

Reflections of Female Leaders in Oman

An Agenda for Change

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Context for Female Empowerment

- shifting international paradigms
- diversity good for business
- “Gender Empowerment Deficit” in the Arab world

The Gender Tapestry in Oman

- Transformed Realities
 - education, employment, visibility and legal rights
- Contrasting Paradigms
 - low economic participation
 - concentration of women in lower level jobs in spite of higher educational attainment
 - gender based specializations & positions
 - legal illiteracy
 - higher unemployment, illiteracy, disadvantaged earnings
 - negative attitudes & stereotypes

Voices of Leading Women

Shared Characteristics

- socialization patterns
 - egalitarian home environments
 - influential parents – fathers
 - emphasis on education
- measured motivation
- work/home “imbalance” impact on spouses
- pressure to prove themselves

Path for Change

1. establish direction – a vision
2. develop a transformational strategy
 1. progressive interpretation of Islam
 2. reconstruct public perception of gender
 3. transform work cultures
 4. include men as change agents
 5. emphasize the business case for inclusiveness
 6. promote gender studies and link with international and regional institution
3. establish a gender research agenda and link to public policy
4. measure and celebrate accomplishments

A call for change

“God will never change the grace which He hath bestowed on a people until they change what is in their (own souls)”

The Holy Quran,
Surat Alanfal, VIII:52