absorbers.

WOMEN’S EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

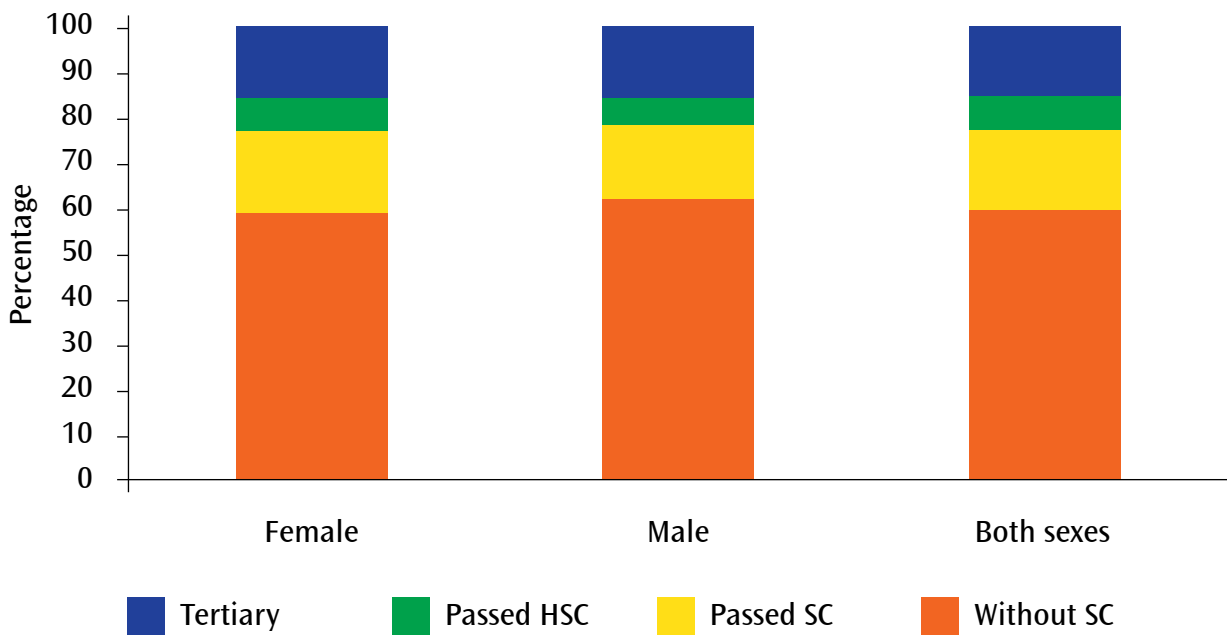
Whether the new pillars of the economy will impact favourably on women’s employment is a question that is premature. But judging by current unemployment figures and from the experience of how female employment evolved, and the kinds of sectors that are emerging, it seems rather unlikely that there will be any significant positive changes.

Figure 2. Unemployment by quarter, first quarter 2004 to third quarter 2010



Source: Labour Digest, 2011

Figure 3. Unemployed population by educational attainment and sex, 2011



Source: Labour Digest, 2011

Table 4. Unemployment population by educational attainment and sex, 2011

Educational attainment	Male	Female	Both sexes
Primary	5,200	7,400	12,600
Below CPE	3,800	4,900	8,700
Passed CPE	1,400	2,500	3,900
Secondary	10,600	15,700	26,300
Form I-V but not passed SC	6,400	8,500	14,900
Passed SC	2,900	5,100	8,000
Passed HSC	1,300	2,100	3,400
Tertiary	3,000	4,200	7,200
Total	18,800	27,300	46,100

Source: Labour Digest, 2011

Table 5. Average monthly income (Rs) from employment by occupational group and sex, 2011

ISCO* major occupational group	Occupational group	Average monthly income (Rs)		
		Male	Female	Both sexes
1-3	Legislators, senior officials and managers, professionals, technicians and associate professionals	36,000	22,100	30,300
4	Clerks	15,800	13,300	14,300
5	Service workers and shop and market sales workers	14,200	7,900	11,900
6-8	Skilled agricultural and fishery workers, craft and related trade workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers	11,600	5,700	10,600
9	Elementary occupations	10,400	5,000	8,100
1-9	All occupational groups	16,400	11,000	14,500

Source: Labour Digest, 2011

Table 6. Unemployment rate (%) by age group and sex, 2011

Age group (years)	Male	Female	Both sexes
Below 20	26.1	48.1	34.7
20-29	11.4	18.3	14.2
30-39	3.3	12.9	7.1
40-49	2.0	7.7	4.2
50 and over	2.3	4.2	2.9
All ages	5.2	12.5	7.9

Source: Labour Digest, 2011

2. WOMEN AND LEGISLATION IN MAURITIUS

Mauritius has signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and has invested a lot of energy in developing and passing a number of gender-sensitive laws. However, none of these deal explicitly with the employment of women. The two pieces of legislation which have a bearing on women's employment are the Employment Rights Act and the Employment Relations Act.

The right to work is a fundamental human right, as per the ILO definition, but many women are deprived of such a right. Women's fundamental rights in terms of the right to work are not even part of the gender debate. Mauritius does not have a specific 'female employment policy' but there is increasing recognition of the need to promote women's economic empowerment. Several schemes, projects and programmes have been designed and adopted to create jobs for women, but there is still a long way to go in the promotion of gender equality in the labour market.

The other gender-sensitive pieces of legislation include: the 1982 Immigration and Deportation Act, the 1997 Domestic Violence Act, the 2002 Sex Discrimination Act, the Sexual Harassment Act 2005, the 1995 amendment to the Mauritian Citizenship Act, the Combating and Trafficking in Persons Act 2009 and the 2012 Criminal Code Amendment Bill on abortion.

The 1997 Domestic Violence Act is the first such legislation in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region and has been used as a model in other southern African countries, where domestic violence has been one of the main problems affecting women. While the legislation listed above does not deal directly with the question of female employment, a number of stakeholders are of the opinion that it can assist (albeit indirectly) with women's employment. For instance, one female academic interviewed during the course of this study argued that the Domestic Violence Act has proved to be beneficial to women. She notes: 'Men should think twice before beating a woman up, less violence means less absenteeism from work, more pay for the woman and more productivity and benefit for the company ... a win-win situation ...' This concurs with a study on the economic costs of violence commissioned by the Ministry of Gender Equality a few years ago.

LABOUR LEGISLATION AND WOMEN

The two most recent labour laws, the Employment Rights Act (2008) and the Employment Relations Act (2008), have a bearing on women. The Employment Rights Act states that women are entitled to 12 weeks maternity benefits, thus facilitating women's entry into the labour force and their capacity to retain their employment. However, there are a few cases, reported by trade unions, that suggest that despite the legislation women are at times discriminated against.

As far as the Employment Relations Act is concerned, trade unions argue that it has facilitated ‘hiring and firing’ by the employer. The new legislation has put an end to the operation of the ‘termination of the contract board’. This constituted an important platform for scrutinising the cases of workers who had been laid off. But this no longer exists. Employers have greater latitude to ‘hire and fire’ and workers, particularly women, are more vulnerable. However, the Employment Rights Act also provides for a workfare programme.

