



Call for Papers

International Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Challenges, Solutions, and Best Practices in the Mediterranean Region

Faculty of Law

Main Campus,
Abu-Dis, Palestine

2 - 4 December 2025
Hybrid Event

Selected papers will be published in either an accredited Italian or Palestinian Journal

Background

Al-Quds University College of Law, announces the launch of a call for papers for the International Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Challenges, Solutions, and Best Practices in the Mediterranean Region.

This conference is organized in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Forum of Palestinian NGOs to Combat Violence Against Women, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the University of Perugia (Italy), with the support of The Italian Cooperation. It will take place from 2 to 4 December 2025.

The first day will be held at Al-Quds University in a hybrid format, the second day will include visits to Palestinian civil society organizations, and the final day will be dedicated to a roundtable dialogue with officials from the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

The conference will provide a dynamic platform for academics, researchers, civil society actors, policymakers, and regional stakeholders to share knowledge, exchange best practices, and develop actionable strategies to advance women's empowerment and combat gender-based violence (GBV) across the Mediterranean region, with a special focus on Palestine.

The three-day conference will adopt an inclusive, participatory, and evidence-informed approach designed to foster meaningful engagement and collaborative learning. It will feature a combination of keynote addresses, thematic panel discussions, interactive roundtables, case study presentations, and participatory workshops, ensuring a comprehensive dialogue that bridges academic research with grassroots realities. Gender experts, civil society representatives, and policymakers will actively contribute to co-creating knowledge and formulating policy recommendations.

Funded by:
The Italian Cooperation



To ensure broad accessibility and diverse participation, the conference will be held in a hybrid format with real-time interpretation in English, Arabic and Italian. This structure will facilitate engagement from Palestinian and Italian universities while welcoming contributions from interested academics and gender specialists from across the region and beyond.

The conference aims to shed light on the broader challenges confronting women across the Mediterranean region, with particular emphasis on the specific and multifaceted struggles faced by Palestinian women. It seeks to examine and identify concrete mechanisms to ensure the full respect, protection, and fulfilment of their rights, especially within a context marked by extreme vulnerability and the persistent deepening of social, political, and economic hardships in Palestine.

Conference Themes

Drawing on statistical data, this Conference aims to provide a platform for discussing critiques, solutions, and challenges related to women's empowerment in the Mediterranean region. Furthermore, the research and proposals of leading scholars will be integrated with the practical solutions adopted by institutions in addressing women's issues, with the active participation of civil society.

To this end, the Scientific Committee of the Conference welcomes submissions on relevant topics from jurists, economists, sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, and other experts, focusing on one of the following five thematic areas related to gender equality and women's empowerment:

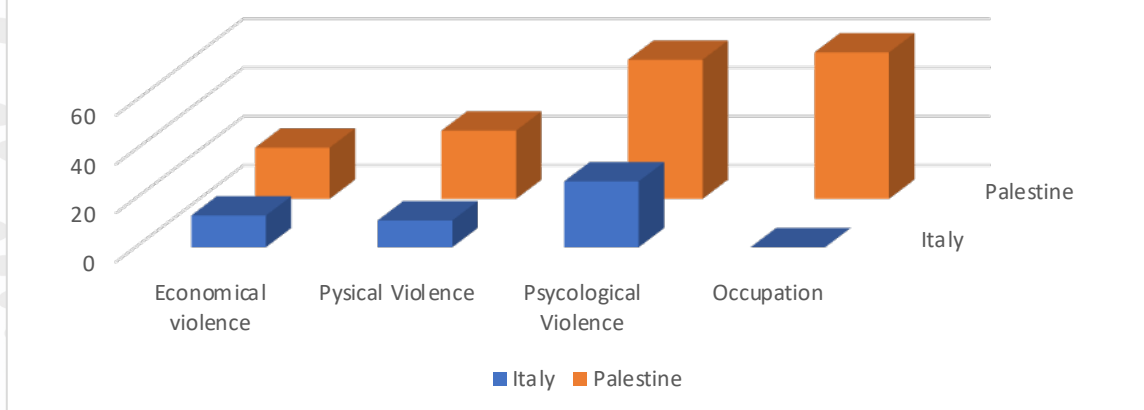
1. Violence against Women

Violence against women (VAW) is a global phenomenon. According to the World Health Organization's 2018 Report on Violence Against Women, nearly one in three women worldwide has experienced gender-based violence in at least one form, perpetrated either by intimate or non-intimate partners.

