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ENERGY

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Executive Summary

This report examines the state and importance of female participation in the workforce in four countries—Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Kuwait—the economic reforms these four nations plan to enact or are currently implementing, and the role the energy sector could play in increasing female participation in the workforce nationwide.

The 2014 fall in global oil and gas prices affected many oil-producing countries, including those in the Gulf. The need for oil-producing nations to diversify their economies became a reality as oil prices are not expected to return to their previous highs. For these countries to continue to prosper economically and innovate, women must be included in the workforce. However, the four nations discussed in this report employ a very high percentage of expatriates and a very low percentage of women, even though women are higher educated than men in all four countries and make up the majority of the national population in some of them.

All four nations have made ambitious plans to implement reforms that, if successful, could lead to economic diversification and an increase in female participation in the workforce. Decreasing the state's role in the economy and increasing the role of the private sector is key to reform, yet the governments ironically aim to do this by investing in the private sector, thereby maintaining their significant roles in the economies. The states also lack transparency in communicating how they intend to achieve their reforms or what progress has been made thus far. This also applies to the goal of increasing female participation in the workforce, a goal that all four governments subscribe to, but offer little information on how they will achieve it.

The energy sector is the backbone of these countries' economies and cannot be separated from government-initiated reform, as the sector is mostly state owned. Moreover, each country's energy sector is in a position to help its respective government with the implementation of reforms. For instance, Saudi Arabia has announced a forthcoming initial public offering for Saudi Aramco, offering the public a stake in the corporate entity, while the UAE already took that step with a specific business segment of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC). ADNOC raised $851 million through its sale of 10 percent of its distribution unit, while the Saudi government is hoping to receive at least $100 billion for Saudi Aramco, amounts the governments plan to reinvest into their respective economies to support diversification efforts.

"Making women an integral part of the economy is key for the Gulf countries to innovate and remain economically prosperous."

Female participation in the energy sector varies per country but in each, the energy sector is in a position to make tremendous progress and thus set an example for others to increase female participation, and include women in the diversification process in those instances where the sector is taking the lead. Increasing and maintaining female participation in the workforce is more likely to succeed if change comes from within. However, the governments will need to put in place the necessary legislation that would enable women to work. Making women an integral part of the economy is key for the Gulf countries to innovate and remain economically prosperous. This report offers pragmatic recommendations for how the energy sector as well as governments can increase and maintain female participation in the workforce, including but not limited to the following:

- Companies can push toward modernization and empowerment from within the company or organization itself. Increasing diversity has a better chance of succeeding if the organization gradually pushes for change from within on its own terms.
- Management should communicate with female employees to better understand the obstacles women encounter as well as what they need to succeed and move up within the company.
- The energy sector should invest in and promote Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs and create partnerships with universities for STEM students to gain experience in the field. It is not only in the energy sector's interest, but also in the interest of economic diversification.
- Office-bound women should receive the opportunity to spend time in the field in order to gain a better understanding of the work the company does and learn what other opportunities or career paths are out there.
- Governments can create a code of conduct requiring female participation on all levels within an institutional hierarchy and equal opportunities

Women employees walk through the clean-room during operations at STRATA, a composite aerostructures manufacturing plant in Al Ain in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in 2012. *Photo credit:* Jumana El Heloueh/Reuters.

within a workplace when domestic and foreign investors establish a business.

- Require companies to provide diversity figures in annual reports that are shared with stakeholders.
- Include accountability when implementing reforms. Implementing reforms and passing laws are one thing, but they will not lead to real change if they are not reinforced or there is no accountability to ensure change is actually occurring.
- Female leadership must become the norm. Both in government and within companies, ensure that either the minister or deputy minister within a ministry is female, or that the chief executive officer or their deputy is female. More female role models are needed, and if elected, appointed, or hired in a leadership role, female leaders will help increase gender diversity in the workforce. As all four nations are pushing to increase female participation in the workforce, this could become a realistic goal as more qualified women enter the job market.

Introduction

The 2014 decrease in global oil prices significantly affected many oil-producing countries, including those in the Gulf. As oil prices are not expected to return to their previous highs for the foreseeable future, many oil revenue–based economies are taking on the challenge of diversifying their economies. The Gulf countries—in particular Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, and Qatar, the four countries this report focuses on—must incorporate women into their economies if they are to innovate and continue to prosper economically. While the performance of countries and sectors varies, Gulf countries broadly and the oil and gas sector specifically have a reputation for a lack of female participation in the workplace.

All four nations have announced reform plans that, if successfully implemented, are intended to pivot their economies away from being solely reliant on oil and gas to becoming knowledge-based economies. As part of this overall effort, each reform plan aims to increase female participation in the workforce. The inclusion of this goal in their reform plans shows these countries not only recognize that women have the necessary qualifications, but that their participation in the workforce is crucial for economic prosperity. However, given the role of religion and the conservative cultures in these countries, efforts to diversify the economy and increase female participation may receive some backlash from within society.

Education is key to economic prosperity and increasing female participation in the workforce. Promoting science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs and fields is not only beneficial for the oil and gas industry, but key for a knowledge-based economy as well. For women to qualify for the jobs that are available, or will soon become available due to the reforms, it will be crucial to encourage them to study STEM-related disciplines.

As these countries work on diversifying their economies, the energy sector will continue to be a large source of revenue—and at present, it remains the most important one. This raises the key questions to be addressed in this paper: What role has the energy sector played or can it play in increasing female participation in the workforce? Can it be a leading example for other sectors? What types of reforms are the four countries implementing and will they be enough to increase female participation? What role does the energy sector play in the nation-wide reforms?

This report will provide four country case studies, exploring the role of women in society and how this relates to the economy, in particular the energy sector, in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar.[1] The report will also provide two benchmarks, Norway and Statoil, as an example of an oil-producing country and partially state-owned company that have been successful in increasing female participation in the workforce, decreasing dependence on expatriates, and investing in the development of the workforce. The report then offers recommendations—with the aim of improving the overall performance of a country or company—on how the respective governments and energy sectors can maintain and increase female participation in their workforces.

1 To contain the length of this report, the author decided not to include all the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Saudi Arabia was chosen as it has some of the largest proven oil reserves, is a major exporter, and announced its intention to implement reforms that could lead to major societal changes. The UAE was chosen based on its reputation as an innovative nation in the Gulf, while maintaining a low percentage of female participation. Qatar's female labor force participation rate was 53 percent in 2016 according to the International Labour Organization's ILOSTAT database, which is reflected neither in the numbers provided by the Qatari government nor in female participation in the energy sector. Kuwait was chosen because close to 13 percent of the energy sector workforce is female, which is relatively high.

The Path to Increasing Women's Rights: Economic Diversification

Often, women's rights around the world have improved more out of necessity than anything else. For example, during the world wars, while the men were off fighting or dying as a result, it was the women left behind who picked up the necessary jobs, eventually leading to improved rights for women in many European countries.

For the Gulf countries, the late 2014 drop in oil and gas prices in part drove home the necessity of reforms to more sustainably manage their resource revenues. Although a push for increased female participation had been made in different ways in the four case study countries prior to the decline in oil prices, these reform efforts began to accelerate afterward. The majority of the populations in all four countries is female, and thus none of these countries will be able to successfully diversify their economies without increasing female participation in the workplace. As Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, chief executive officer (CEO) of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) and the UAE's minister of state, said during a speech in August 2017: "Creating a work environment in which women thrive is not just fair, it makes smart business sense."[2]

All four nations have government plans for economic reform: Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia; Vision 2021 in the UAE; the Kuwait National Development Plan in Kuwait; and National Vision 2030 in Qatar. While each plan, or vision, differs in its details, all are intended to help each country diversify by pivoting away from being an oil and gas–revenue dependent economy toward becoming a knowledge-based economy.

For instance, in Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia is pushing to attract foreign investors, increase the size of its private sector, and decrease the presence of the state in the economy, which the government ironically plans on doing by investing in the private sector itself.[3] Moreover, Saudi Arabia is aiming to increase female participation in the workforce from 22 to 30 percent and investing in women's capabilities through education and training.[4] Other goals outlined in Vision 2030 include improving the quality of education, improving labor laws, and promoting and increasing participation in STEM programs. Though Qatar, the UAE, and Kuwait have other goals in place, when it comes to the core of it, the four countries are all implementing reforms along the same lines. However, while increasing female participation in the workforce is a noted goal for these countries as well, none of them has identified a percentage it is aiming to achieve.

The energy sector plays a central role in these economic reform plans and the economies of all four countries. In the four countries, the energy sector is mostly state owned, and oil and gas revenue is invested in projects that are outlined in each country's plan. As the case studies in this report make clear, the energy sector is so intertwined with each of the four governments that it will need to play a major role in the overall drive to increase female participation in the countries' workforces.

Female participation in the workforce is low across these countries, and most women who work are employed in the public sector. Women tend to be higher educated than men in all four nations; however, the quality of education in these countries is inconsistent, and men more often than women have the opportunity to study abroad, and have therefore enjoyed more educational opportunities.

In addition to Vision 2030, Vision 2021, the Kuwait National Development Plan, and National Vision 2030, the Gulf countries are spearheading other initiatives in pursuit of the same goals. For instance, in March 2014, the Arab World Council of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research endorsed the Arab Strategy for Science, Technology, and Innovation, which aims to increase male and female participation in STEM. The strategy focuses on three points: academic training in science and engineering, scientific research, and regional and international scientific cooperation. The areas of cooperation include development and management of water resources, nuclear energy, renewable energy, oil, gas, and petrochemical industries, desertification, climate change and its impacts on agriculture, information technologies,

2 "ADNOC Provides the Necessary Infrastructure to Enable Women to Be Partners in Core Business," ADNOC, August 28, 2017, https://www.adnoc.ae/en/news-and-media/press-releases/2017/adnoc-provides-the-necessary-infrastructure-to-enable-women-to-be-partners-in-core-business.

3 Karen E. Young, "Can the Saudi Economy Be Reformed?" Current History, December 2016, Vol. 115, No. 785, 355.

4 "Thriving Economy Rewarding Opportunities," Vision 2030 - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, accessed October 23, 2017, http://vision2030.gov.sa/en/node/8.

space sciences, and nanotechnology, among others.[5] This initiative was agreed upon before the drop in oil prices, but it shows that when it comes to education the Arab nations see the importance of promoting STEM programs more broadly. The initiative is aimed at both men and women, which could support the wider efforts to increase female participation in the workforce.

