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E4E Initiative for Arab Youth

E4E Initiative for Arab Youth aims to provide youth with skills that are relevant to the marketplace by investing in education and skills, engaging stakeholders, and enabling solutions so that Arab Youth earn a better future.

The reality facing Arab women

40%

Female youth unemployment -- highest globally

25%

Labor market participation rate – lowest globally

55%

Of youth enrolled in higher education are women

15%

of SMEs are owned by women-- less than half global average

- The Middle East and North Africa region has taken large strides over the past four decades to bridge gender gaps, especially in the areas of education and health. As a result, there is currently a reverse gender gap in higher education in many economies in the region, with more women than men enrolled in universities, for example, across the region.
- However, the increased rates of women's higher education are not translating into greater economic opportunities, and **women enter the MENA labor market at half the average global rate.**
- One reason is barriers to inclusion. This is partially due to social and legal barriers women face in obtaining professions and participating in the economy.
- Globally, the MENA region has the lowest representation of women-owned formal SMEs – 12-15%, compared to 31-38% of women-owned formal SMEs in emerging markets, according to IFC research

Measuring legal restrictions impacting economic parity

Women, Business and the Law examines differences by comparing men and women of the same marital status on the following 21 areas:

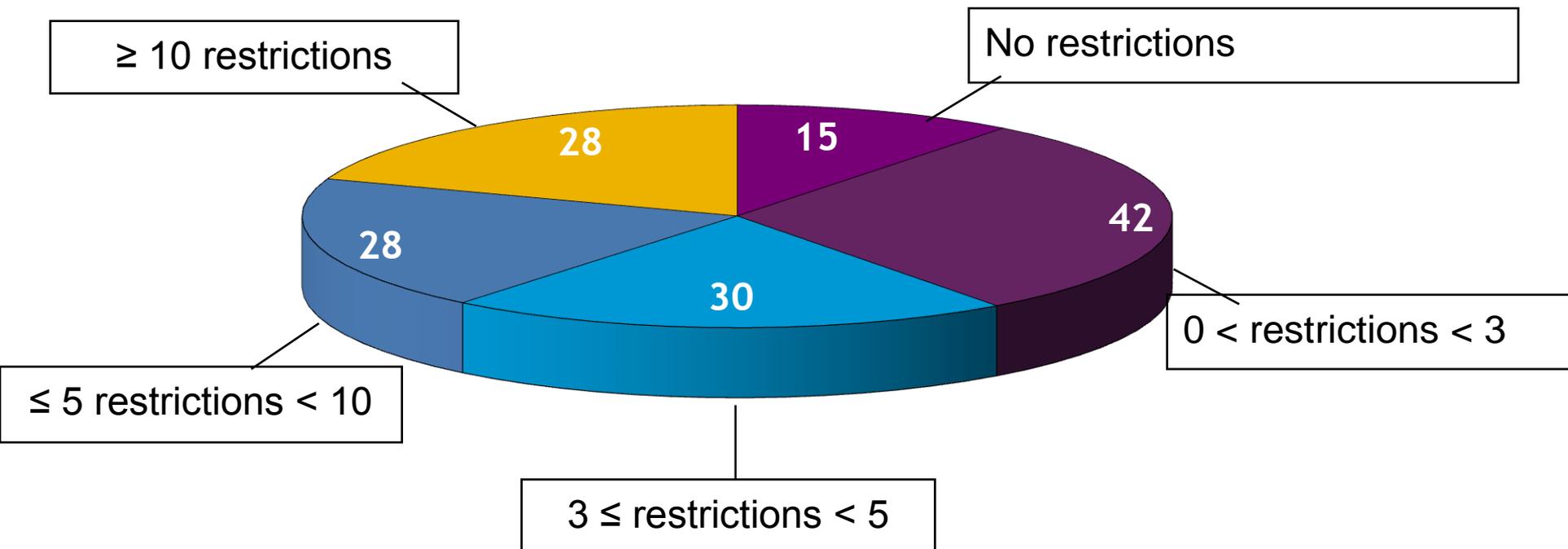
1. Applying for a passport
2. Traveling outside the home
3. Traveling outside the country
4. Getting a job or pursuing a trade or profession without permission
5. Signing a contract
6. Registering a business
7. Being “head of household” or “head of family”
8. Conferring citizenship on their children
9. Opening a bank account
10. Choosing where to live
11. Obtaining a national identity card
12. Having ownership rights over property
13. Having inheritance rights over property
14. Working the same night hours
15. Doing the same jobs
16. Enjoying the same statutory retirement age
17. Enjoying the same tax deductions or credits
18. Having their testimony carry the same evidentiary weight in court
19. Absence of a gender or sex nondiscrimination clause in the constitution
20. Validity of customary law if it violates the constitution
21. Validity of personal law if it violates the constitution