THE WORKFARE PROGRAMME

The objective of this programme is to assist all workers who may have lost employment. Assistance takes the form of a transitional unemployment benefit (TUB) for a maximum of one year. Other facilities include training by the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) and assistance from the Small Enterprises and Handicraft Development Authority (SEHDA) in case the worker wishes to start a small business of his/her own. Lack of effective monitoring and evaluation makes it difficult to measure the programme’s success.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION

In 2011 the government also set up an Equal Opportunities Commission to look into all forms of discrimination that may be taking place, particularly at work. It is argued that large numbers of women have reported cases of discrimination to the Commission, but no specific data are yet available. A phone interview with an officer of the Commission confirmed this.

3. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES CONFRONTED BY WOMEN

Despite progress on women’s status and advancement, there are still a number of issues and challenges that women confront in Mauritius, all of which impact on their potential for employment. These include:

- The persistent under-representation of women in science and technology;
- Unequal pay for similar work in certain arenas within the private sector;
- Increasing unemployment and growing feminisation of poverty;
- Non-recognition of the role of unpaid labour and the care economy;
- Rising levels of teenage pregnancy;
- A weak female voice in the media;
- Poor visibility of women in the political arena;
- Lack of know-how and training in emerging sectors.

Given the many issues that women confront, the major challenge is to restructure the economy with more gender-sensitive policies, break the patriarchal code, and develop and provide relevant training for women. Successive reports on the EPZ, which remains a major absorber of female labour, all point to the need for targeted training aimed at upgrading the skills of the existing and future workforce (Day-Hookoomsing, 2003). The latter also points to three major obstacles to achieving this goal: inability of employers to release employees during working hours, fear of poaching and the low level of education of many employees.

Box 1 captures some of the other issues confronted by women and, more importantly, highlights the interlocking of gender-based disadvantage. Often this cuts across dimensions at many levels, such as capacity, opportunity, security and well-being.

Box 1

- Gender-based violence persists and disempowers women, incapacitates them, damages their health and well-being, and also lowers performance and productivity in the workplace.
- There seems to be no correlation between women's high level of educational performance and their economic empowerment through work opportunity.
- Women continue to have a marginal presence in political and economic decision-making, although the figures on this have improved over the years.
- Current wage gaps between women and men entail lower pensions for women in later life and persisting patterns of economic dependence and insecurity for women in old age.
- The unequal division between paid and unpaid work between women and men, the unequal sharing of family and household maintenance and caring obligations between them reflect the extent to which patriarchy is embedded in both the private and public spheres.
- This unequal division of unpaid work has ramifications across many sectors, economic and political, as well as social. Women's financial autonomy remains very difficult to attain.
- Women are also less able to enjoy leisure, sports and cultural pursuits because of the prevailing unequal division of labour.
- The idea of flexible working hours has still not entered the Mauritian psyche, making it harder for women to leave the realm of the household.

Source: Author's compilation

MEASURES, SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES FOR FEMALE EMPLOYMENT

Several schemes and measures have been adopted to promote women's employment and empowerment. These include the setting up of the National Women's Entrepreneur Council (NWECC), SEHDA, the Small and Medium Industries Development Organisation (SMIDO), the Empowerment Programme and the Youth Employment Programme (YEP). Some of these programmes are not specifically for women, but can have unintended benefits for them.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEUR COUNCIL

The NWECC is a parastatal body that has operated under the aegis of the Ministry of Gender Equality since 1999. Its main objectives include the identification of actions and projects that promote the entrepreneurial activities of women; the evaluation and assessment of women entrepreneurs; and an examination and evaluation of the contribution of women entrepreneurs to the various sectors of development in the light of national needs and priorities. The expansion of women entrepreneurs has also contributed to widening opportunities for female employment. However, the sector requires a proper audit for its actual contribution to women's employment to be appreciated.

THE SMALL ENTERPRISES AND HANDICRAFT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

SEHDA is committed to the development of small enterprises throughout Mauritius. A key aspect of this is the regulation of small enterprise registration, but SEHDA also aims to enhance women's business productivity through research, training and other measures. While women are encouraged

to enter the small enterprise sector, hardly any gender-disaggregated data are available, thus making it rather difficult to understand the extent to which women in Mauritius are actually using SEHDA as a platform for employment and employment creation.

THE SMALL AND MEDIUM INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION

SMIDO is the prime support institution for small and medium enterprises and was established by the SMIDO Act of 1993. It aims to consolidate, expand and enhance the competitiveness of SMEs. Again, there is very little scientific knowledge as to how many of the firms registered as SMEs are generating employment for women. But given that women have been given a number of facilities through micro-credit schemes and soft loans at the Development Bank of Mauritius (Budget speech, 2011), it is generally argued that doors have been opened for them.

The Mauritius Commercial Bank (MCB) Focus report of 2012, however, notes: ‘The ability of enterprises to create new jobs in response to the growing labour force is anticipated to remain hampered in the coming period, whilst non-negligible market uncertainty levels could imply that firms will remain locked in a wait and see mode in respect of the decision to generate further productive capacity and make use of additional human resource.’ Given that the country is grappling with the ripple effects of the crisis, and that there is a lot of economic imbalance across the globe, particularly in Mauritian European export markets, the island economy is characterised by a high level of uncertainty.

THE EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

The Empowerment Programme was set up in 2006 with a view to assisting the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in Mauritian society. Since its creation, it has placed and trained more than 4,000 unemployed people, given technical support to some 100 SMEs from various sectors and trained some 500 retrenched women, among a number of other interventions.

Consequently, the Empowerment Foundation has helped some 3,000 women through a special programme for unemployed women and around 7,640 people through its training and placement programme. Again, there are very little gender-disaggregated data and no follow-up is available to enable us to know what has actually happened to those who were on the special programme.

THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

The YEP has been very recently designed to help young people gain experience by working in business for one year to make them more ‘employable’. The Mauritius Employers Federation Report (2012) tells us that there are some 34,000 unemployed young people. Some 8,500 graduates are unemployed, including 1,400 who remain without a job for more than a year. This youth training and skills programme will help address the challenge of youth unemployment, including young women. While there are many more young women without jobs than young men, the YEP does not specifically address the gender dimension of the problem.

GENDERED BUDGETS

While effective ‘gender budgets’ are still to come, efforts have been made in recent budgets to address the economic empowerment of women, and in so doing to tackle female unemployment.

For instance, the 2009 Budget speech noted:

‘... We will continue to encourage employment of more women under the Training Placement Programme. The Empowerment Programme will contribute 75 per cent of the wages paid to women above 45 years as opposed to 50 per cent for men.

The Empowerment Programme Sub-committee for unemployed women is expanding its activities to address the impediments for unemployed women above 40 years old to take up the jobs being created.

Government is creating a new micro-credit scheme that would meet 100 per cent of the financing requirement of projects implemented by women. DBM will act as a wholesaler and provide the necessary finance to co-operative credit unions to implement the schemes. ...'