Based on official data available on types of VAW in Palestine and Italy, it is evident that the phenomenon poses a common challenge for both countries in achieving the 5th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, VAW in the two contexts is shaped by different social and political circumstances. The Conference aims to engage stakeholders in combating VAW by fostering the exchange of strategies and experiences.

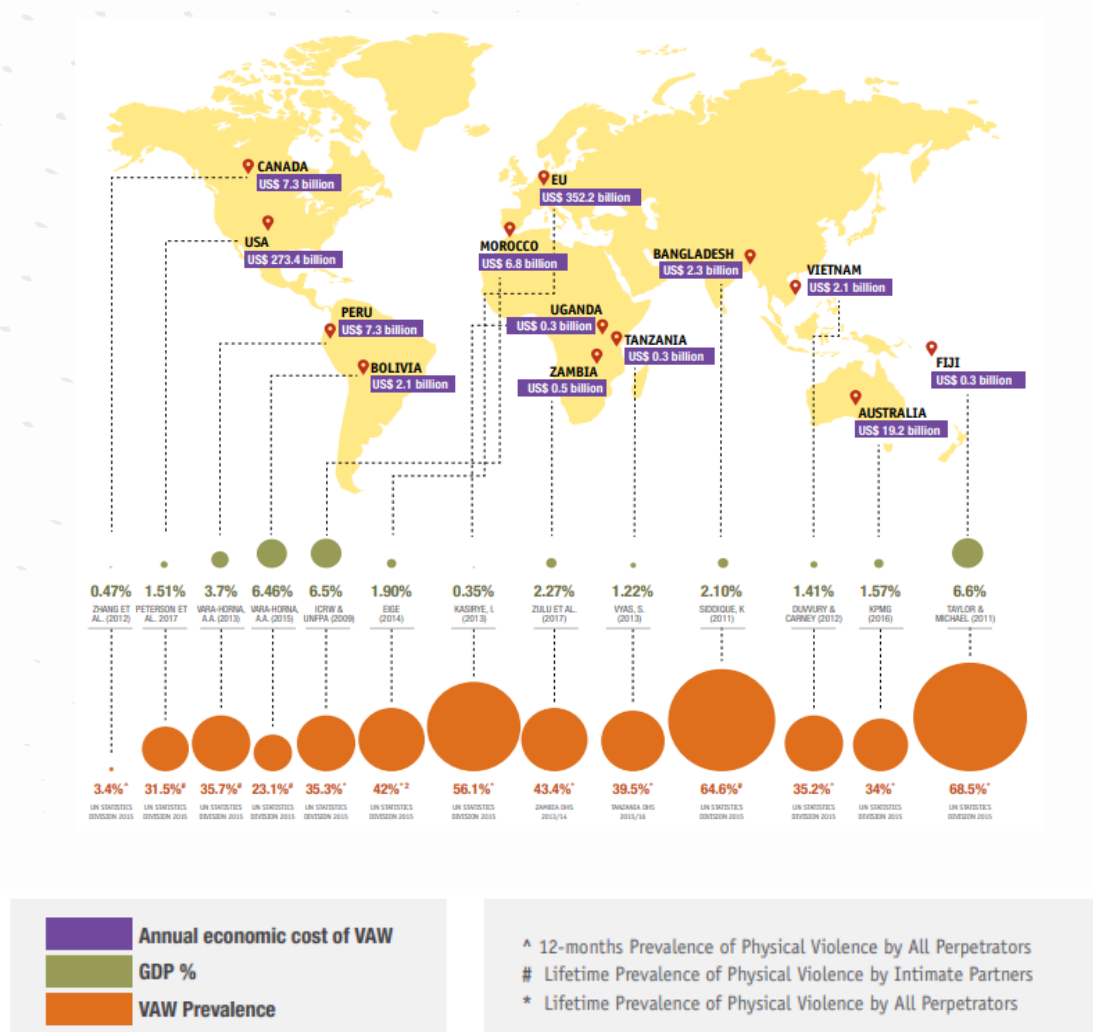
Official data collected by Italian National Institute of Statistics ([ISTAT](#)), the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics ([PCBS](#)), and the UN Population Fund ([UNFPA](#)) indicate that both countries are proportionally affected by similar forms of VAW. At the same time, the lack of systematic and comprehensive data collection remains a critical issue, preventing the provision of accurate and consistent information on an annual basis. This gap in data availability warrants further scholarly reflection.