All four nations should be commended for aiming to create a society that not only values a woman's intellect and capabilities, but acknowledges that women are just as qualified and in many instances more so than men. Pushing toward modernization and women's empowerment could also potentially lead to a society with more equality between men and women. However, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar all lack transparency in how they plan to achieve their respective visions. Milestones are not always in place and when they are, it remains unclear what steps each government has taken in implementing reforms and how exactly the governments plans to achieve those milestones.

5 Susan Schneegans, "UNESCO Science Report: Towards 2030," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, second revised edition 2016, 435-436, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002354/235406e.pdf#nameddest=235422.

Saudi Arabia

An oil-rich country with an oil-based economy, Saudi Arabia is known as one of the strictest nations when it comes to women's rights. Saudi Arabia has a guardianship system, which means that women need permission from a male guardian (usually a father, brother, husband, or at times a son) to travel, work, marry, or apply for a passport, among other things.[6] However, there has been some progress in expanding women's rights in recent years. In 2013, the late King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud issued a decree allowing women on the Shura Council (an advisory body of the government) for the first time in history, and also implemented a 20 percent quota for women in the council.[7] Women were also granted the right to vote or run for public office in 2015.[8] Other steps have included appointing women to leadership positions, such as Princess Reema bint Bandar Al-Saud, appointed in 2016 to be the vice president for women's affairs of the General Sports Authority.[9] Physical education for women in public schools did not exist until 2017.[10] Sarah Al Suhaimi,

6 "Saudi Arabia: "'Unofficial' Guardianship Rules Banned," Human Rights Watch, May 9, 2017, https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/05/09/saudi-arabia-unofficial-guardianship-rules-banned.

7 "Breakthrough in Saudi Arabia: Women Allowed in Parliament," Al-Arabiya, January 11, 2013, http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2013/01/11/259881.html.

8 "Saudi Arabia's Women Vote in Election for First Time," BBC News, December 12, 2015, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35075702.

9 Jasmine Bager, "Saudi Arabia Just Created a Division for Women in Sports," *Time*, August 1, 2016, http://time.com/4433992/saudi-women-olympics/.

10 "Saudi Arabia to Introduce Physical Education for Schoolgirls," Reuters, July 11, 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-education-women/saudi-arabia-to-introduce-physical-education-for-schoolgirls-idUSKBN19W1DM.

SNAPSHOT

Total population: 31,742,308 (male 57.44 percent / female 42.56 percent) of which 20,064,970 (63.2 percent) is Saudi (male 50.96 percent / female 49.04 percent)

Population by age (by percentage):

	Total	Male	Female
0-14	24.8	22	28.5
15-64	72	75	67.9
65+	3.2	3	3.6

	Total Saudi	Male	Female	Total non-Saudi	Male	Female
0-14	19.2	15.4	14.9	5.6	7.8	7.4
15-64	41.4	33.5	32	30.6	59.7	23.5
65+	2.6	2.1	2.1	0.6	1.1	0.5

Human Development Index rank: 38

Gender Inequality Index rank: 50

Global Gender Gap Index rank: 138 (141 in 2016)

Sources:
"Demographic Research Bulletin 2016," General Authority for Statistics, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, accessed October 15, 2017, 20-23, https://www.stats.gov.sa/sites/default/files/en-demographic-research-2016_4.pdf.
Selim Jahan, *Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone, United Nations Development Programme*, 2016, 198, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2016_human_development_report.pdf.
World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, 2017 Edition, 11, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf.
World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2016*, 2016 Edition, 11, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR16/WEF_Global_Gender_Gap_Report_2016.pdf.

CEO of NCB Capital Co., was appointed in 2017 as the chair of the Saudi stock exchange, Tadawul.[11] Finally, the government announced in September 2017 that women will be allowed to drive starting in June 2018.[12]

Granting voting rights, establishing a quota for women on the Shura Council, appointing women to leadership positions, and soon allowing women to drive are all incremental and important steps in improving the rights of women and increasing female participation in the workforce. Overall, Saudi Arabia has made the largest improvements on the overall Global Gender Gap Index in the region over the past decade.[13]

Currently, the domestic workforce consists of approximately 3 million Saudis and 10.8 million non-Saudi nationals, of which 22 percent and 9 percent, respectively, are women.[14] However, women are still limited in what they can achieve on their own due to the guardianship requirement. Driving will be a positive step in increasing the economic possibilities for women—thus far, women and families who can afford it hire a driver to get women from place to place, an expense that can add up and undermine the economic rationale for women to get a job. Once female drivers are allowed, it will be financially beneficial for women to work and give a boost to the incomes of low- and mid-income earners.[15]

Education

In Saudi Arabia, women tend to be better educated than men. The net enrollment rate among females is 51.6 percent at the university level, compared with 41.6 percent among men.[16] The World Bank's Education Statistics show that over the last decade (2005 to 2015), the types of programs women have graduated from have somewhat shifted, but while participation in STEM programs has grown, it is still not the most popular field of study. In 2005, 39.1 percent graduated from an education program, which drastically decreased to 12.6 percent in 2014. Science programs saw an increase from 5.5 percent in 2005 to 15 percent in 2015, as did business and law programs (4.7 to 8.9 percent). The percentage of women graduating from an engineering program remained mostly unchanged at close to 12 percent. The humanities and arts was the most popular discipline for women in 2015 at 31.7 percent.[17] While women are better educated in the country, these figures do not reflect those who were educated abroad, an opportunity that men benefit from more often than women do. Therefore, while women are higher educated in Saudi Arabia, men who studied abroad are better educated.

The Economy, Vision 2030, and the Role of Saudi Aramco

Saudi Arabia has the second-largest proven oil reserves in the world (around 16 percent of the world's total), and was the largest exporting country of total petroleum liquids, mostly destined for European and Asian markets, in 2016.[18] According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), 59.3 percent of the government's revenue came from oil in 2016, and it is projected that this will reach 70 percent for 2017.[19] Oil revenue has been the engine of economic growth in Saudi Arabia for a long time: between 2003 and 2013, Saudi Arabia's gross domestic product (GDP) nearly doubled, household incomes grew by 75 percent, and $450 billion was invested in infrastructure, health care, and education.[20] Riyadh uses the oil revenues to provide for its population: Saudi companies are not taxed on their revenue, people do not pay income taxes,[21] and health care and education are paid for by the government. Prices

11 Vivian Nereim and Matthew Martin, "Sarah Al Suhaimi to Become the First Woman to Head Saudi Arabia's Stock Exchange," Bloomberg, February 16, 2017, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-02-16/sarah-al-suhaimi-said-to-become-first-woman-to-head-saudi-bourse.

12 Ben Hubbard, "Saudi Arabia Agrees to Let Women Drive," *New York Times*, September 26, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/26/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-women-drive.html.

13 World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, 22.

14 Ahmed Al Omran, "Saudi Arabia Edges More Women into Work," *Financial Times*, August 31, 2017, https://www.ft.com/content/c55d6cf4-8cd3-11e7-9084-d0c17942ba93?mhq5j=e5.

15 Zainab Fattah, "How Female Drivers Can Spur Growth in Saudi Arabia," Bloomberg, September 27, 2017, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-09-27/how-female-drivers-can-spur-growth-in-saudi-arabia-economists.

16 "Demographic Research Bulletin 2016," General Authority for Statistics, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 27.

17 "Education Statistics - All Indicators," The World Bank, Databank, accessed October 18, 2017, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=Education%20Statistics.

18 "Country Analysis Brief: Saudi Arabia," US Energy Information Administration, last updated October 20, 2017, https://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis_includes/countries_long/Saudi_Arabia/saudi_arabia.pdf.

19 Aasim M. Husain and Sanjaya Panth (approved by), *Saudi Arabia Country Report no. 17/316*, International Monetary Fund, October 2017, 6, http://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2017/10/05/Saudi-Arabia-2017-Article-IV-Consultation-Press-Release-and-Staff-Report-45312.

20 Gassan Al-Kibsi, Jonathan Woetzel, Tom Isherwood, Jawad Khan, Jan Mischke, and Hassan Noura, "Saudi Arabia Beyond Oil: The Investment and Productivity Transformation," McKinsey Global Institute, December 2015, 1, https://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/employment-and-growth/moving-saudi-arabias-economy-beyond-oil.

21 "Saudi Finance Minister Says No Income Taxes for Saudi Citizens," Reuters, April 9, 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-finance-taxation/saudi-finance-minister-says-no-income-taxes-for-saudi-citizens-idUSKBN17B0TG.

of gasoline, water, and electricity are discounted, and housing is subsidized. In return, the population follows the monarchy's leadership.[22]

The Saudi government was financially affected when oil and gas prices plummeted in 2014. The US Energy Information Administration estimates that Saudi Arabia earned $301 billion in net oil export revenues in 2014, which fell to $133 billion in 2016.[23] The government's plan to diversify the economy and the announcement of Vision 2030 by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MbS) in April 2016 can in part be seen as an admission by Riyadh that the livelihoods of the Saudis will decline, and fear that the people may choose to direct their frustration at the monarchy if no reforms are implemented.[24]

Among the issues that must be dealt with in diversifying the economy is that roughly 70 percent of Saudis work in the public sector, while 80 percent of expatriates work in the private sector. Women are often excluded from jobs, and their participation in the workforce is low.[25] The Saudi unemployment rate was around 12.3 percent in 2016, 34.5 percent of which was female.[26] The IMF also believes that public sector opportunities will become limited, and over one million jobs in the private sector will be needed for Saudi nationals over the next five years.[27] Without the necessary reforms to stimulate the economy and increase job opportunities, the unemployment rate will increase. Moreover, as the majority of the private sector relies on cheap foreign labor, the government will need to incentivize business owners to employ Saudis at a normal wage.