The 2011 budget speech notes:

'We cannot talk about raising the nation's productivity without giving some deep thoughts to the low participation rate of women in the economy, which is 43 per cent compared to 76 per cent for men. Moreover, the female unemployment rate is 12 per cent compared to only frictional unemployment among males. To rebalance growth, we will need to rebalance these statistics with emphasis on training, re-skilling and also encouraging more women to become entrepreneurs.'

The budget speech 2012 notes:

'The Commission for the Democratisation of the Economy will work with relevant ministries to implement a pilot programme to empower the vulnerable through small scale farming jobs.'

While the intent as reflected on paper in several reports is very noble indeed, the reality on the ground is a rather complex one. This is exacerbated by the fact that there is insufficient co-ordination between the diverse stakeholders and no sustained accompaniment for small women-owned businesses, therefore contributing to a very low survival rate.

CONCLUSION

Women's position in the post-crisis era is not very bright. In its efforts at restructuring, the government bailed out some of the big companies that were in difficulty, but there was nothing for women, once more reflecting the male biases in economic policy-making. Mauritius needs to rethink its strategy if it wants to make the most of its human capital and at the same time ensure gender-equitable development.

Some of the economic indicators for Mauritius highlight the difficulties that the economy is facing. While growth may be sustained at around the 3 per cent mark, there is no certainty that productive jobs will be created to absorb the growing unemployment, particularly among women.

There is an urgent need for a multi-pronged strategy, where a new focus on female employment and gender budgets should become central. There should be greater control on the import of foreign labour and incentives, as well as facilities such as crèches near the workplace and flexi hours, and the possibility of working from home should be introduced. Training and skills development, particularly focused on women, should be enhanced. Contracts made by employers in the private sector should be more worker-friendly and secure. More importantly, education and training should be revisited from an early age, with the explicit aim of breaking patriarchy and doing away with the reproduction of gender identities which tend to reinforce the unequal gender order. Gender-disaggregated data should be developed and consolidated, and mechanisms should be developed to ensure that there is a better information flow among stakeholders.

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Women in Samoa's Civil Service

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INTRODUCTION

Samoa is arguably emerging as one of the leading nations in the Pacific region with respect to economic and social developments. One of the key factors contributing to this is sound policy-making that forms the institutional backing that is required for any progress to be made. With respect to the recognition of the role of women in society, the Samoan government in the past and in recent years has pushed for several initiatives. A Ministry of Women Affairs was established in the early 1990s; a forum for women representatives from each village was established in the late 1990s; and the government has adopted international conventions that support and protect the rights of women.

The same trend has taken place in relation to employment for women. While the matter hardly featured in the concerted development effort that immediately followed independence in 1962, there is no doubt that employment opportunities and conditions for women were certainly on the agenda in the early 1990s; since then this thinking and trend has continued to evolve.

This paper gives a brief assessment of the existing institutional framework that protects women working in Samoa's public service. Like other Pacific island countries (PICs), Samoa went through an extensive public sector reform in the 1990s as part of its drive to improve public service delivery. Part of these novel changes was to give women better employment opportunities and better security in the civil service. The following analysis gives an account of whether such intentions have been achieved following the 1990s reform and other initiatives.

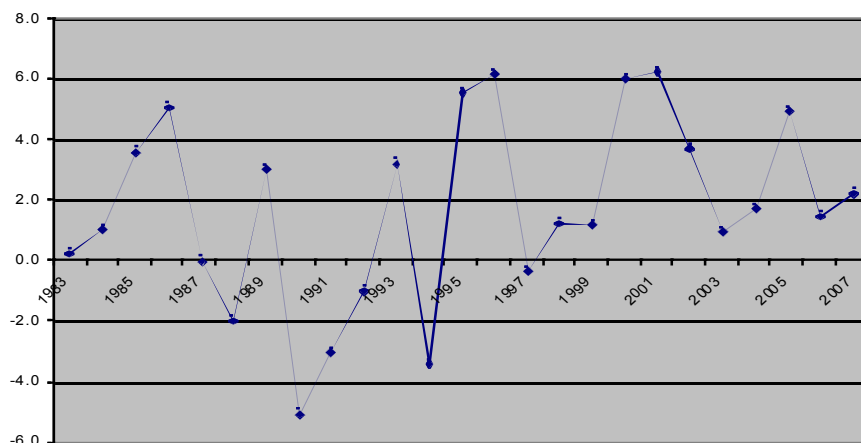
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND FEMALE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Samoa's first elected government following independence in 1962 was preoccupied with economic and social development. Cocoa, copra and bananas were the major exports in the early years of independence. In 1968, for instance, agricultural products made up 98 per cent of the country's total exports. This figure fell to 92.5 per cent in 1973, when the government decided to diversify its agricultural products for export and import substitution (Amosa, 2012).

In the 1980s, Samoa's economy continued to rely on subsistence agriculture despite the decrease in copra, cocoa and banana exports. The industrial sector has made progress mainly in food processing and timber milling. Tourism also emerged as another source of economic development in the 1980s. Growth was between 1 and 2 per cent in the 1980s due to external shocks like the increase in oil prices and the world recession (Government of Samoa, 1984).

Following the poor economic performance of the 1980s, in its Fifth Development Plan the government varied its strategy in order to revamp economic progress. Partnership with the private sector is perhaps the highlight of the renewed strategy for economic growth in the 1990s. Unfortunately, the two cyclones in the early 1990s (1990 and 1991), the taro blight and the substantial debt generated by the state-owned national airline threw the government's plans into disarray. As a result annual growth in the first half of the 1990s was a mixture of highs and lows (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Annual growth of GDP per capita, 1983–2007



Source: World Bank, 2009

Samoa's economic performance at the turn of the century was sound, following the severities of the early 1990s. Both the manufacturing and industrial sectors have made a significant contribution to the country's economy as a result of the economic policies and strategies established in the 1990s. This performance is reflected in Table 1, which shows the contribution of each sector to the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

The country's public service was also part of the overall economic reform of the 1990s. This was considered necessary following a substantial increase in its size and cost. Prior to the economic reform of the 1990s, the number of departments had increased from 16, following independence, to 28. The size of the civil service also increased from 1,167 civil servants in 1962 to more than 4,000 in the early 1990s.

The restructuring in 2003 reduced the number of ministries from 28 to 19, while the size of the civil service only received a minor change as a result of the 'no redundancy' policy of government. Currently, 31 per cent of chief executive officers (CEOs) in the civil service are female. The second layer of the civil service hierarchy, which consists of assistant CEOs, is evenly spread between both genders. Women occupy 49 per cent of this category while men take 51 per cent of the total 145 positions. Overall, in Samoa's civil service women are in a small majority. Of the total number of 4,038 public servants, 54 per cent are women.