comparing forms of VAW per Year (period 2014-2019)



According to the World Health Organization's report on [the economic dimension of interpersonal violence](#), VAW represents not only a violation of human rights but also a critical issue of public health policy. Its economic and social costs make it a matter of significant public concern from a macroeconomic perspective, particularly in relation to state economies and public finances.

The United Nations has estimated the global cost of VAW at approximately 1.5 trillion dollars, equivalent to about 2% of world GDP - comparable to the entire GDP of Canada.



Credits :CARE International report COUNTING THE COST :The Price Society Pays for Violence Against Women

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Consequently, this research track invites academics and experts to move beyond traditional approaches, to analyze the phenomenon and its root causes, assess the effectiveness of existing public policies, legislation, and advocacy efforts in combating VAW, and share experiences and best practices aimed at proposing joint solutions.

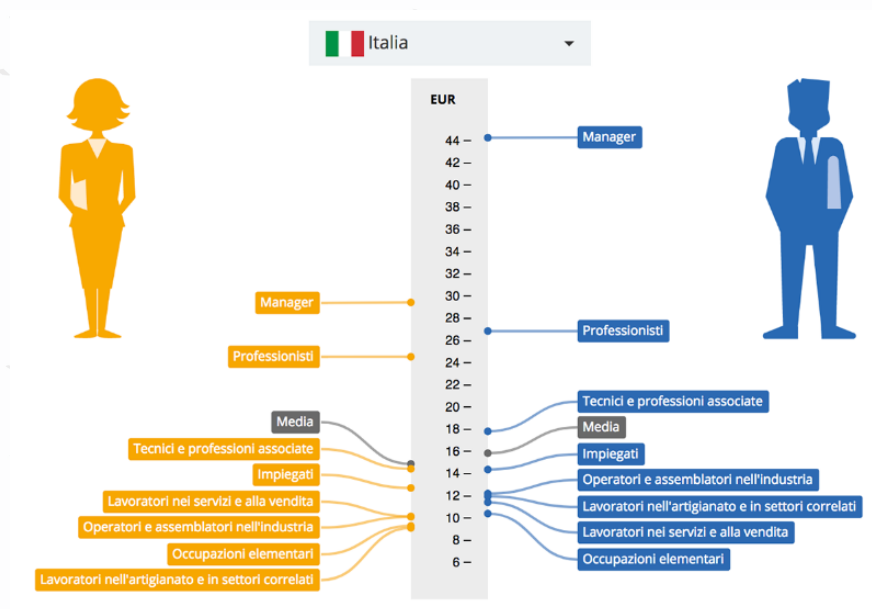
2. Gender Equality in the Labour Market and Workplace

According to the European Pillar of Social Rights, equality of treatment and opportunity between women and men must be ensured and promoted in all areas, including participation in the labour market, as well as in the terms, conditions, and prospects of employment and career progression.

However, cultural stereotypes in some societies continue to influence women's roles. Married women are often expected to assume the role of housewives, responsible for childcare and domestic duties. As a result, a significant number of women leave the workforce after marriage.

From the perspective of the gender pay gap, although women and men have the right to equal pay for work of equal value, the implementation of this principle remains far from reality. The unadjusted gender pay gap, the employment gap by type of work, and women's overall participation in the labour market continue to represent common challenges - albeit in different forms - for both countries in achieving the 5th UN Sustainable Development Goal.