While Vision 2030 is a noteworthy aim, there are still obstacles to achieving it, and questions about transparency. As long as guardianship exists, increasing female participation in the workforce will remain difficult. The legacy of gender segregation in the workplace, which existed until recently, is another obstacle. While the government now allows women to work alongside men in the workplace, most buildings were constructed without considering women, and thus are still constructed in a way that does not accommodate them (lack of separate bathrooms, lunchrooms, and spaces to pray). Thus, to accommodate female employees, business owners need to reconstruct the workplace, adding unwanted costs.[28]

One of the rare exceptions in Saudi Arabia is Saudi Aramco, the eighty-year-old state-owned energy company, where women have long been part of the staff. According to its CEO, Amin Nasser, the energy company "is at the heart of Vision 2030."[29] Saudi Aramco has a long history, which is intimately tied to the country more broadly. In 1933, Saudi Arabia agreed to allow the Standard Oil Company of California to conduct a geological survey, and the first well was drilled in Dhahran a year later.[30] Just six years later, around 3,000 Saudis, 300 Americans, and 140 other nationalities were employed by the company.[31] It was not until 1964 that then Aramco hired Najat Husseini, its first female Saudi employee, as a health professional.[32] Though the first Saudi female employee, Husseini was not the first female at Aramco, as the company already employed American and European women.[33] Today, Saudi Aramco has over 65,000 employees, about 85 percent of whom are Saudi[34] and about 8 percent of whom are women.[35]

While women currently make up a small proportion of Saudi Aramco employees, the potential for female

22 Bill Spindle and Ahmed al Omran, "Oil Change: Affluent Saudi Arabia Goes to Work," *Financial Times*, May 31, 2016, https://www.wsj.com/articles/oil-change-affluent-saudi-arabia-goes-to-work-1464716895?tesla=y.

23 "Country Analysis Brief: Saudi Arabia," US Energy Information Administration, last updated October 20, 2017, https://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis_includes/countries_long/Saudi_Arabia/saudi_arabia.pdf.

24 Karen Elliott House, "Saudi Arabia in Transition: From Defense to Offense, But How to Score?" Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, July 2017, 2, https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/files/publication/SA%20Transition%20-%20web.pdf.

25 Husain and Panth, *Saudi Arabia Country Report no. 17/316*, 58.

26 Ibid., 7.

27 Ibid., 58.

28 Al Omran, "Saudi Arabia Edges More Women into Work."

29 "Saudi Aramco CEO: Saudi Arabia's 'Vision 2030' Plan," CNBC's Andrew Ross Sorkin interviews Saudi Aramco CEO Amin Nasser, October 23, 2017, https://www.cnbc.com/video/2017/10/23/saudi-aramco-ceo-saudi-arabias-vision-2030-plan.html.

30 Up until 1980, when Saudi Aramco became a fully state-owned company, the energy company was always at least partially owned by US energy companies. The fact that Saudi Aramco was partially owned by Western energy companies has had a positive influence on gender diversification within the company throughout its history.

31 "1930s," Saudi Aramco, accessed October 24, 2017, http://www.saudiaramco.com/en/home/about/history/1930s.html.

32 "1960s," Saudi Aramco, accessed October 24, 2017, http://www.saudiaramco.com/en/home/about/history/1960s.html.

33 "Remembering Najat al-Husseini, the First Woman to Ever Work at Saudi Aramco," *Al-Arabiya English*, September 26, 2017, https://english.alarabiya.net/en/features/2017/09/26/PHOTOS-First-Saudi-woman-to-work-in-Aramco.html.

34 "Performance and Key Figures," (2016 annual review), Saudi Aramco, accessed October 23, 2017, http://www.saudiaramco.com/content/dam/Publications/annual-review/2016/English-PDFs/04-performance-key-figures_EN.pdf.

35 Jerusha Sequeira, "Saudi Aramco Increases Female Recruitment by 20%," Argaam, November 29, 2016, https://www.argaam.com/en/article/articledetail/id/456787.

participation to increase has been recognized by the company's leadership. In 2015, Aramco's executive director of human resources, Huda Al-Ghoson, said there "is a huge shortage of qualified, skilled professionals in our industry," but that there is "a huge pool of untapped talent—women."[36] To increase female participation and help women advance in their careers, Saudi Aramco created Women in Business and Women in Leadership initiatives and, as a result, the company had 84 female leaders by 2015.[37] However, the company has never been led by a woman, nor is any of the board of directors or corporate management team female.[38]

Saudi Aramco invests in its staff as well as in the community. It has built schools (for men and women) and universities and started agricultural projects for farmers; it also provides scholarships, professional development programs, and health care, among other things.[39] Women are allowed to drive inside the compound, and are not required to cover themselves. Saudi Aramco also has a Young Leaders Advisory Board that helps the executive management think about how it can be innovative in shaping the future of the company, given that it has such a young population.[40] The acceleration of Saudi Aramco's growth and having Western partners for most of its existence may have influenced the company's commitment to maintaining a relatively diverse workplace.

Saudi Aramco is integral to Vision 2030. The government plans to sell 5 percent of the state-owned company to investors and offer $100 billion in stock in an initial public offering (IPO) in 2018 (although there is some talk this may be pushed back to 2019), establishing a company value of $2 trillion.[41] However, Saudi Aramco is going public at a time when oil prices are low, bringing the viability of the $100 billion stock offering into question. Moreover, it has been reported that the Kingdom is having difficulty reaching the $2 trillion valuation for Saudi Aramco.[42] However, if successful, the IPO will provide the Kingdom the funds to invest in and develop other sectors.

Saudi Aramco is also helping to diversify Saudi Arabia's economy by developing a crude oil–to–chemical plant that would produce plastics in collaboration with the Saudi Arabian Basic Industries Corporation, a chemical manufacturing company. The project on Saudi Aramco's side is overseen by Nabilah Al-Tunisi, the chief engineer, who believes people and the company should always be ready for change and that "almost everyone who works in Aramco recognizes it has a huge opportunity for learning and growing, and doing different things."[43]

Saudi Aramco can serve as an example for others and help drive higher female participation in the workforce at large. It heavily invests in its staff, is committed to providing its employees with services and benefits, and has created a workplace where segregation between men and women does not exist. It has successfully pushed itself toward modernization and empowerment from inception, and it has done so from within the system.

A big question for Vision 2030 is whether the population, given the conservative and religious nature of the country, is willing to accept the reforms it outlines. There is also concern that MbS may be doing too much at once. The developments in Saudi Arabia will impact the other Gulf Cooperation Council countries and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region at large, given Saudi's influence as well as investments in the region. The UAE, among other neighboring countries, is supportive of Vision 2030, but also afraid that its failure could raise doubt about the viability of having an open economy with a tightly run political system.[44]

Ultimately, Vision 2030 is an ambitious plan, which at best could lead Saudi Arabia toward a more liberalized society and rule of law, under the heavy guidance of Riyadh. However, for all of Vision 2030's potential pitfalls and open questions, Saudi women interviewed for this report expressed hope that the plan could lay the groundwork for a future in which they would be seen as equals.

36 Huda Al-Ghoson, "Women Leaders in the Gulf: The View from Saudi Aramco," *McKinsey Quarterly*, February 2015, https://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/leadership/women-leaders-in-the-gulf-the-view-from-saudi-aramco.

37 Ibid.

38 "Leadership Team," Saudi Aramco, accessed August 28, 2017, http://www.saudiaramco.com/en/home/about/governance/leadership-team.html.

39 "History," Saudi Aramco, accessed October 24, 2017, http://www.saudiaramco.com/en/home/about/history.html.

40 "YLAB: Young Leaders Advisory Board," Saudi Aramco, accessed October 25, 2017, http://www.saudiaramco.com/en/home/about/young-leaders.html.

41 Elliott House, "Saudi Arabia in Transition: From Defense to Offense, But How to Score?" 24.

42 Rob Cox, "A Big Question in Riyadh: The Status of Aramco's I.P.O.," *New York Times*, October 24, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/24/business/dealbook/aramco-ipo.html?ribbon-ad-idx=5&rref=world/middleeast.

43 Kelsey Warner, "With a Saudi Aramco IPO on the Way, Nabilah Al Tunisi Is Prepared for Change," *Forbes*, October 23, 2016, https://www.forbesmiddleeast.com/en/with-a-saudi-aramco-ipo-on-the-way-nabilah-al-tunisi-is-prepared-for-change/.

44 Young, "Can the Saudi Economy Be Reformed?" 355.

Qatar

Qatar is one of the wealthiest nations in the world and the world's leading liquefied natural gas (LNG) exporter,[45] accounting for one-third of global supply.[46] Among the MENA nations, Qatar ranks the highest in the 2017 Human Development Index, at 33 out of 188 nations,[47] but drastically dropped in the past year in the Global Gender Gap Index from 119 to 130 out of 144 countries.[48] This is due to "a decline in wage equality for similar work and on the estimated earned income indicator, highlighting the full extent of the nation's remaining income gender gap."[49]

Women in Qatar are allowed to receive an education, work, own and manage property, vote, and run for public office.[50] While women seemingly have a higher degree of opportunity than in other Gulf countries, Qatar is one of only five countries (Yemen being the only other country in the MENA region) in the world with no female representatives

45 Andrew England and Simeon Kerr, "Qatar's Wealth Fund Brings $20 Bn Home to Ease Impact of Embargo," *Financial Times*, October 18, 2017, https://www.ft.com/content/47f307a2-b365-11e7-a398-73d59db9e399.

46 Husain and Zakharova, *Qatar Country Report no. 17/88*, 4.

47 Jahan, *Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone*, 198.

48 World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, 10-11; World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2016*, 10-11.

49 World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, 21.

50 "Qatar," United Nations Women, The Spring Forward for Women Programme, accessed October 27, 2017, http://spring-forward.unwomen.org/en/countries/qatar.

SNAPSHOT

Total population by gender (as of August 2017):

569,436 female (23 percent)
1,876,892 male (77 percent)

Age of population by percentage (as of August 2017):

0-14	11.9 percent
15-24	13.9 percent
25-64	73.2 percent
65+	1.1 percent

Workforce division by gender and nationality (as of second quarter 2017):

1.8 percent	Qatari females
3.3 percent	Qatari males
11.5 percent	Non-Qatari females
83.4 percent	Non-Qatari males

Human Development Index rank: 33
Gender Inequality Index rank: 127
Global Gender Gap Index rank: 130 (119 in 2016)

Sources:
"Qatar Monthly Statistics: Statistics of August 2017," Qatari Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, September 2017, 14, http://www.mdps.gov.qa/en/statistics/Statistical%20Releases/General/QMS/QMS_MDPS_44_Sep_2017.pdf.
"Labour Force Survey: The Second Quarter (April-June) 2017," Qatari Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, Summer 2017, 19, http://www.mdps.gov.qa/en/statistics/Statistical%20Releases/Social/LaborForce/2017/Q2/LF_Q2_2017_AE.pdf.
Jahan, *Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone*, 198.
World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, 11.
World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2016*, 11.

in parliament.[51] It also does not have any quotas in place to increase female participation in the public or private sector.