Table 1. Development by sector, 1990–2009

	1990 ^a	1995	2000	2005	2009
Agriculture, value added (% of GDP)	19.2	18.5	16.8	13.2	11.9
Industry, value added (% of GDP)	30.5	29.6	26.0	30.6	26.7
Manufacturing, value added (% of GDP)	-	19.3	14.8	15.7	9.4
Services, value added (% of GDP)	50.7	51.9	57.2	56.2	61.4
GDP growth (annual %)	-4.4	6.6	7.0	4.1	-5.5

Source: World Bank, 2011; Government of Samoa, 1990, 1995

^a 1990 data are from the Ministry of Finance, Government of Samoa; all other data are from World Bank, World Development Indicators

With hindsight, not much attention was directed to female employment in the early years after independence. Most of the effort was expended on leveraging economic growth to address the rapid population growth. The focus shifted to female employment opportunities in the 1990s, partly because of external influences. Several developments marked a change of heart by the government at the time. These included the establishment of the Ministry of Women; the adoption of an equal opportunities employment policy by the Public Service Commission; the acceptance of International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions which secure the rights of women at the workplace; and the establishment of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that promoted the interests and rights of women.

In the same period, employment opportunities for women have increased substantially. The successful luring of the Japanese-owned car wire manufacturing company, Yasaki, boosted female employment. During the period of its initial operation, the company employed more than 2,000 women. That number subsequently increased to 3,000. Complementing employment opportunities at Yasaki was the rapid growth of the tourism industry as a result of government policy priorities. This progress in the industry opened up more employment opportunities for women.

It is evident that while in the post-independence period the immediate economic development efforts inadvertently overlooked the impact of policies on employment opportunities for women, this oversight did not generate criticisms of the government at the time. The trend changed in the 1990s and that has altered the landscape of employment in the country, both in the private and the public sectors.

In recent years, some economic development policies have caused concern (at least for this analysis) about the employment opportunities for women as a result of global and domestic trends. The Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme that the government of New Zealand launched in 2007 with Pacific island countries has attracted young men from Samoa to work in farms in New Zealand intermittently throughout the year or for a longer period. As a result, their spouses are forced to stay home to take care of domestic activities while their husbands are away working in New Zealand. It is also evident that several industries have recruited women from within the region or overseas. The hotel industry, for instance, has recruited heavily from Fiji Islands, presumably because the industry is well established there and Fiji Islands has an extensive pool of experienced female workers. The garment trade, while small in size compared to the hotel business, has in fact recruited a fair number of women from the Philippines for its operations. Perhaps the most striking change is in the restaurant and retailing businesses where Chinese women are very much in control.

TRADITIONAL ROLE OF SAMOAN WOMEN

In order to make a sound analysis of female employment in Samoa, the traditional role of Samoan women needs to be highlighted for several reasons. In particular, it is largely perceived that any government employment policy inherently embraces the customary role of both men and women in society. Second, the behaviour of Samoan women with respect to employment (and the employment environment) is directly influenced by their cultural responsibilities.

While Samoan women assume several social roles, there are three overarching roles that society expects of them. First, women are seen as the *fai'oa*. This refers to women as the producers of wealth in the family. This is translated into the art of weaving fine mats (which is mainly done by women) and other traditional artefacts which are regarded as wealth in Samoan culture. The second role positions women in the challenging but critically important task of peace-keeping, which is mainly referred to in Samoan as the *pae ma le auli*. This particular role is mainly exercised within the family and the village. The third role casts women as *fautua*, or advisers. This role is also regarded

as a domestic task that normally takes place between a woman and her spouse within a particular household, or in the context of an extended family in which the women in the family give advice to their matai or chiefs.

The three roles have some impact on the behaviour of women in the workplace, as stressed above. Interestingly, Samoan women's response has varied for several reasons. Taking the first role of fai'oa, one group of women, especially the well-educated and economically stable group, perceived this role as integrated in their career. Earning income is part of generating wealth for the family. And if there is a need for fine mats and other traditional forms of wealth, they could always use their income to purchase such items. At the opposite end of the scale, a traditional group of women, who are mainly resident in traditional villages and have minimal education, would prefer to remain at home to produce fine mats and other traditional materials for the use of the family.

With respect to the second role, the trend falls into two streams in the workplace. The traditional group tends to be patient, polite and respectful. In comparison, the other stream consists of younger women mainly born in the 1970s and 1980s. They are inquisitive and vocal about their own rights as women and as employees in the workplace. The same pattern can be detected in relation to the third role. The mature group prefers to play a 'supporting actress' role, while the younger stream is ambitious and prefers the 'main character' role.

OVERVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE BY GENDER

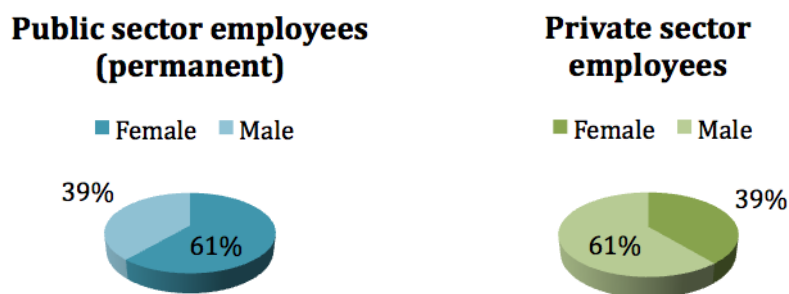
Samoa's working age population (15 years old and above) is categorised into 'economically active' and 'non-economically active' groups. The economically active category consists of those in:

1. Formal waged employment in the public sector;
2. Waged employment in private enterprises that have formally registered with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour (MCIL); and
3. Semi-subsistence agricultural work, street vending activities and self-employment, which may not be registered with MCIL.

The non-economically active group refers to those performing domestic duties, in formal educational training and who are incapable of working (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The formal sector is made up of (1) and (2) above. The informal sector consists largely of (3).

The employment market is characterised by a dualism of the formal and the informal sectors, which totalled 47,881 in 2011. Historically, the two sectors respectively contribute 40 and 60 per cent of the national labour force (Imbun, 2012). The gender composition for each sector is depicted in Figure 1. Of the current national labour force, about 73 per cent (34,763) are male and 27 per cent (13,118) are female. Males predominantly work as waged employees, employers, self-employed and street vendors. About 68 per cent of females are involved in domestic-related, unwaged activities, compared with 37 per cent participation by males. In the informal sector, there is a high proportion of men engaged in subsistence work (94%) compared to women (6%) (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2012). This is to be expected, as Samoan men are more likely to do heavy manual labour outside the house, such as farming and fishing activities.