In addition, the dataset captures five other areas applicable only to married women:

22. Being legally required to obey their husbands
23. Being able to convey citizenship to their non-national husband
24. Administering marital property
25. Having legal recognition for nonmonetary contributions to marital property
26. Having inheritance rights to the property of their deceased husbands

Women Face Challenges Across Areas Measuring Economic Parity

Almost 90% of the 143 economies covered by *Women, Business and the Law 2014* have at least one legal difference restricting women's economic opportunities.

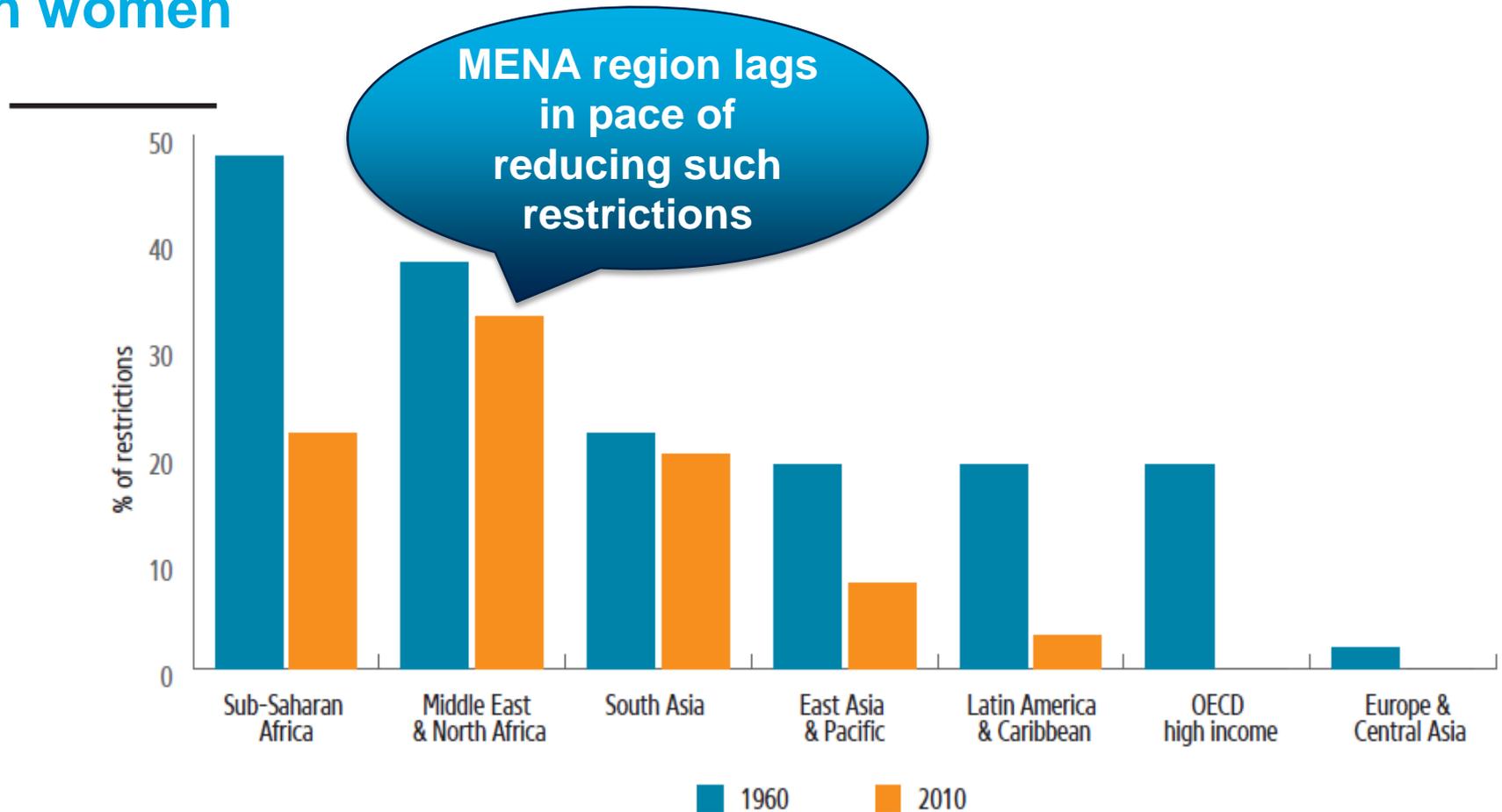


Among 28 economies that have 10 and more restrictions, 25 are in the Middle East and North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Married women face considerable restrictions on their actions impacting economic parity – especially in MENA