Education

Qatar failed for a long time to address its lack of quality education, and the government finally started implementing comprehensive education reforms in 2002.[52] According to the Qatari Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, the number of students in university has increased over the years, showing 17,266 students in 2011-2012 and 28,668 in 2015-2016, of which 65 percent and 68 percent, respectively, were female.[53] In 2015-2016, 33 percent of women were enrolled in an arts and science program, 17 percent in an administration and economy program, and 9 percent in both education and engineering programs. For the men: 25 percent were enrolled in an engineering program, 20 percent in an administration and economy program, and 17 percent in an arts and science program.[54] That same year, 43 percent of the women graduated with a degree in arts and sciences, 22 percent received a degree in administration and economy, and 7.5 percent in engineering.[55] Qatar has been promoting STEM educational programs and according to the World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report 2016*, of the STEM graduates, 17 percent were female and 46 percent male.[56] Women are by far the majority in gaining a higher education, making it even more crucial to promote STEM programs with women if the nation is serious about increasing female participation in the workforce, particularly in STEM-related fields.

The Economy, National Vision 2030, and the Energy Sector

For the past two decades, gas and oil have accounted for about 80 percent of Qatar's total exports; almost 90 percent of fiscal revenues have come from the hydrocarbon sector.[57] Services and construction constitute the main non-hydrocarbon revenue for Qatar.[58] The country will host the 2022 World Cup, which has generated a lot of construction work, mostly conducted by non-Qataris.

In 2015, the US Central Intelligence Agency estimated that 88.4 percent of Qatar's population is non-Qatari,[59] meaning there are roughly just 300,000 Qataris among the country's 2.2 million inhabitants, only 5 percent of whom participate in the workforce.[60] It is unlikely that such a high dependence on expatriates is economically sustainable in the long run. Qatar's economy slowed down after the fall in oil prices, and it recorded its first budget deficit in fifteen years in 2016 with a $12 billion financing gap.[61]

In June 2017, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt severed diplomatic and transportation ties with Qatar, isolating the nation in the region.[62] While the boycott and sanctions have had little impact on the Qataris so far, the Economist Intelligence Unit expects that the boycott could last until at least 2021, if not longer, which in turn could lead to internal political instability in Qatar and impact the welfare of the Qataris.[63] However, Qatar continues to state that it has sufficient resources to survive the current boycott, as it could almost indefinitely replenish its reserves by liquidating assets in the sovereign wealth fund, the Qatar Investment Authority, which had about $300 billion (at least $180 billion of which were liquid foreign assets) before the diplomatic

51 Belinda Goldsmith, "Violence, "Old Boys' Clubs" Put Women Off Life in Politics but at What Cost?" Reuters, October 22, 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-women-rulers-global/violence-old-boys-clubs-put-women-off-life-in-politics-but-at-what-cost-idUSKBN1CS044.

52 Gabriella Gonzalez, Lynn A. Karoly, Louay Constant Hanine Salem, and Charles A. Goldman, *Facing Human Capital Challenges of the 21st Century: Education and Labor Market Initiatives in Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates*, RAND-Qatar Policy Institute, 2008, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG786.sum.pdf.

53 "Education Statistics," Qatari Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, 2016 edition, accessed October 28, 2017, Table 61, http://www.mdps.gov.qa/en/statistics/Statistical%20Releases/Social/Education/2016/Education_Chapter_4_2016_AE.pdf.

54 Ibid., Table 78.

55 Ibid., Table 80.

56 World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2016*, 299.

57 Husain and Zakharova, *Qatar Country Report no. 17/88*, 4.

58 Qatari Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, *Qatar Economic Outlook 2016-2018*, Issue Number 10, June 2016, ix, http://www.mdps.gov.qa/en/knowledge/Doc/QEO/Qatar_Economic_Outlook_2016_2018_EN.pdf.

59 "Qatar," Central Intelligence Agency - The World Factbook, last updated October 19, 2017, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/qa.html.

60 "Sukkan Population Newsletter," Permanent Population Committee, Qatari Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, Issue No. 35, Rajab 1438 AH - March 2017 AD, http://www.mdps.gov.qa/en/statistics/Statistical%20Releases/Population/Population/2017/Sukkan%20(E)%2035th%20Issue.pdf.

61 Simeon Kerr, "Qatar's Slowing Economy Puts World Cup Spending in Spotlight," *Financial Times*, March 1, 2017, https://www.ft.com/content/048e5762-f9a4-11e6-bd4e-68d53499ed71.

62 England and Kerr, "Qatar's Wealth Fund Brings $20 Bn Home to Ease Impact of Embargo."

63 Mohamed Abdelmeguid, "Qatar: Country Report," Economist Intelligence Unit, October 2017, 2.

"How the government plans to create opportunities to boost female participation, particularly in the private sector, as part of National Vision 2030 is unclear."

rift started.[64] Still, the trade, tourism, and banking sectors have been affected,[65] and in the short term the costs of the conflict may fall more heavily on Qatar than on any other country. However, the situation also forces Qatar to develop alternative routes and relations that will help Doha in the long term and change its economic landscape, which in turn could end up hurting Qatar's neighbors, who have invested tens of billions of dollars in Qatar.[66]

In 2008, during the reign of the former Emir His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, National Vision 2030, a roadmap for Qatar's future, was announced. The vision consists of four pillars of development: human, social, economic, and environmental. The human development pillar focuses on improving the educational and health care systems, and increasing and diversifying the workforce, including through incentives for Qataris to take on professional and managerial roles and opportunities and vocational support for women.[67] One of the social development pillar goals focuses on female empowerment, as it aims to improve women's capacities, encourage them to enter the political and economic spheres, and take on leadership positions.[68] The economic development pillar focuses on creating a balance between an oil- and knowledge-based economy, increasing the role of the private sector, and gradually decreasing dependence on the hydrocarbon sector.[69]

When it comes to the workforce, around 48 percent of working-age Qataris (fifteen years and older) are inactive, meaning that they are retired or disabled, a student, or take care of the household. Females account for 68 percent of this inactive population.[70] Other factors contributing to unemployment include the lack of job opportunities or experience, a search for a better job (especially among women), and the lack of academic qualifications or suitable work.[71] These factors are concerning, particularly given that women are higher educated than men. Only 36 percent of the active Qatari workforce are women,[72] 68.2 percent of whom worked in the public sector and 14.7 percent in the private sector in 2013.[73] How the government plans to create opportunities to boost female participation, particularly in the private sector, as part of National Vision 2030 is unclear.

While Qatar mostly relies on hydrocarbon-based revenues, the oil and gas sector is not the largest employer; the largest sector for non-Qataris is construction, while over half of Qataris work in public administration, and only about 9 percent work in the hydrocarbon sector.[74] Under the directive of Minister of Energy and Industry Dr. Mohammed bin Saleh Al-Sada, Qatar has been leading a so-called Qatarization since 2000, aiming to decrease dependence on foreign workers and increase the number of Qataris working in the energy and industry sector to 50 percent.[75] Currently, 29 percent of the those employed by the energy and industry sector are Qatari, a number that has tripled over the past

64 Andrew Torchia, "UPDATE 1-Qatar C.Bank's Foreign Reserves, Liquidity Rebound from Sanctions Hit," Reuters, October 5, 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/qatar-reserves/update-1-qatar-c-banks-foreign-reserves-liquidity-rebound-from-sanctions-hit-idUSL8N1MG5FQ.

65 "Qatar 'Uses $38bn to Support Economy' during Gulf Crisis," *BBC News*, September 14, 2017, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41267815.

66 Nader Kabbani, "The High Cost of High Stakes: Economic Implications of the 2017 Gulf Crisis," The Brookings Institution, June 15, 2017, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/06/15/the-high-cost-of-high-stakes-economic-implications-of-the-2017-gulf-crisis/.

67 "Qatar National Vision 2030: Human Development," Qatari Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, accessed October 29, 2017, http://www.mdps.gov.qa/en/qnv1/Pages/default.aspx#qnvHuman.

68 "Qatar National Vision 2030: Social Development," Qatari Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, accessed October 29, 2017, http://www.mdps.gov.qa/en/qnv1/Pages/default.aspx#qnvSocial.

69 "Qatar National Vision 2030: Economic Development," Qatari Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, accessed October 29, 2017, http://www.mdps.gov.qa/en/qnv1/Pages/default.aspx#qnvEcon.

70 "Labour Force Survey: The Second Quarter (April-June) 2017," Qatari Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, 22.

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid., 13.

73 Qatari Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, *Realising Qatar National Vision 2030: The Right to Development*, June 2015, 57, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/qatar_nhdr4_english_15june2015.pdf.

74 "Qatar Economic Insight 2016," QNB Group, 2016, 8, https://www.qnb.com/cs/BlobServer?blobkey=id&blobwhere=1355558746548&blobheader=application%2Fpdf&blobcol=urldata&blobtable=MungoBlobs.

75 "What Is Qatarization?" Qatarization, accessed October 28, 2017, http://www.qatarization.com.qa/Qatarization/Qatarization.nsf/40278ec4e9ade91c4325725d003bc463/f6d73500302675e7432574500040a8c5?OpenDocument.

sixteen years from 2,900 to 9,300.[76] While it is unclear how many of those employees are female, increasing female participation in both technical and non-technical jobs in the sector is a key element of the Qatarization plan.[77]

The plan also offers training, scholarships, and internships to help Qataris develop the necessary skills to be successful in the sector. Although the Qatarization plan has led to an increase in Qatari employees, given the country's demographics it is doubtful the goal of 50 percent can be achieved unless the Qatari population grows. Moreover, while the Qatarization initiative provides tools that would help increase and maintain Qataris' participation in the hydrocarbon sector, it is unclear how the Qatari government has achieved the increase thus far or how or when it will achieve the overall goal. Like the National Vision 2030, the Qatarization plan lacks transparency and clarity.

The Ministry of Energy and Industry also supports National Vision 2030. But so far, the state-owned energy companies have not managed to set an example on increasing female participation. Created in the mid-1970s, Qatar Petroleum is responsible for the oil and gas industry, along with its subsidiaries.[78] The company supports National Vision 2030 and actively takes part in the Qatarization plan.[79] Although Qatar Petroleum says diversity is key to its organization, there is very little information available about the company's gender diversity efforts. Qatar Petroleum does not have any women on its board or executive management team,[80] and there are no known numbers on the percentage of female employees in the company. However, the 2015 annual report states that the company supports initiatives that encourage women to pursue STEM-related careers, and encourages female students to apply for sponsorships within the industry.[81]

RasGas Company, a subsidiary of Qatar Petroleum that produces gas and exports LNG, is also committed to National Vision 2030 and the Qatarization initiative. Although it has no women on its board or in executive management, it "believes that diversity provides differing perspectives on problem-solving [and] opportunities for team-building that extend beyond the workplace."[82] In 2015, 13 percent of the company's employees were female.[83] RasGas also provides development opportunities, training, health care, scholarships, and internships for both men and women.