Figure 2. Private and public sector employment by gender, 2010

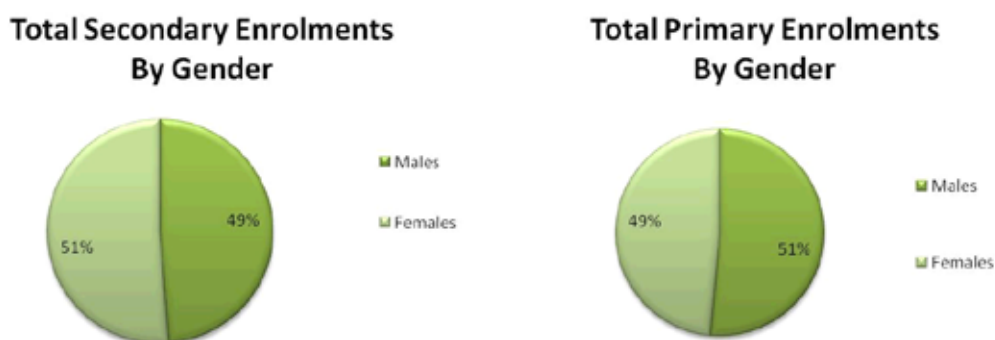


Source: MCIL, 2010. Report 2010 Labour Market Survey of Private Sector Employers in Samoa, Apia

EMPLOYMENT IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The higher number of permanent female employees in the public service reflects the concentration of women in the teaching and nursing professions. Available data show that the current total number of primary and secondary school teachers in government, mission and private schools is 2,454. About 63 per cent are female and 37 per cent are male (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 2012). School enrolment by gender follows a similar pattern, although this is statistically insignificant. The total enrolment by gender for both primary and secondary schools reveals that 50 per cent of both genders were enrolled in school in 2012. About 51 per cent (20,097) of boys were registered in the primary level, while 49 per cent (18,976) of girls were registered in the secondary level. However, when students move from primary to secondary level, the opposite occurs and more girls are enrolled in secondary schools than boys (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 2012). As shown in Figure 3, there is little difference between the average male enrolment and the average female enrolment for both primary and secondary schools.

Figure 3. Primary and secondary enrolment by gender, 2011



The current employment situation in Samoa is tough. In the private sector alone, total employment of 12,711 in 2010 indicates a drop of 25 per cent in the number employed as compared with 2007. This was due mainly to the significant reduction in the number of employees in the manufacturing industry, building and construction, transport and communication, finance and business (see Tables 2–4). About 53 per cent of employers froze or cut employment towards the end of the last decade, largely as a result of unfavourable global economic conditions and natural disasters. Samoa’s largest private employer, Yazaki Samoa, a Japanese-owned vehicle parts company, experienced financial problems as a result of the global slump in the automotive industry. This downward trend has reflected the country’s vulnerability to global economic shocks and natural disasters such as the global financial crisis in 2008–2009, the tsunami in September 2009 and Cyclone Evan in December 2012. These events have slowed down the country’s steady move towards a more commercially oriented

economy (Government of Samoa, 2010). The implications of these trends for female employment are not well understood, although redundancies from Yazaki Samoa in 2008–2009 affected about 80 per cent of its female workers.

Overall, the total unemployed population is 2,720, in which 896 (33%) are women (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2012). This shows the shift of employment opportunities towards women in Samoa.

Table 2. Private sector workforce by industry, 2004–2010

Industry	2004 Total M & F	2007 Total M & F	2010 Total M & F
Accommodation, cafés, and restaurants	1904	1999	2128
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	159	122	234
Building and construction	1139	1175	887
Education and welfare	1397	1544	1097
Community, social and personal services	1040	1161	910
Electricity, gas and water	681	704	648
Finance, insurance, real estate and business services	1761	2153	1837
Manufacturing	3505	3230	1805
Mining and quarrying	14	11	0
Transport, storage and communication	1818	1734	995
Wholesale and retail trade	2524	2898	2152
Total	16,146	16,921	12,711

Source: Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour, 2010

Table 3. Employment by industry, 2011

Industry type	Total	Percent	Male	Percent	Female	Percent
TOTAL	45,161	100.0	32,939	100.0	12,222	100.0
Agriculture	124,841	32.9	13,960	42.4	881	7.2
Fishing	1,851	4.1	1,688	5.1	163	1.3
Food manufacturing	901	2.0	543	1.6	358	2.9
Other manufacturing	1,564	3.5	852	2.6	712	5.8
Electricity	858	1.9	742	2.3	116	0.9
Water	277	0.6	223	0.7	54	0.4
Construction	1,892	4.2	1,809	5.5	83	0.7
Commerce	3,530	7.8	1,787	5.4	1,743	14.3
Accommodation	1,597	3.5	747	2.3	850	7.0
Restaurants	865	1.9	474	1.4	391	3.2
Transport	2,501	5.5	2,243	6.8	258	2.1

Industry type	Total	Percent	Male	Percent	Female	Percent
Communication	614	1.4	368	1.1	246	2.0
Financial services	1,080	2.4	430	1.3	650	5.3
Other business services	1,231	2.7	779	2.4	452	3.7
Education	3,215	7.1	1,131	3.4	2,084	17.1
Health	960	2.1	382	1.2	578	4.7
Public administration	2,383	5.3	1,476	4.5	907	7.4
Consultant services	533	1.2	389	1.2	144	1.2
Other services	4,254	9.4	2,774	8.4	1,480	12.1
ns	214	0.5	142	0.4	72	0.6

Source: Samoa Bureau of Statistics 2012

Table 4. Employment by occupation, 2011

Occupation type	Total	Percent	Male	Percent	Female	Percent
TOTAL	45,161	100.0	32,939	72.9	12,222	27.1
Managers	1,259	2.8	802	63.7	457	36.3
Professionals	3,661	8.1	1,807	49.4	1,854	50.6
Tech/Assoc professional	1,222	2.7	670	54.8	552	45.2
Clerical	5,023	11.1	2,089	41.6	2,934	58.4
Service	6,306	14.0	3,654	57.9	2,652	42.1
Agriculture and forest	14,843	32.9	13,991	94.3	852	5.7
Skilled fishery	1,852	4.1	1,702	91.9	150	8.1
Craft - trades	4,608	10.2	3,231	70.1	1,377	29.9
Plants/machine	2,773	6.1	2,409	86.9	364	13.1
Elementary	3,419	7.6	2,458	71.9	961	28.1
ns	195	0.4	126	64.6	69	35.4

Source: Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2012

According to the 2006 Population and Housing Census, 51 per cent of the working-age population participated in the labour force. Women make up 34.1 per cent of the labour force and men make up 65.9 per cent. The figure for women's participation in 2006 improved slightly compared with the data from the previous two censuses, in 1991 and 2001. However, a growing number of women have been employed in the highest paying occupations, with 27 per cent working as managers, professionals/associate professionals and clerical workers, compared to 20 per cent of men (Table 4). Most of these are in government ministries, state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and constitutional agencies.

There has been a slight change since 2006, according to the 2011 census. Women now make up 27 per cent of the total workforce of 45,161 (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2012). This is a clear drop from 34.1 per cent in 2006. The main cause, as explained earlier, is the massive redundancies made by Yasaki Samoa

EMPLOYMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Samoa's public sector consists of 13 government ministries and 20 SOEs and constitutional agencies. As of December 2012, 61 of the 174 senior positions in government ministries are occupied by women (35%), with five in chief executive officer positions (38%).¹ Of the 82 Assistant CEO positions, 41 (50%) are filled by women, reflecting a steady increase since the mid-1990s (Liki, 2013). Evidence indicates that women have occupied 28 per cent of Assistant CEO positions in mid-1996, 37 per cent in 2000 and 40 per cent in 2005 (Lua'iufi, 2006: 71). Women have also been increasingly appointed to other senior positions such as managers, parliamentary counsels, project co-ordinators, consultant specialists, registrars and overseas mission counsellors.