Action	Economies where married women do not perform the action the same way as married men
Be head of household	Benin; Burundi; Cameroon; Chad; Chile; Congo, Dem. Rep.; Congo, Rep.; Gabon; Guinea; Honduras; Indonesia; Iran, Islamic Rep.; Jordan; Madagascar; Mali; Mauritania; Morocco; Nicaragua; Niger; Oman; Philippines; Rwanda; Saudi Arabia; Senegal; Sudan; Togo; Tunisia; United Arab Emirates; Yemen, Rep. (29)
Choose where to live	Benin; Burkina Faso; Cameroon; Chad; Congo, Dem. Rep.; Congo, Rep.; Gabon; Guinea; Haiti; Iran, Islamic Rep.; Jordan; Kuwait; Malaysia; Mali; Nicaragua; Niger; Oman; Rwanda; Saudi Arabia; Senegal; Sudan; Syrian Arab Republic; United Arab Emirates; West Bank and Gaza; Yemen, Rep. (25)
Apply for a passport	Benin; Botswana; Cameroon; Congo, Rep.; Egypt, Arab Rep.; Fiji; Gabon; Haiti; Iran, Islamic Rep.; Jordan; Kuwait; Malawi; Oman; Pakistan; Saudi Arabia; Sudan; Uganda; United Arab Emirates; Yemen, Rep. (19)
Confer citizenship on her children	Guinea; Iran, Islamic Rep.; Jordan; Kuwait; Lebanon; Madagascar; Malaysia; Mali; Mauritania; Nepal; Oman; Saudi Arabia; Sudan; Syrian Arab Republic; United Arab Emirates; West Bank and Gaza (16)
Get a job without permission	Bolivia; Cameroon; Chad; Congo, Dem. Rep.; Gabon; Guinea; Iran, Islamic Rep.; Jordan; Kuwait; Mauritania; Niger; Sudan; Syrian Arab Republic; United Arab Emirates; West Bank and Gaza (15)
Obtain a national identity card	Benin; Cameroon; Egypt, Arab Rep.; Mauritius; Oman; Pakistan; Saudi Arabia; Senegal; Togo (9)
Travel outside the home	Iran, Islamic Rep.; Jordan; Kuwait; Malaysia; Oman; Sudan; Syrian Arab Republic; West Bank and Gaza; Yemen, Rep. (9)
Travel outside the country	Oman; Saudi Arabia; Sudan; Syrian Arab Republic (4)

Evolution of legal restrictions impacting economic parity on women



Source: 50 Years of Women's Legal Rights database; Hallward-Driemeier, Hasan and Rusu forthcoming.

Note: Where data are unavailable for 1960, the first known value is used.

In summary: MENA has a way to go to unleash potential of 50% of society

- ❑ **The Middle East and North Africa** had the second highest proportion of legal restrictions on women in 1960 as measured by *Women, Business and the Law's* historical analysis — **and the highest proportion today.**
- ❑ **There is growing evidence showing the links between women's legal rights and economic opportunities.** *Women, Business and the Law 2014* provides a rich body of data
- ❑ While globally progress has been made in recent decades in gradually dismantle many of the legal restrictions which have hampered women from more fully contributing to national prosperity, **there is a large unfinished agenda of reform in the MENA region.**
- ❑ In too many economies across all regions the law is still being used to hold women back, to silence their voices and limit their actions imposing large tangible costs linked to these constraints on women's freedom. **Gender equality is important not only for fairness and equity, but also for economic efficiency and is at the center of creating a more prosperous world.**
- ❑ **MENA**, with its lagging growth and limited youth entrepreneurship and employment opportunities, **should empower women by removing legal restrictions so that they become greater economic contributors**



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Thank You

For more information visit: www.E4EARabyouth.com

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