It is important that Qatar does not lose its commitment to National Vision 2030 while it remains isolated in the region. It has not done enough to increase female participation in the workforce or to invest in the development of its population, and the fact that it has dropped drastically in the rankings of the Global Gender Gap Index is a concern. The energy sector, although not dominant in the workforce, can be the driving force behind implementing reforms that would increase female participation, and set an example for other sectors to do the same if it were willing to take the lead, as it has done with the Qatarization initiative.

76 "The Energy and Industry Sector Holds Its 17th Annual Qatarization Review Meeting," Qatarization, May 15, 2017, http://www.qatarization.com.qa/Qatarization/Qatarization.nsf/en_NewsOnIP/DE925206C07BE89343258132002CA1A3?OpenDocument.

77 "FAQs," Qatarization, accessed October 28, 2017, http://www.qatarization.com.qa/Qatarization/Qatarization.nsf/40278ec4e9ade91c4325725d003bc463/52325c3e3fb197d5432574cc0043e986?OpenDocument.

78 "Corporate Profile," Qatar Petroleum, accessed October 28, 2017, https://www.qp.com.qa/en/MediaCentre/Lists/QPPublications/Attachments/28/Corporate%20Profile.pdf.

79 "Message from the President & CEO," Qatar Petroleum, accessed October 28, 2017, https://www.qp.com.qa/en/AboutQP/Pages/CEOsMessage.aspx.

80 Qatar Petroleum, *Annual Review 2015*, accessed October 28, 2017, 12-13, https://www.qp.com.qa/en/MediaCentre/Lists/QPPublications/Attachments/5/QP%20Annual%20Review%202015%20-%20English.pdf.

81 Ibid., 83.

82 RasGas Company, *Fit for Future: Sustainability Report 2015*, accessed October 28, 2017, 41, https://www.rasgas.com/Files/RasGas%20Sustainability%20Report%202015_LR.pdf.

83 Ibid., 42.

United Arab Emirates

The UAE is among the world's ten-largest oil producers, and is a gas-exporting country as well. For most of its history, the UAE has largely relied on hydrocarbon revenues to support its economy.[84] As the UAE works to diversify its economy, it is becoming one of the most important financial and trading centers in the world.[85] In 2017, the UAE was the most innovative country among the Arab nations—ranking 35 out of 127 countries globally, having moved up six places since 2016,[86] showing that the Emirates is not only serious about making the necessary changes to pivot away from being an oil and gas–based economy, but is also taking successful measures to achieve that goal.

The UAE is also making progress in increasing female workforce participation and closing the gender gap. The UAE moved up four places to 120 in

84 "United Arab Emirates," United States Energy Information Administration, last updated March 21, 2017, https://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=ARE.

85 Ibid.

86 Soumitra Dutta, Bruno Lanvin, and Sacha Wunsch-Vincent, eds., *The Global Innovation Index 2017: Innovation Feeding the World*, Cornell University, Cornell SC Johnson College of Business, INSEAD: The Business School of the World, World Intellectual Property Organization, tenth edition, Page xviii, 40, https://www.globalinnovationindex.org/gii-2017-report.

SNAPSHOT

Total population in 2016: 9,121,167
2,822,873 female (31 percent)
6,298,294 male (69 percent)

Percentage by age group 2017 (est.):

0-14	14 percent
15-24	11 percent
25-64	72 percent
65+	2 percent

Labor force participation rate in 2016 (population ages 15+):

Male	91.1 percent
Female	42 percent

Human Development Index rank: 42
Gender Inequality Index rank: 46
Global Gender Gap Index rank: 120 (124 in 2016)

Sources:
"UAE Population 2016," UAE's Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority, accessed October 24, 2017, http://fcsa.gov.ae/en-us/Pages/Statistics/UAE-Population-2016.aspx.
United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables*, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017), Working Paper No. ESA/P/WP/248, 21, https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2017_KeyFindings.pdf.
"Labor Force Participation Rate, Male (% of Male Population Ages 15+) (Modeled ILO Estimate)," International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT database, accessed October 29, 2017, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.MA.ZS?locations=AE.
"Labor Force Participation Rate, Female (% of Female Population Ages 15+) (Modeled ILO Estimate)," International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT database, accessed October 29, 2017, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS?locations=AE.
Jahan, *Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone*, 198.
World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, 11.
World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2016*, 11.

the 2017 Global Gender Gap Index due to "notable improvements on gender parity in ministerial positions and wage equality for similar work," and is as a result the best-performing country among the Gulf nations, and second best among the Arab nations in the MENA region, with Tunisia coming in first place, ranking 117.[87]

The female Emirati population has the same constitutional rights as men, and can get an education, work, and own property. The UAE is taking steps to meet the Sustainable Development Goals, part of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, one of which is gender equality. In 2015, the UAE took an important step in founding a Gender Balance Council, responsible for improving the work environment in the public sector and giving women equal opportunities. The UAE has made other strides in gender diversity as well. Nine women, including the speaker, out of forty have been appointed to the Federal National Council, the country has opened its first military school for women, women form 20 percent of the diplomatic corps, and manage half the country's small and medium-sized enterprises.[88]

Education

According to World Bank Education Statistics, 55 percent of Emirati students pursuing tertiary education in 2015 were female.[89] In 2015 about 38.6 percent of the female students graduated from a science program, while 11 percent graduated from social sciences, business, and law programs, followed by 10 percent from a humanities and arts program. Only 1 percent of all female students graduated from an engineering program.[90] There are no data available for men that year, but in 2014, 56.1 percent of the male students graduated in social sciences, business, and law, while engineering came second with 20.2 percent, and 12.9 percent graduated in a humanities and arts program; only 5.2 percent obtained a science degree.[91] According to the *Global Gender Gap Report*, 2016 STEM graduates in the UAE were 16 percent female and 25 percent male.[92] Although the UAE has been promoting STEM education in the past few years, it is clear that its population prefers careers in business. Given that the UAE has become a financial and market trade center this should not come entirely as a surprise. However, to become the innovation hub the UAE wants to be known as in the future, it will need to find a way to encourage Emiratis to study the STEM programs that are key to a knowledge-based economy.

Economy, Vision 2021, and ADNOC

Low oil prices have impacted the UAE's economy. In 2017, hydrocarbon export revenues amounted to $65 billion, compared with $129 billion (35 percent of total revenues) in 2013.[93] As a result, the UAE has been reconsidering its policy priorities, and is taking steps toward becoming a more high-skilled, knowledge-based economy, and decreasing its dependence on hydrocarbons.[94] While it will continue its hydrocarbon-focused economy, the UAE is becoming an important financial and trading center in the MENA region, and infrastructure and technology are becoming important non-oil sectors that will support the UAE's economy.[95]

While the energy sector is an important part of the UAE's economy, it employs only 1 percent of the workforce, as shown in figure 1. Almost every other sector employs a larger percentage of the population.

In 2015, 66 percent of the women active in the workforce in the UAE worked in the public sector.[96] Women own 10 percent of the private sector, and run projects that are worth over forty billion Emirati dirham.[97]

While the energy sector employs only 1 percent of the workforce, ADNOC, the UAE's state-owned energy company, created a 2030 Strategy that maps out how the company can continue to grow, create value, and increase profitability as it

87 World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, 11, 21.

88 "Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls," The Official Portals of the SDGs in the UAE, last updated October 1, 2017, http://uaesdgs.ae/en/goals/gender-equality.

89 "Education Statistics - All Indicators," The World Bank, Databank, accessed October 18, 2017, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=Education%20Statistics.

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid.

92 World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2016*, 353.

93 "United Arab Emirates," United States Energy Information Administration, last updated March 21, 2017, https://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=ARE.

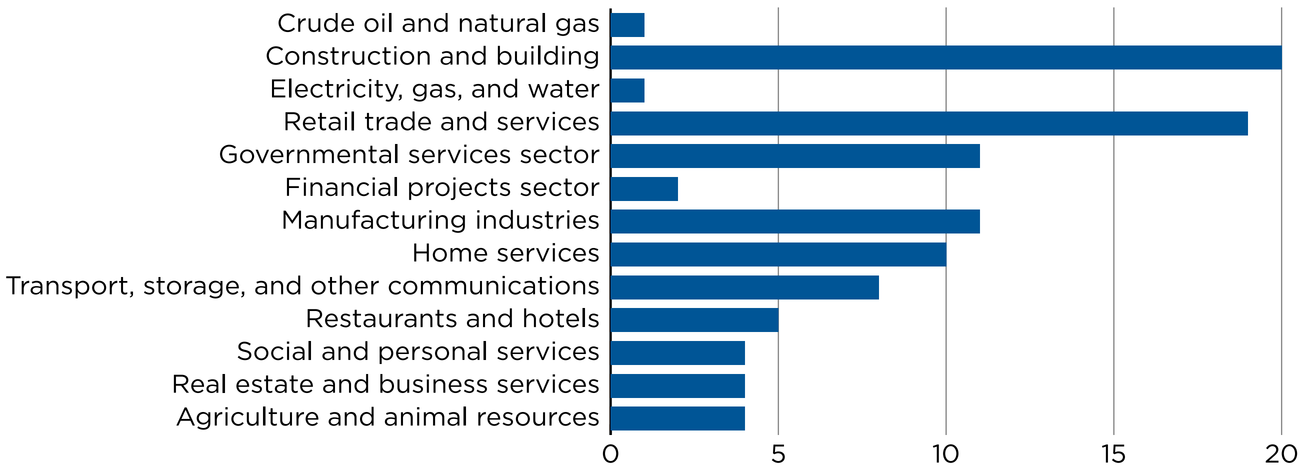
94 The Economist Intelligence Unit, *UAE Economic Vision: Women in Science, Technology and Engineering*, 2014, 3, http://www.alqasimifoundation.com/admin/Content/UserFiles/ENGLISH%20UAE%20Vision%20Women%20FULL%20-%20WEB_0.pdf.

95 "United Arab Emirates," United States Energy Information Administration.

96 "Women Grab 66% of UAE Government Jobs," *Gulf News*, October 15, 2015, http://gulfnews.com/news/uae/government/women-grab-66-of-uae-government-jobs-1.1601388.