For SOEs and constitutional bodies, 12 of the 20 CEO positions (60%) are held by women.² In 2005, there were ten women CEOs in the public sector as a whole (government ministries and SOEs). This number increased to 13 in 2009, and to 17 by the end of 2012. Recent female appointments to several influential positions include the first female court magistrate, CEO for Samoa Chamber of Commerce, first woman registrar for the National University of Samoa and a female police inspector. All senior women have university level qualifications. At the lower strata of public service employment, however, more women are present, reflecting a pattern of high female occupancy of posts in teaching and nursing. Within these areas, however, movement of females to senior positions such as school principal and inspector is becoming more common (Faasalaina, 2012).

The rise of women in senior public service positions is not a new thing in Samoa. In fact, women have occupied leadership positions in government since Samoa's independence in 1962. The appointments, however, were sporadic and infrequent. A relatively small number of Samoan girls were sent on overseas scholarships in the 1950s and 1960s and were channelled into teacher training colleges, mainly in New Zealand. Most returned to teaching jobs in the islands and soon became leaders in educational institutions. The country's first woman Ph.D holder, Professor Aiono Fanaafi, returned home in the late 1960s and became the first female Director of Education until the mid-1970s; she later entered parliament in the 1980s. Galumalemana Netina became the first woman principal of the Teachers Training College in 1973 and Samoa College, regarded as among the most prestigious senior schools in the country, welcomed its first female principal, Ruby Vaa, in 1981. The first woman Commissioner of the Public Service, Lisi Vaai, took office in the 1980s (Ministry of Women Affairs, 2001). Increasingly over the last 20 years Samoa has witnessed a very different trend with a growing number of its highly qualified women assuming leadership positions in government.

The increased participation of women in Samoa's public sector leadership has coincided with the restructuring of the sector. Reform of Samoa's public service began around the mid-1990s, when the government announced a comprehensive economic reform programme in its 1996 Statement of Economic Strategy. The process has been a deliberate effort by government to redress perceived errors in prior and existing policy and institutional arrangements (Lua'iufi, 2004 and 2006). Such an effort has followed calls by international institutions, such as the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and donor countries Australia and New Zealand, for good governance in Pacific

1 Sixty-one of the 174 senior positions in government ministries are occupied by women. The agencies with female CEOs are the Public Service Commission, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Revenue, Ministry of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development.

2 Eleven of the 20 SOEs are headed by women. These are the Samoa Housing Corporation, Samoa Lands Corporation, Samoa National Provident Fund, Samoa Tourism Authority, Samoa Post, Unit Trust of Samoa, Samoa Qualification Authority, Central Bank of Samoa, Samoa Broadcasting Corporation, Samoa Computer Services Ltd and Samoa International Finance Authority and, Samoa Reform Commission.

nations (Huffer and Schuster, 2000; Macpherson and Macpherson, 2000). Government ministries and departments were to be reorganised into a structure that would improve services and the performance of employees.

Underpinned by concerns about economic failure rather than political reform (Huffer and Schuster, 2000), public service restructuring has been clearly defined by public management ideals ranging from corporatisation of government enterprises to improving the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of ministries' daily operation. Official documents and research relating to the reform and its outcome (for example Amosa, 2007; So'o and Laking, 2008; Public Service Commission, 2006; ADB, 2001) discuss the drive towards better management and improved performance. Prominent in these works is a greater emphasis on the technicalities of the restructuring, such as the introduction of output budgeting, strategic planning, the refinement of accounting systems and the provision of increased independence for corporations and line agencies.

The increase in the number of women in managerial and senior executive positions that paralleled public service reform became an interesting phenomenon for researchers. There has been no evidence, however, of a specific policy emphasis on women or their leadership as a core component or goal of the reforms. Thus the restructuring did not call attention to women's involvement as a management tool for achieving good governance. Rather, the reform happened to take place at a time when there was an established pool of highly qualified Samoan women, whose leadership capabilities have been recognised by the government. This also coincided with the beginning of government's commitment to international conventions on the improvement of women's status, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The involvement of a number of Samoan women in senior public service positions has been made possible therefore by a combination of factors, and not merely by the reform itself. Certain parts of reform policies, however, have opened up opportunities for women to apply for senior positions. According to Matagiālofi Lua'iufi (2006: 72), the woman CEO of the Public Service Commission at the time of the reform, there are 'policy choices or decisions which have contributed to the realisation of women's potential'. She identifies four reform areas that contributed to the selection of women to fill senior public service positions:

1. A delayering of ministries and department structures with the disestablishment of deputy level positions. These positions were seen as constituting a bottleneck that had been responsible for much red tape and inefficiency in ministries, and most of these positions were held by men. The new changes 'created opportunities for women to compete equally with men and got appointed as ACEOs' (ibid: 71).
2. The emphasis and enforcement of the merit factor, rather than long service, in the hiring process for senior management positions. Prior to the reforms, more emphasis was placed on length of service, in the belief that the longer the service the more experience an applicant had to become a senior manager. Today, relevant experience is only one aspect of the selection process. Qualifications, total competence, performance and productivity are also important determinants in selections to senior positions. Under these conditions, women are eligible to apply for positions involving management and decision-making processes.
3. The establishment of consultant specialist positions has created opportunities for women with specialised and professional qualifications to pursue a career in their field of specialisation, rather than opting for administrative positions.
4. Advertisements for positions are no longer restricted to the PSC's Official Circular. With the reforms, open advertisement through the newspapers and on television is enforced. Both men and women can apply. No appointment to a senior management position can be processed if it has not been publicly advertised.

WHAT LAWS ARE IN PLACE ON FEMALE EMPLOYMENT IN SAMOA?

Labour laws in Samoa are weak and, particularly in the private sector, employment is poorly regulated (ILO, 2008). The Public Service Act 2004 provides anti-discrimination protection for women in the public service. It also contains provisions for equal pay for both genders. Evidence shows, however, that for professionals the average income for women is half that for men. Women also have lower average incomes in lower paying jobs (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2010). For the formal sector as a whole, despite their predominance in the clerical and junior services levels, women earn around 88 per cent of men's wage (CEDAW, 2012). Thus wage gaps persist, although in 2008 Samoa ratified the ILO's Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951.

The Public Service Act 2004 also guarantees eight weeks of paid maternity leave. This can be extended to six months, but is unpaid beyond eight weeks. However, the standard of 14 weeks as recommended by CEDAW and the ILO is not met (ILO recommends a period of 14 weeks maternity leave and CEDAW recommends that this period be paid) (CEDAW, 2012: 303). Other provisions not in the Act include specific health protection for pregnant employees and provisions for breastfeeding mothers. Such issues as reasonable nursing time during work hours and the absence of government-funded childcare facilities are legitimate concerns for nursing mothers (ibid: 317).

The Act also protects all civil service employees from coercion and harassment. According to UN Women, however, the legislation does not provide specifically for sexual harassment protection from employers and co-workers. The legislation's silence on this particular form of harassment is disadvantageous to female workers, who are often the victims of such behaviour. The Act also inhibits women's employment choices by banning them from night work and manual labour 'unsuited to their physical capacity'. The UN CEDAW Committee argues that this protectionist provision interferes with women's autonomy and their right to choose professions and employment (ibid. 318).