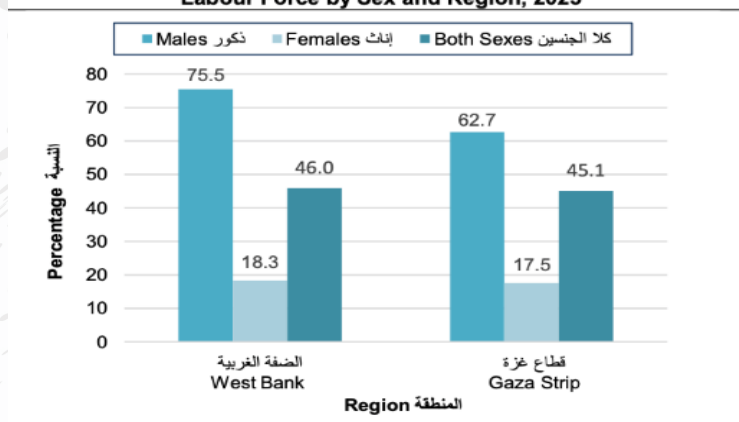
According to [ISTAT](#), women in Italy earn on average 5% less than men.



Data collected by the ISTAT highlights a new trend in: 2022 the percentage of women on the boards of directors of listed companies rose to 42.9%, marking an increase of 1.7 percentage points. Similarly, the share of women in decision-making positions reached 21%, reflecting an increase of 1.9 percentage points.

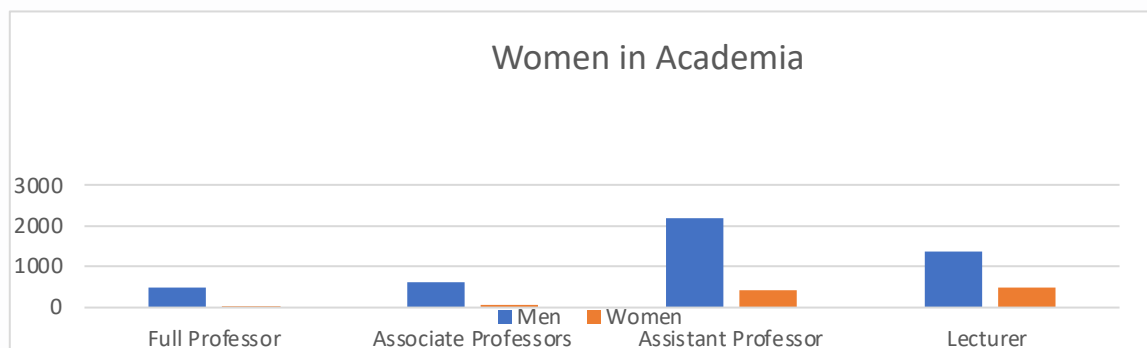
In Palestine, however, the gender gap in the labour market remains critical. Women are often paid less despite their engagement in decent work and continuing to shoulder a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic responsibilities, as documented in the UN Report on the [Social and Economic Situation of Palestinian Women and Girls](#).

نسبة الأفراد (15 سنة فأكثر) المشاركين في القوى العاملة حسب الجنس والمنطقة، 2023
Percentage of Individuals (Aged 15 Years and above) participating in Labour Force by Sex and Region, 2023



Credits :PCBS 2024, b,pp64 .

The disparities in the labour market must also be examined in light of contradictory data collected from the education sector. In Palestine, for example, gender inequality is evident in academia. While the Ministry of Higher Education reported in 2023 that women accounted for 63.1% of the 42,394 graduates, the vast majority of those holding the title of Professor Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor (remain men).