97 "Women," The Official Portal of the UAE Government, last updated October 4, 2017, https://government.ae/en/information-and-services/social-affairs/women.

Figure 1. Distribution of employees per sector (2014)



Source: United Arab Emirates Ministry of Economy, Annual Economic Report 2016, 24th edition, 41.

transforms.[98] The company invests in its employees by providing professional development training, opportunities to receive an education, mentorship programs, functional skills training, and leadership skills.[99] Empowering women to become part of the energy sector is part of ADNOC's 2030 Strategy.

In 2015, ADNOC had over 65,000 employees, of which 34.1 percent were Emirati and 10.3 percent were female.[100] Currently, ADNOC Group does not have any women on its executive management team,[101] but Al Jaber announced in August 2016 that "ADNOC will seek to appoint one female chief executive across its group of operating companies."[102] He further announced that ADNOC is reserving 15 percent of managerial positions for women, and aims for women to make up 30 percent of staff by 2020.[103]

ADNOC's strategy closely aligns with the UAE's Vision 2021, which aims to improve the nation by implementing reforms and increasing its position in global rankings compared with global benchmarks.[104] Vision 2021 has different pillars, one of which is becoming a competitive knowledge economy, and the UAE has created twelve performance indicators to help achieve this goal.[105] These include diversifying the economy, increasing Emirati private sector employment (Emiratisation)—about 88 percent of the population in the UAE is non-Emirati[106]—increasing foreign investments, encouraging entrepreneurship by creating an easy and friendly environment for people to start or conduct businesses, and becoming more competitive when it comes to health care and education, labor market efficiency, and labor market development.[107] To help diversify the economy, ADNOC offered 10 percent of its distribution unit for sale at the Abu Dhabi stock exchange on December 13, 2017. The company raised $851 million.[108]

The UAE is ambitious and clearly wants to be among the best of the best. The steps it is taking, including in the energy sector, are encouraging, but it still has quite a bit to achieve to reach that goal,

98 "ADNOC 2030 Strategy Foreword," ADNOC, accessed October 29, 2017, https://www.adnoc.ae/en/strategy2030/adnoc-2030-strategy-foreword.

99 ADNOC Group, *ADNOC Group Sustainability Report 2015: Taking Innovation to New Heights*, 2015 edition, 30.

100 Ibid.

101 "Executive Management," ADNOC, accessed October 29, 2017, https://www.adnoc.ae/en/about-us/executive-management.

102 Anthony McAuley, "Adnoc Commits to Putting Women in Chief Executive Role at Operating Company and Other Top Jobs," The National, August 28, 2016, https://www.thenational.ae/business/adnoc-commits-to-putting-women-in-chief-executive-role-at-operating-company-and-other-top-jobs-1.160352.

103 Ibid.

104 "UAE Vision," Vision 2021, accessed on October 29, 2017, https://www.vision2021.ae/en/our-vision.

105 "Competitive Knowledge Economy," Vision 2021, last updated in 2017, https://www.vision2021.ae/en/national-priority-areas/competitive-knowledge-economy.

106 "United Arab Emirates," Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook, last updated October 19, 2017, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ae.html.

107 "Competitive Knowledge Economy," Vision 2021.

108 Holly Ellyatt and Hadley Gamble, "Oil Giant Hails Success of Abu Dhabi's 'Largest IPO in a Decade,'" CNBC, December 13, 2017, https://www.cnbc.com/2017/12/13/uae-oil-giant-adnoc-hails-success-of-spin-off-ipo.html.

as most women do not work. There is a danger of wanting to do too much—in other words, more than can be achieved due to a lack of qualified women or simple demographics. While setting quotas is one way to achieve increasing diversity in the workforce, it raises the bigger question of what companies like ADNOC will do if there are not enough qualified Emirati women to fill the positions. There is no indication that ADNOC or others are hiring women for the sake of meeting a quota, but if this were the case, the company or government entity would nevertheless be responsible for training, educating, and providing any necessary skills courses to ensure the women will be successful in their roles and add value to the organization as a whole.

Kuwait

Kuwait is a major oil producer with one of the oldest legislatures in the Gulf. Its economy is relatively stable as it has large financial buffers to weather the financial impact of low oil prices.[109] Kuwait, like Qatar and the UAE, has a relative small domestic population, and only 30 percent of residents are Kuwaiti, meaning that the majority of the workforce is non-Kuwaiti.

Kuwaiti women have the right to be educated, work, earn an income, own property, vote, and run for public office.[110] There is currently only one female parliamentarian in Kuwait, even though fifteen women ran in the last election.[111] Kuwait also has one female minister,[112] and the prime minister has one female advisor.[113] Kuwait does not have any gender diversity quotas in place that could increase

109 Husain and Zakharova, *Kuwait Country Report no. 17/15*, 4.

110 May Seikaly, Rahil Roodsaz, and Corine van Egten, *The Situation of Women in the Gulf States*, European Parliament, Directorate General for Internal Policies, 2014, 132-133, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2014/509985/IPOL_STU(2014)509985_EN.pdf.

111 Lauren Cohn, "15 Female Candidates Ran for Parliament in Kuwait's Latest Election. Only This Woman Won," *Fortune*, November 28, 2016, http://fortune.com/2016/11/28/kuwait-parliament-election-women/.

112 "The Government of Kuwait," Diwan of His Highness the Prime Minister, accessed October 30, 2017, http://www.pm.gov.kw/council-minsters.aspx.

113 Ibid.

SNAPSHOT

Total population as of October 2017: 4,513,143
1,364,460 (30.23 percent) Kuwaiti nationals
3,148,683 (69.77 percent) non-Kuwaitis

Gender division as of June 2017:

Kuwaiti male	49 percent
Kuwaiti female	51 percent
non-Kuwaiti male	68 percent
non-Kuwaiti female	32 percent

Labor force participation rate in 2016 (population ages 15+):

0-14	20 percent
15-24	12 percent
25-64	66 percent
65+	2 percent

Human Development Index rank: 51

Gender Inequality Index rank: 70

Global Gender Gap Index rank: 129 (128 in 2016)

Sources:
"Daily Population Stat," The Public Authority for Civil Information, Kuwait, last updated October 2017, https://www.paci.gov.kw/stat/default.aspx.
Ibid.
"Statistical Reports - Gender by Nationality and Age and Governorate," The Public Authority for Civil Information, Kuwait, June 2017, http://stat.paci.gov.kw/englishreports/.
Jahan, Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone, 198.
Ibid., 214.
World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, 11.
World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2016*, 11.

female participation politically or economically. Like Qatar, Kuwait has declined in its progress to close the gender gap over the past year, dropping in its ranking from 128 in 2016 to 129 in 2017. While Kuwait made "notable improvements in gender parity in professional and technical workers as well as healthy life expectancy," its ranking fell due to "a decline in wage equality for similar work and women's share of estimated earned income."[114]

Education

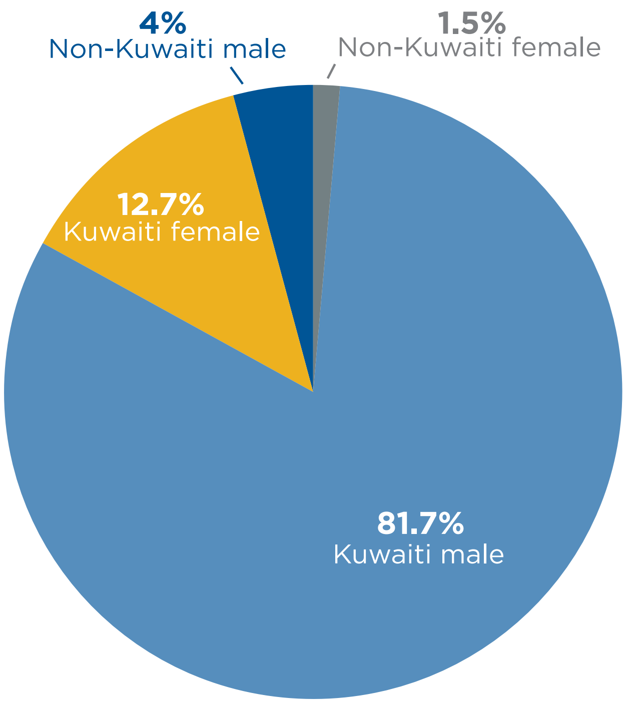
Overall, women are better educated than men in Kuwait. During the 2015-2016 academic year, 75 percent of the college graduates from Kuwait University were female: 60 percent received a degree in education, 15 percent in administration science, 14 percent in engineering and petroleum as well as social science, 6 percent in law, and 6 percent in science. Of the male graduates, 26 percent received a degree in engineering and petroleum, 22.5 percent in administration science, and 6 percent in science.[115] According to the World Economic Forum's 2016 *Global Gender Gap Report*, 46 percent of men were STEM graduates versus 13 percent of women.[116]

As part of the Kuwait National Development Plan, discussed in more detail in the next section, the government intends to reform the education system, change the curriculum to match the labor market, train teachers and invest in their development, and improve the level of school performance.[117] If implemented, this could increase the quality of education, as well as workforce participation after graduation. However, it is crucial that the government actively promotes STEM programs, which are necessary for the hydrocarbon sector and to build a knowledge-based economy.

The Economy, Kuwait National Development Plan, and the Energy Sector

Just over half of Kuwait's GDP came from oil revenue in 2014-2015. However, this fell to 36.7 percent in 2016-2017, while non-oil revenue increased from 15.4 to 17.6 percent of GDP over the same period.[118]

Figure 2. Distribution of employees in state-owned energy sector (2014)



Source: "Employment in Government Sector," Central Statistical Bureau, State of Kuwait, 2016 edition, 22, https://www.csb.gov.kw/Socan_Statistic_EN.aspx?ID=13.

When it comes to employment, an overwhelming 87 percent of those employed work in the private sector, 28 percent of whom work as house servants, followed by 18 percent in both retail and construction.[119] Among Kuwaitis, 77 percent work in the public sector.[120] In terms of the female Kuwaiti workforce, only 2 percent of female workers are in a senior/managerial position, 52 percent are in professional positions, and 42 percent are clerks, mainly working in public service. When looking at state-owned energy companies, a major part of the Kuwaiti economy, 14.2 percent of the workforce is female (both Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti; see figure 2).