Women in the private sector have no similar protection. The Labour and Employment Act 1972 governs employment in the private sector, but does not make provisions for maternity leave (ILO, 2008). It has taken more than a year for parliament to pass the Labour and Employment Bill 2011, which provides for six weeks paid maternity leave for women in the private sector. The Bill also includes new provisions on unfair dismissal which will improve labour conditions for women (Tuala-Warren, 2012). It also provides that women and men should receive equal pay for work of equal value. As this Bill has gone through the first and second readings in parliament, it is hoped that it will be passed in early 2013 (Afualo, 2012). Opposition to the Bill concerns the financial capacity of private sector employers to support paid maternity leave as a normal employment condition. As Samoa's private sector is small, this provision would result in significant adverse effects on the sector's capacity to maximise revenue (Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour, 2011). The government's view about this provision is that it will be a disincentive to potential investors. In addition, the change will increase the cost of conducting business, which will be passed on to the customers.

CURRENT TRENDS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Despite some concerns raised mainly by international agencies (as mentioned above) about the Public Service Act 2004, there has not been much criticism from within the public service itself, especially from those women who are in senior positions. There is no record of any complaint launched by the Public Service Association (PSA) or by the parent NGO that protects the rights of women, the Samoa Umbrella of Non-Governmental Organisations (SUNGO).

Despite the absence of any legitimate and constructive pressure on government and in particular the Public Service Commission (PSC), which is the main authority responsible for the Public Service Act 2004, it is evident that there is a co-ordinated effort to improve on the status quo. In essence, much

work has been done on defining the process and procedure a government ministry needs to follow with respect to a case of sexual harassment in the workplace. Ministries have also been instructed by the PSC to make female officials in their ministries aware of these procedures.

In 2012, the consultation for establishing a Human Rights Commission was completed. The onus is now on government to facilitate the establishment of the Commission. This development strengthens existing mechanisms that are in place to safeguard women working in both the public and private sectors. NGOs, and in particular the Samoa Victim Support (SVS) group, are doing a great job in assisting disadvantaged women who are victimised in their homes and workplaces. The Office of the Ombudsman is also tasked with the duty of supporting and representing women who are unfairly treated at work.

There is no doubt that women working in Samoa's civil service are closely secured under various institutional mechanisms that complement the Public Service Act 2004. While women employed in the civil service may not enjoy the same benefits as their colleagues in Australia and New Zealand, it is important to note the current attempt by the government to improve employment conditions and security for career women through amendments to the Labour Act 1972. The amendments as anticipated are directly linked to ILO conventions.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN WORKING IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

Unfortunately there is no study that formally documents specific issues and challenges faced by women employed in the civil service. Based on experience and discussions with several senior female officials in the service, a number of challenges were identified. Competitiveness among the women themselves within the same ministry or separate ministries is regarded as a challenge. While competitiveness, according to those contacted, is a good motivator to give one's best, the downside is when people become subjective, rather than professional, in their judgement. As a result, personal frictions and divisions are inevitable in the workplace, thus affecting the quality of work.

Some also mentioned the challenge of being frank and honest at times when giving advice, especially when the issue is controversial. They are normally asked in such situations to look for other options that will probably undermine the truth. Further, stereotyping was also suggested as a challenge. Because of this, senior male officials normally assume that their female counterparts are emotionally unstable under pressure and soft at heart, and hence their judgement will be influenced by emotions and they will at times be indecisive.

CONCLUSION

Better employment opportunities for women, in the public or private sector, are without doubt on the wish list of government. The trend, which started in the early 1990s, is still evolving and there are signs that further improvements are in the pipeline and will be taken forward when several policies currently devised are announced.

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This study analyses good practices and gaps in ESD implementation in ten small island states vulnerable to climate change: Dominica, Guyana and Jamaica (Caribbean region), Maldives and Mauritius (Africa, Indian Ocean and Mediterranean and South China Seas region) and Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga (Pacific region).

The study focuses particularly on climate change education, and provides practical and realistic recommendations on how ESD may be better integrated in education policy and strategy and delivered more comprehensively.

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THE BIG DIVIDE: A TEN YEAR REPORT ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

John L Roberts and Ibukunoluwa Ibitoye

This report provides a comprehensive assessment of progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) from a small states perspective. The authors compare the performance of 46 small island developing states (SIDS) with 10 benchmark states, illuminating achievements and highlighting areas in which countries are falling behind.