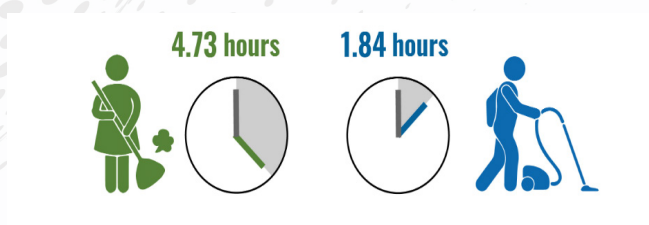


This data highlights significant disparities that warrant further research to uncover their underlying causes. Could the areas of study chosen by women be a contributing factor? In the academic year 41%, 2020/21 of women enrolled in faculties of technology, information, and communication, while women accounted for 72% of students in natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics compared to 28% of men.

Within this framework, academics and experts are invited to analyse this phenomenon and its root causes through a holistic and multidisciplinary approach. This includes assessing the effectiveness of existing public policies, legislation, and advocacy initiatives in addressing the gender gap in the labour market and workplace, as well as sharing experiences and best practices to develop joint solutions.

3. Women and Society

Studies by the [UN](#) and the [Council of the EU](#) demonstrate that women's empowerment is primarily shaped by societal factors, with stereotypes playing a major - whether direct or indirect - role in the percentages and statistics reported. Gender discrimination embedded in social norms continues to influence multiple aspects of society. For example, the SIGI 2023 Global Report highlights the global disparity in the time men and women dedicate to housework.



Credit SIGI

Further, a study on [Multiple Dimensions of Gender Stereotypes](#) shows common perceptions of women's skills.

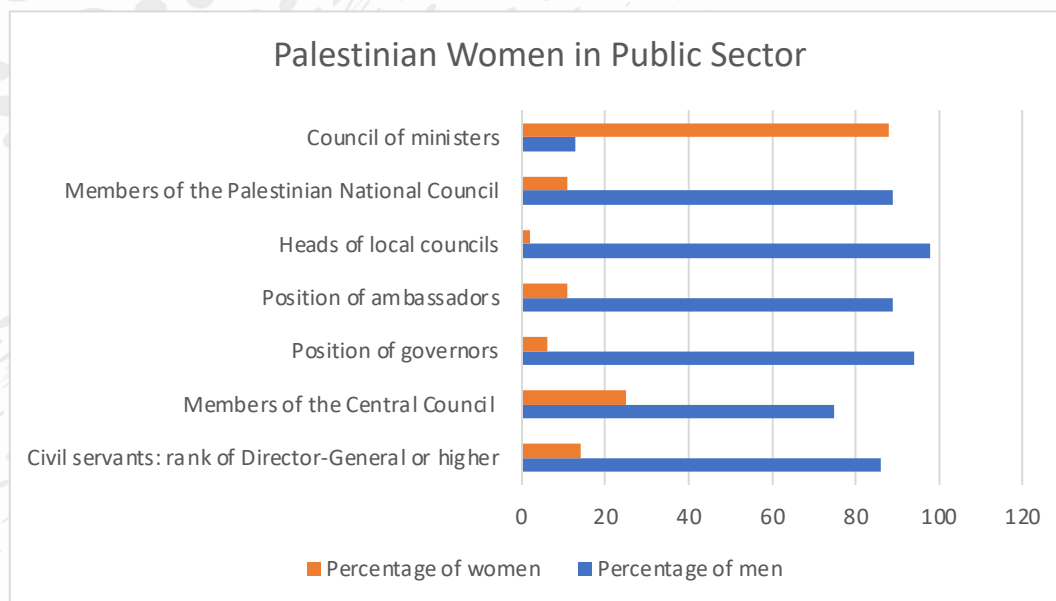
Agency dimensions	Corrected item-scale correlation	Communality dimensions	Corrected item-total correlation
Instrumental Competence ($\alpha = 0.88$)		Concern for Others ($\alpha = 0.91$)	
Competent	0.74	Understanding	0.75
Effective	0.79	Kind	0.79
Productive	0.78	Compassionate	0.82
Task-Oriented	0.67	Sympathetic	0.80
Leadership Competence ($\alpha = 0.80$)		Sociability ($\alpha = 0.77$)	
Leadership Ability	0.71	Communicative	0.62
Achievement-Oriented	0.62	Collaborative	0.58
Skilled In Business Matters	0.62	Relationship-oriented	0.52
Assertiveness ($\alpha = 0.80$)		Likeable	0.60
Dominant	0.62	Emotional Sensitivity ($\alpha = 0.75$)	
Bold	0.56	Emotional	0.59
Assertive	0.66	Intuitive	0.47
Competitive	0.60	Sentimental	0.68
Independence ($\alpha = 0.82$)			
Independent	0.72		
Desires Responsibility	0.56		
Emotionally Stable	0.60		
Self-Reliant	0.69		