To diversify its economy and decrease dependence on oil revenue, in 2017 Kuwait introduced the Kuwait National Development Plan, which includes five desired outcomes and seven pillars designated as areas for investment and improvement. To

114 World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, 21.

115 "Annual Bulletin of Education Statistics 2016/2015," Central Statistical Bureau, State of Kuwait, 2016, https://www.csb.gov.kw/Socan_Statistic_EN.aspx?ID=58.

116 World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2016*, 221.

117 "Human Capital," Kuwait National Development Plan, accessed October 30, 2017, http://www.newkuwait.gov.kw/en/pillars-cpt/human-capital-en/.

118 Husain and Zakharova, *Kuwait Country Report No. 17/15*, 6.

119 "Statistical Reports - Employment by Economic Activity and Sector," The Public Authority for Civil Information, Kuwait, June 2017, http://stat.paci.gov.kw/englishreports/#DataTabPlace:ColumnEmpOccup.

120 "Statistical Indicators," The Public Authority for Civil Information, Kuwait, accessed October 30, 2017, https://www.paci.gov.kw/stat/Indicator.aspx.

". . . [A]t the very least the revenue made from the energy sector will need to be invested in projects that will support the reforms. . ."

measure progress, Kuwait is following twenty global indicators, hoping to get into the top 35 percent of each one by 2035.[121] The goals include increasing female participation in the workforce (primarily in the private sector), investing in and developing women's skills and capabilities, and reforming the education system.[122] How the government intends to achieve these goals is unclear. Although the government tracks progress in an online system, it does not explain or provide information on what has been done thus far, resulting in a lack of transparency in intention and progress.

In an interview with Switch Energy Alliance, Kuwait Energy CEO Sara Akbar said the following on developing other sources of energy and the lack of long-term planning or vision for the future:

> In this part of the world, they haven't thought about the future and change. The simple reason is because they have an abundance of oil and gas in the region. And economically it doesn't work for any of them to look at any other alternative source of energy. For example, I think one of the best sources of energy in this part of the world would be the sun. We have 360 days direct sun. So you can utilize a lot of solar energy in this part of the world. But the development and technology is not there and we are not investing in developing that technology either. Looking long term is not something we do in this part of the world. Planning long term is not something that is built into the systems here.[123]

The role the energy sector can play is not outlined in the Kuwait National Development Plan; however, given that Kuwait thus far has been an oil-based economy, the sector will need to play a part in the reform process and at the very least the revenue made from the energy sector will need to be invested in projects that will support the reforms and help Kuwait become a knowledge-based economy.

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) is a state-owned company and the Kuwaiti oil minister chairs the board of directors. While KPC has no women on its board, it does have one woman on its management team.[124] The company has multiple subsidiaries, some of which have women on either their management teams, like Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company[125] and Kuwait Oil Company, or boards of directors, including Kuwait Oil Company.[126]

In a presentation at Columbia University in October 2016, Hosnia Hashim, deputy CEO, Olefins and Aromatics, Petrochemical Industries Company (a subsidiary of KPC), listed some of the challenges women face in the oil and gas sector, namely the lack of female role models in leadership positions, monotonous career paths, human resource policies lacking equality for men and women, working in field operations not ideal for women, legislation, and culture.[127] To attract women to join the oil and gas sector, the company has launched a women's network and is increasing career opportunities, improving workplace conditions, and raising awareness about the gender gaps within the companies.[128]

Kuwait is home to Kuwait Energy Company, one of the few private oil companies in the region that has a female CEO, Sara Akbar. She believes that there is no cultural barrier for women joining the industry, but rather that there are barriers to women attaining leadership positions in any sector. She stated that "In Kuwait, it is the result of the political system, as we are not in parliament, we are not in government, we have no voice, we cannot influence in the decisions. And that is why we have always been kept away."

121 "Plan," Kuwait National Development Plan, accessed October 30, 2017, http://www.newkuwait.gov.kw/en/plan/.

122 "Human Capital," Kuwait National Development Plan, accessed October 30, 2017, http://www.newkuwait.gov.kw/en/pillars-cpt/human-capital-en/.

123 "Sara Akbar – The Switch Interview," Switch Energy Alliance, September 1, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_-yvw_vDpg.

124 "KPC's Management," Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, accessed October 30, 2017, https://www.kpc.com.kw/about/Leadership/KPC_Top_Management.

125 "Management," Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company, accessed October 30, 2017, http://www.kufpec.com/en/about-us/management.

126 "Leadership," Kuwait Oil Company, accessed October 30, 2017, http://www.kockw.com/sites/EN/Pages/Profile/Leadership/Leadership.aspx.

127 "Diversity and Inclusion in the Energy Sector: The Kuwait Journey," presentation giving by Hosnia Hashem in October 2016 at Columbia University, slide 12, http://energypolicy.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/Columbia%20University%20KeyNote%20Address%202.pdf.

128 Ibid., slide 15.

Female oil sector employees sit in a hall on the first day of an official strike called by the Oil and Petrochemical Industries Workers Union over public sector pay reforms, in Ahmadi, Kuwait April 17, 2016. *Photo credit:* Stephanie McGehee/Reuters.

She is also of the opinion that women should not receive positions because of their gender, but based on their qualifications.[129]

Kuwait and its energy sector have the potential to set an example for others, but the fact that its Global Gender Gap Index ranking is declining is concerning, and a step in the wrong direction. Like Qatar, this calls into question Kuwait's intention to truly implement reforms that would lead to an increase in female participation in the workforce. Efforts need to be consistent, and if equality in wages drops, it takes away some of the incentive for women to enter the workforce in the first place. However, the energy sector could take the lead in increasing female participation. That the different state-owned energy companies have women in leadership positions, even if only in a few cases, does show there is a belief that qualified women are capable of taking on leadership roles within the executive office or board.

129 "Sara Akbar – The Switch Interview," Switch Energy Alliance.

Benchmarks: Norway and Statoil

Some of the key issues the four nations deal with when it comes to increasing female participation in the workforce include the following: women are higher educated than men, but are not active participants in the workforce; female leadership in political positions, which could help influence more equitable policies or represent a voice for women, is lacking; female leadership in the energy sector is lacking; the countries depend highly on expatriates in their workforces; and existing regulations limit women's ability to participate in the workforce.

There are several examples of countries that have implemented reforms and created laws that have helped increase female participation in the workforce, and in the energy sector specifically; close the gender gap; and increase diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Norway is one oil and gas–producing nation that has successfully done this, as has its majority-state-owned energy company Statoil.

Norway is an outlier on female participation, even among Western countries. While the author acknowledges that the nations covered in this report have a different culture, religion, and society, and therefore cannot be expected to and should not try to replicate Norway's approach, Norway can nonetheless serve as a benchmark and an example as the Gulf countries continue to implement their own reforms related to increasing female participation in the economy.

Norway

Like the Gulf countries, Norway is an oil and gas–producing country, but it manages its oil wealth in a different way. Oil revenue is put in the Government Pension Fund Global, created in the 1990s to manage oil revenues for future generations. It is currently the world's largest sovereign wealth fund, reaching $1 trillion in total assets in September 2017.[130] The fund is invested only in foreign companies and countries to limit any disruption from large fluctuations in oil and gas revenue, with the exception of 4 percent of the fund's value, which the Norwegian government uses for its budget.[131] The International Energy Agency and other organizations have applauded Norway's management of its sovereign wealth fund and investments.[132]

While the aim of the four Gulf countries is to increase female participation in the workforce and not necessarily achieve gender equality, Norway's efforts toward achieving gender equality still serve as a useful example. Norway is considered one of the leading countries in this area and has devised and implemented a strategy of gender mainstreaming and taken gender-specific actions.[133] For example, Norway has a constitution that is gender neutral in its formulation[134] and has laws that promote diversity, inclusion, and gender equality and improve the position of women in society. The most important of these laws is the Gender Equality Act, and Norway has also enacted laws related to childcare and legislation against discrimination, and has signed onto over thirty international treaties and agreements related to gender equality and anti-discrimination, among other things.[135] Corporate boards are required by law to meet a certain quota to ensure gender balance, and the country can dissolve companies that fail to comply.[136] For at least four consecutive years (2011-2015), Norway topped the list of European countries when it came to gender diversity on corporate boards.[137]

In Norway's workforce, the gap between male and female managers is not very large. While construction and machinery jobs are still mostly conducted by men, and sales and services by women, Norway has managed to even out most

130 Richard Milne, "Norway's Oil Fund Tops $1tn in Assets for First Time," *Financial Times*, September 19, 2017, https://www.ft.com/content/3f3f75c4-9d0c-11e7-8cd4-932067fbf946?mhq5j=e5.

131 International Energy Agency, *Norway 2017 Review*, 2017 Edition, 68-69, http://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/EnergyPoliciesofIEACountriesNorway2017.pdf.

132 Ibid.

133 "Gender Equality," Gender in Norway, accessed October 27, 2017, http://www.gender.no/Policies_tools.

134 "Legislation," Gender in Norway, accessed October 27, 2017, http://www.gender.no/Legislation.

135 "National Legislation," Gender in Norway, accessed October 27, 2017, http://www.gender.no/Legislation/National_legislation.

136 Aaron A. Dhir, "What Norway Can Teach the U.S. about Getting More Women into Boardrooms," *Atlantic*, May 4, 2015, https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/05/what-norway-can-teach-the-us-about-getting-more-women-into-boardrooms/392195/.

137 Kevin de Pril and Matthew Roberts, *Gender Diversity on European Boards, Realizing Europe's Potential: Progress and Challenges*, European Women on Boards in partnership with ISS, April 2016, 22, http://european.ewob-network.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/EWoB-quant-report-WEB-spreads.pdf.