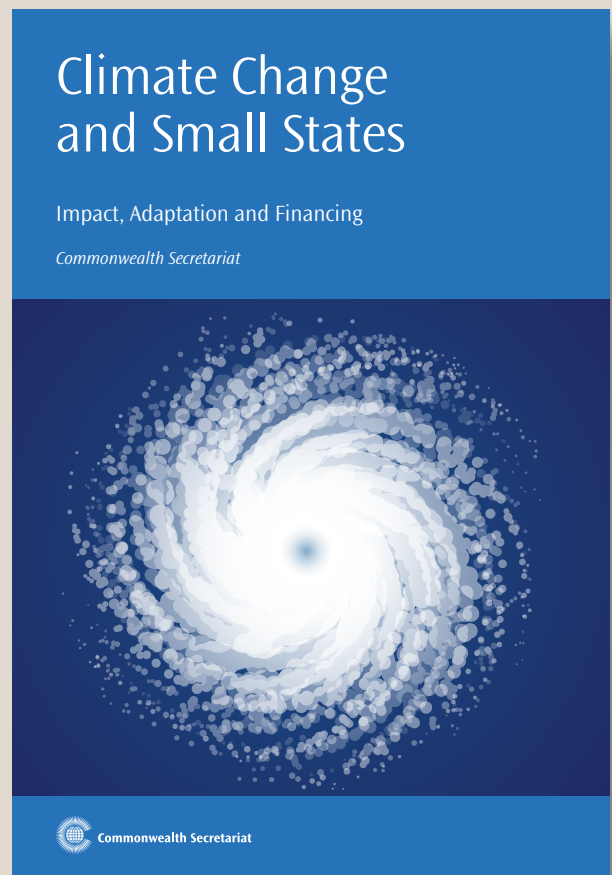
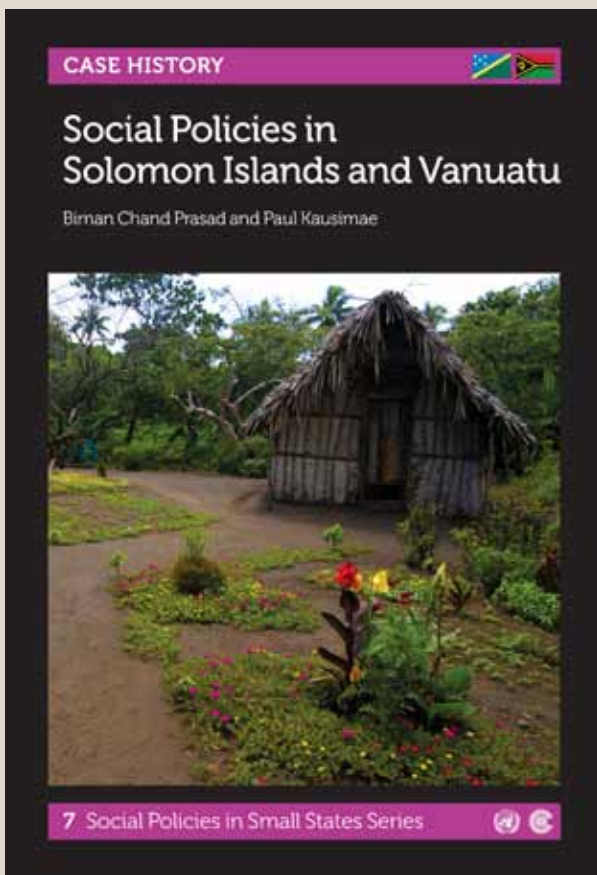
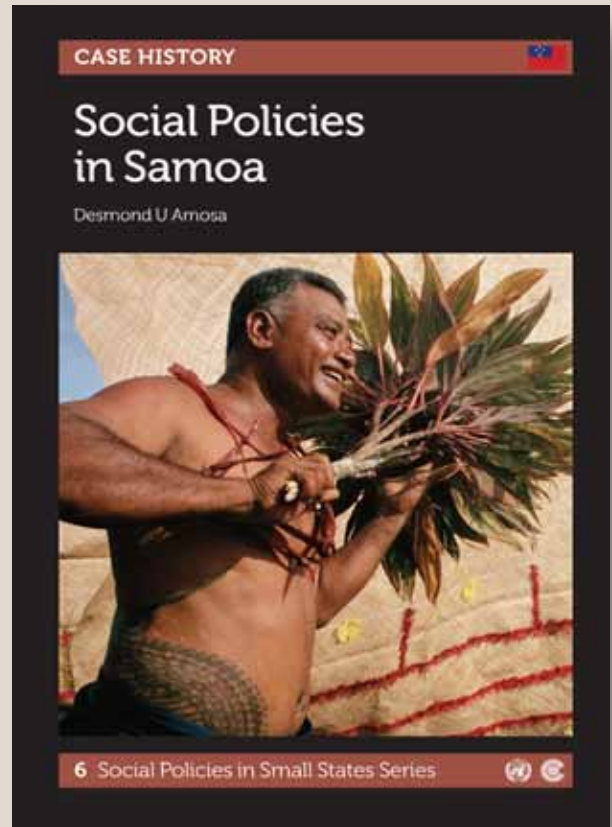
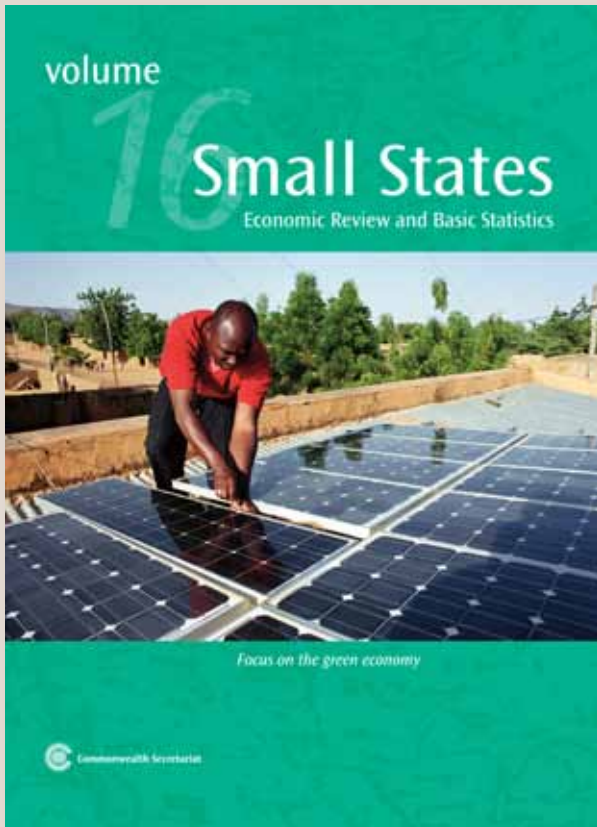
The data, 2000–2010, shows that despite their many commonalities, a ‘big divide’ separates these countries across the range of MDG economic, social and environmental indicators. The report also highlights aspects of the MDG system that are not well attuned to the interests of small states, and recommends how these issues can be resolved. The analysis and recommendations presented in this study will be very useful in the context of on-going international discussions on the MDGs in the light of their conclusion in 2015, and in consideration of successor goals.

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Commonwealth Small States

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	Labour participation rate, female (% of female population ages 15+)*		Ratio of female to male labour force participation rate (%)**		Labour participation rate, (% of total population ages 15+)		Human Development index (HDI) 2013**		Gender inequality index (GI) 2013**
	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	HDI Value	Ranking among 187 states	Ranking among 187 states
Africa									
Botswana	71	72	88	88	76	77	0.634	119	102
Gambia, The	72	72	86	87	78	78	0.439	165	128
Lesotho	59	59	80	80	66	66	0.461	158	113
Mauritius	43	44	56	58	59	60	0.737	80	70
Namibia	58	58	83	84	64	64	0.608	128	86
Seychelles	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.806	46	-
Swaziland	43	44	61	62	57	57	0.536	141	112
Caribbean									
Antigua & Barbuda	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.760	67	-
Bahamas, The	69	69	87	87	74	74	0.794	49	53
Barbados	65	65	85	85	71	71	0.825	38	61
Belize	47	48	58	59	64	65	0.702	96	79
Dominica	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.745	72	-
Grenada	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.770	63	-
Guyana	41	41	50	52	60	60	0.636	118	104
Jamaica	57	56	77	78	65	64	0.730	85	87
St Kitts & Nevis	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.745	72	-
St Lucia	64	64	83	83	70	70	0.725	88	-
St Vincent & the Grenadines	55	56	70	71	67	67	0.733	83	-
Trinidad & Tobago	54	55	70	70	66	66	0.760	67	50
Asia-Pacific									
Brunei Darussalam	56	56	72	73	66	66	0.855	30	-
Fiji Islands	39	39	50	49	60	60	0.702	96	-
Kiribati	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.629	121	-
Maldives	55	55	71	72	65	66	0.688	104	64
Papua New Guinea	71	71	96	95	73	72	0.466	156	134
Samoa	43	43	55	55	61	61	0.702	96	-
Solomon Islands	53	53	67	66	67	67	0.530	143	-
Tonga	54	54	71	71	64	64	0.710	95	90
Tuvalu	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vanuta	61	61	78	77	71	71	0.626	124	-
Mediterranean									
Cyprus	56	57	77	80	64	64	0.848	31	22
Malta	34	35	50	52	50	51	0.847	32	39

* Source: "World Development Indicators", World Bank. <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/variableselection/selectvariables.aspx?source=world-development-indicators#>. Accessed: March 2013.

** Source: "Human Development Report 2013", United Nations Development Programme. http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2013_EN_complete.pdf. Accessed: March 2013

Note: This figure represents the proportion of the female population ages 15 and older that is economically active relative to the corresponding male figure.