Credit: Hentschel, Heilman, Peus

In this regard, academics are encouraged to analyze cultural critiques, challenges, and factors that confine women to specific gender roles. Papers that examine the effectiveness of policies, legislative provisions, and best practices implemented by states to address these cultural barriers and advance gender equality are particularly welcomed.

4. Gender and State Sectors

This track focuses on women's active participation in society. According to the PCBS, women's participation in the public sector remains significantly lower than that of men.



Similarly, in Italy, despite differences in percentages, the trend of male dominance persists. In 2022 women's representation in Parliament stood at 33.7%, while at the regional level, their representation increased by 1.2% in the 2023 regional council elections.

Measures to ensure that public administrations reflect the populations they serve - including gender composition - can contribute to more inclusive decision-making and governance. Gender mainstreaming plays a key role in this regard and is considered one of the most effective strategies for promoting gender equality.

Within this framework, academics and experts are invited to analyze gender equality in public participation, examine the underlying causes of disparities, evaluate the effectiveness of existing public policies, and share best practices.

5. The "Sistema Italia"/ The Italian System

The "Italian System" will be represented by a group of experts from institutional, academic, business, and non-profit sectors, who will bring qualified contributions to the conference based on concrete experiences developed in the Italian context. Through the analysis and sharing of best practices, innovative projects, and case studies, they will present effective models aimed at promoting women's empowerment, female leadership, gender equality, and socio-economic inclusion.

The Italian contribution will be structured around the other four thematic pillars of the conference, with the goal of providing transferable solutions that can be adapted and implemented in different countries and contexts. This approach seeks to foster constructive dialogue and international knowledge exchange, aimed to reinforce international cooperation networks capable of generating positive and lasting impact on gender equality at a global level.

Submission of Abstract:

- Abstracts of **200 - 350** words should be submitted in **English or (in English and Arabic) or (English and Italian)** on one of the five proposed themes, accompanied by the author's biography, no later than **22 September 2025 at 12:00 a.m. (Palestine time.)**
- The **first and final drafts of the paper**, in addition to the **PowerPoint presentation**, should be submitted in one of the official languages of the conference (**Arabic, English, or Italian.**)
- Abstracts should include:
 - Title
 - Author(s) and affiliation(s)
 - Research objectives
 - Methodology
 - Key findings or expected outcomes
 - Relevance to conference themes
- Abstracts and author biography should be submitted online via email: **dsdc@alquds.edu**
- Exceptional papers submitted in the official languages of the conference will be evaluated and published in peer-reviewed Italian or Palestinian journals (depending on the language in which the papers are submitted).

Important Dates

- Abstract and biography submission deadline: **22 September 2025**
- Notification of Acceptance: **2 October 2025**
- Submission of paper's first draft and Power Point presentation: **25 November 2025**
- Conference date: **2 - 4 December 2025**
- Full paper submission for journal publication: **3 January 2026**

Conference Format

The conference will be conducted in a hybrid format, with sessions available both in-person at Al-Quds University and online. We particularly encourage participation from academics and experts from Palestinian and Italian universities, as well as other Mediterranean countries.

Authors of selected papers will be considered main participants in the conference. They are expected to be available to join meetings with Palestinian civil society on 3 December and with the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs on 4 December, in order to engage in productive dialogue with stakeholders and policymakers and to ensure the development of practical recommendations and outcomes from the conference.

We look forward to receiving your submissions and to a fruitful exchange of knowledge and experiences toward **advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the Mediterranean region.**

Contact Information

For inquiries, please contact: **dsdc@alquds.edu**