SNAPSHOT ON NORWAY

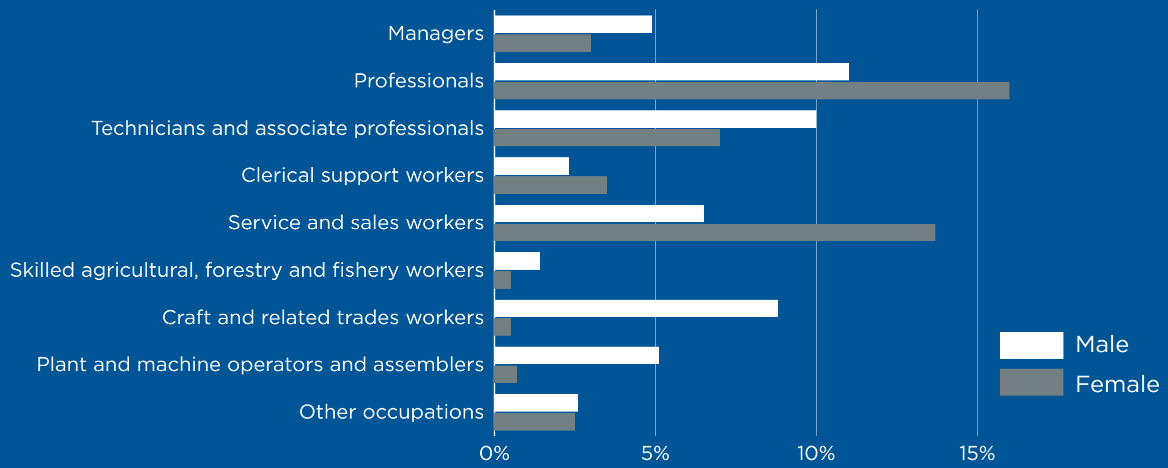
Share of employees in the public sector (20-66 years): 29.8 percent male versus 70.2 percent female

Share of employees in the private sector (20-66 years): 63.4 percent male versus 36.6 female

Share among leaders (20-66 years): 65.1 percent male versus 34.9 percent female

Source:
"Indicators for Gender Equality in Municipalities," Statistics Norway.

Figure 3. Employed people (15-74) by occupation and gender in 2016 (percent)



"Labour Force Survey: Employed Persons Aged 15-74, by Occupation, Sector and Sex. Annual Average 1000," Statistics Norway, last updated October 26, 2017, https://www.ssb.no/en/arbeid-og-lonn/statistikker/aku.

Figure 4. Employed people (15-74), by occupation and major industry in 2016 (thousands)

	Managers	Professionals	Technicians and associate professionals	Clerical support workers	Service and sales workers	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	Craft and related trades workers	Plant and machine operators and assemblers	Other occupations
Agriculture and forestry	0	0	1	1	1	35	1	2	1
Fishing	1	0	2	0	0	9	1	0	0
Oil and gas extraction, mining and quarrying	4	16	14	2	1	0	8	11	1
Manufacturing	26	20	46	13	3	0	54	49	7
Electricity, gas, water supply	4	5	8	3	1	0	4	1	5
Construction	14	6	25	9	3	0	119	20	9
Domestic trade	48	17	56	33	162	1	35	3	6
Transport and storage	8	6	23	26	9	0	3	57	5
Accommodation and food service activities	9	1	3	6	42	0	0	1	11
Information and communication	10	60	16	4	3	0	2	0	2
Financial and insurance activities	5	7	33	1	0	0	0	0	0
Real estate, tech.adm service	16	93	78	25	34	3	13	4	33
Public administration and defence	22	70	44	7	10	0	2	1	25
Education	12	173	8	5	24	0	0	0	5
Human health and social work activities	19	209	66	9	215	0	1	1	17
Other service activities	11	30	24	8	29	0	2	3	6

"Labour Force Survey: Employed Persons Aged 15-74, by Occupation, Sector and Sex. Annual Average 1000," Statistics Norway, last updated October 26, 2017, https://www.ssb.no/en/arbeid-og-lonn/statistikker/aku.

other professions. However, the gender comparison between the private and public sector shows that the latter is dominated by women, while men mostly work in the private sector. One reason why women may pick the public sector, especially if they have a family, is that the public sector may offer more part-time jobs or allow for more flexible work hours.

Norway can serve as a benchmark, something other nations can aspire to when it comes to improving diversity, inclusion, and gender equality. Moreover, Norway's oil revenue management also serves as an example of how to sustainably invest resource revenue for future generations. The four nations' respective governments, companies, and civil societies can push for modernization and empowerment, creating a society that supports diversity, inclusion, and gender equality without disrespecting the prevailing culture, and the energy sector could take the lead on this as it is at the heart of the economy in all four countries.

Statoil

Statoil is a majority-state-owned (the Norwegian government has a 67 percent stake) international energy company[138] with operations in over thirty countries.[139]

While international, Statoil is committed to recruiting locally wherever it operates (usually over 90 percent local employees, including management positions) and providing development opportunities to build capacity and skills.[140] According to Statoil, it offers its employees challenging and meaningful opportunities for deployment and development (either educational or skills based) through its corporate university and internal job market.[141] These development programs are also intended to increase the number of female leaders.[142] Of the apprenticeships to young professionals entering the workforce, at least 30 to 40 percent go to women.[143]

In 2016, Statoil gave sponsorships and partnered with academic institutions to support STEM programs and boost development skills for employees.[144]

Granted, Statoil has to comply with Norwegian law and meet a certain quota for the composition of its board; however, female participation is high for the energy sector and the company relies on local staff rather than hiring expatriates in the areas in which it operates.

138 "The Norwegian State," Statoil, accessed October 30, 2017, https://www.statoil.com/en/investors/our-dividend/the-norwegian-state.html.

139 "About Us," Statoil, accessed October 30, 2017, https://www.statoil.com/en/about-us.html#statoil-at-a-glance.

140 Statoil, *Sustainability Report 2016*, 33.

141 Ibid., 32.

142 Ibid., 38.

143 Ibid., 33.

144 Ibid., 31.

SNAPSHOT ON STATOIL

Corporate Executive Committee: 27.3 percent female
Board of Directors: 40 percent female
Managerial positions held by women (in 2016): 29 percent
Female employees (in 2016): 31 percent
Total employees (in 2016): 20,539

Sources:
"Corporate Executive Committee," Statoil, accessed October 30, 2017, https://www.statoil.com/en/about-us/corporate-executive-committee.html.
"Board of Directors," Statoil, accessed October 30, 2017, https://www.statoil.com/en/about-us/board-of-directors.html.
Statoil, *Sustainability Report 2016*, March 2017, 38, https://www.statoil.com/content/dam/statoil/documents/sustainability-reports/sustainability-report-2016-v2.pdf.

Recommendations

All four nations are dealing with some key challenges: the highest educated population is female; female participation in the workforce is low; there is a lack of female leadership all around; and either there is a lack of legislation that would incentivize female participation or there are existing regulations that prevent women from participating in the workforce. There are several actions that can be taken that would help the various sectors of the economy maintain the female workforce they already have and increase female participation in the workforce at large.

1 WHAT (ENERGY) COMPANIES CAN DO

- **Push toward modernization and empowerment from within the company or organization itself.** Increasing diversity has a better chance of succeeding if the organization gradually pushes for change from within on its own terms.
- Create an **equal opportunity** work environment for men and women.
- Management should **communicate** with female employees to understand the obstacles women encounter as well as what they need to succeed and move up within the company.
- When adding members to the board or hiring new executives, company leadership should **go outside the known network**. Men dominate the boardrooms and leadership positions, and their networks are often largely male. Female candidates may not match the exact requirements or may have gained their experience in a different sector, but skills can be transferable, and experiences comparable.
- **Create partnerships and share knowledge** with companies that are considering diversifying their workforces but do not know how to do so.
- **Invest in and promote STEM programs and create partnerships with universities for STEM students to gain experience in the field**. It is not only in the energy sector's interest, but also in the interest of economic diversification.
- Give office-bound women **the opportunity to spend time in the field**, so they can gain a better understanding of the work the company does and learn what other opportunities or career paths are out there.

2 WHAT GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Create a **code of conduct** requiring female participation on all levels within an institutional hierarchy and equal opportunities within a workplace when domestic and foreign investors establish a business.
- Require companies to **provide diversity figures in annual reports** that are shared with shareholders.
- **Implement gender quotas for boards as well as for the government.**
- As Vision 2030, National Vision 2030, Vision 2021, and National Development Plan 2035 all largely aim for the same changes, **exchange ideas and experiences and collaborate where possible** to ensure successful implementation across the board.
- **Reforms need to include accountability.** Implementing reforms and passing laws are one thing, but they will not lead to real change if they are not reinforced or there is no accountability to ensure change is actually occurring. For example, the Norwegian government can take action when either the private sector or state-owned companies are not increasing female participation.

3 WHAT BOTH CAN DO

- **Retain female talent.** Companies and government entities should introduce incentives to keep women as active participants in the economy, helping them develop skills and providing them with opportunities to grow within an organization.
- **Organize tours for government officials and business leaders to visit countries and companies that have facilitated a diverse workplace.**
- **Make female leadership the norm.** Both in government and within companies, ensure that either the minister or deputy minister within a ministry is female, or that the CEO or their deputy is female. More female role models are needed, and if elected, appointed, or hired in a leadership role, female leaders will help increase female participation in the workforce. As all four nations are pushing to increase female participation in the workforce, this could become a realistic goal as more qualified women enter the job market.

4 WHAT OTHERS CAN DO

- **Foreign investors.** All four nations want to increase foreign investments in their economies. When investing in one of these four countries, require that the company is committed to improving gender diversity.

Conclusion

All four countries have ambitious plans to implement reforms that would diversify their economies and pivot away from relying solely on hydrocarbon revenue. Energy is such an integral part of these Gulf economies that it has become part of the diversification process—and if there is one sector that could lead the change to increasing female participation in the workforce, the oil and gas sector is it. It has the finances to do so within the industry, and can help other sectors by investing in them. If the four Gulf nations are successful in diversifying their economies, they would be the first to successfully do so among oil and gas–based economies.

With Vision 2030, National Vision 2030, Vision 2021, and National Development Plan 2035, all four governments are attempting to bring about similar changes in their economies, without necessarily decreasing the government's influence or stake in the economies, and keeping the culture and traditions intact. The intention is there, but transparency is lacking, and both the methods and progress thus far are often questionable. Moreover, there is a real concern about wanting to achieve too much—in other words, more than can be achieved due to the lack of qualified women in the relevant fields or the demographics of a nation; it is difficult to fill positions with nationals when you do not have enough qualified people to fill them. How these economies will overcome this obstacle without losing their economic prosperity remains to be seen, but in the long term, relying so heavily on expatriates will not remain economically viable.

If not for the expatriates, women would form the majority of the populations in most of these countries; they are also better educated than their male counterparts in all four countries. The workforce is currently divided among nationals in the public sector and expatriates in the private sector. Integrating women into the workforce will be crucial and may lead to greater political participation, which is currently lacking. Moreover, most of the countries have young populations that are living in a world made much smaller by technology. If the respective governments are not bringing the necessary changes to their economies, which in turn would bring change to the way of life for their citizens, it could lead to internal instability due to the lack of opportunities for the younger population. Failure by these governments to implement reforms could therefore lead to the society forcing change from the bottom up, instead of change coming from the top down.

About the Author

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