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CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON DISABILITIES
AND SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Employment of Arab Women Aged 18-64

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The study was commissioned and funded by
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RESEARCH REPORT

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1. Introduction

This report relates to a study on the employment of Arab women in Israel. In 2006, the population of Arab women aged 18-64 was 350,000. Only 22.5% of them – 78,600 women – participate in the labor force: 65,400 (18.7%) are employed and 13,200 (3.8%) are seeking work. In contrast, 245,000 are not working, nor seeking work, nor studying. The rate of participation in the labor force among Jewish women is 71.3%. Thus, Arab women are over-represented in the population of women who do not participate in the labor force: they account for 38% of all non-participating women, while their percentage among the total population of women aged 18-64 is 17.2%.

Their participation rate in the labor force has increased only slightly over the years, despite a consistent, steady increase in education levels and a decline in fertility rates. An increase in the rate of working women should contribute considerably to reducing poverty in Arab families, particularly if it increases the number of families with two breadwinners. Expanding Arab women's employment has been defined as a major goal of national policy to promote economic growth.

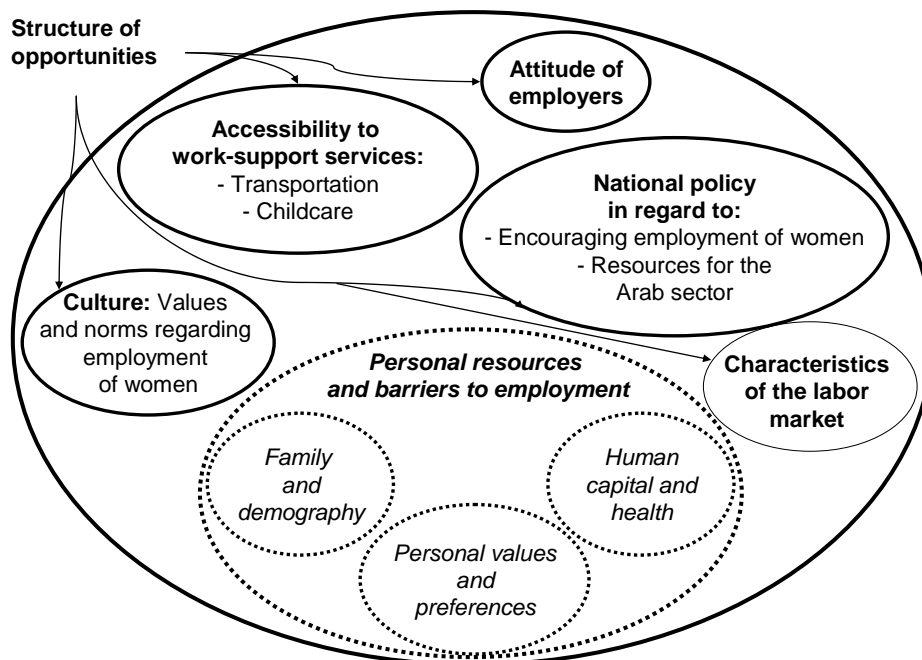
The report focuses on the analysis of patterns of employment. However, it also analyzes characteristics of those not participating in the labor force and tries to identify groups with high potential for employment.

The report has three parts: Conceptual framework, a statistical analysis of employment data from diverse sources, and a description of three types of strategies to promote the employment of Arab women in Israel.

2. Conceptual Framework

In the academic and public discourse, there are three types of explanations for the low participation rate in the labor market among Arab women: (1) Characteristics of the women themselves, chiefly the barriers that impede their integration into employment, such as a low level of education, lack of occupations suited to a modern economy, lack of employment experience, poor command of Hebrew (which limits their ability to work in the Jewish sector), and a relatively large number of children; (2) The culture and social norms of traditional Arab society regarding gender roles, that emphasize the role of women in the household and the family and impose restrictions on what they can do outside the home and the local community; (3) The structure of opportunities for the Arab minority, particularly Arab women, in the labor market as influenced by the limited local-ethnic labor market open to them, attitudes of employers (discrimination and stereotypes), government policies toward the Arab population with respect to infrastructure, education, training and employment assistance, including childcare arrangements (see figure 1). The report focuses on an analysis of the personal resources and barriers to employment, while shedding light on the role of cultural factors.

Figure 1: Factors Affecting the Employment of Arab Women



3. Statistical Analysis of Employment Data

The statistical analysis is based on data from three categories of surveys conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS): (1) *The Labour Force Surveys*, 1990–2006; (2) *The Social Surveys* – 2005, which focused on employment, and 2004, which addressed childcare arrangements; (3) *The Income Survey, 2006*. Special analyses were also made of data collected in the course of an evaluation of the *Mehalev* program (the Israeli equivalent of From Welfare to Work) by the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute and the Research and Planning Administration at the National Insurance Institute.

There are three factors that should support greater participation of Arab women in the labor force: a decline in fertility, an increase in the level of education, and a climate that encourages them to go out to work.

3.1 Decline in the Fertility Rate of Arab Women Coupled with a Considerable Increase in the Level of Education, Chiefly Among Younger Women

- ◆ Between 1996 and 2006, the fertility rate among all Arab women declined from 4.4 to 3.7, while the fertility rate among Jewish women hardly changed (a decline from 2.7 to 2.6).
- ◆ The greatest decline was among Druze women – from 3.4 to 2.6. Among Muslim women, the fertility rate declined from 4.7 to 4.0.

- ◆ The level of education among Arab women aged 18-64 increased steadily between 1990 and 2006. The percentage of those with little education (0-8 years) declined from 60.2% to 31.8%. The percentage of high school graduates increased by 9 percentage points – from 18.4% to 27.6%; the percentage of those with 13-15 years of education doubled – from 6.1% to 13.3%; and the percentage of those with 16+ years of education, the vast majority of whom (75%) have an academic degree, increased fivefold (from 1.8% to 10.3%). Among Jewish women there was a decline in the rate of the less educated (from 17.1% to 4.7% among those with 0-8 years, and from 15.8% to 8.9% among those with 9-11 years of education). In parallel, there was a marked increase in the rate of those with post secondary-education (from 33.2% to 53.8%).
- ◆ The improvement in education is especially striking among young women aged 18-24. The percentage of those with little education among them declined from 33.4% in 1990 to 9.9% in 2006, and the percentage of those with post-high school education rose from 11.7% to 36.6%.
- ◆ There is still a considerable gap between Arab and Jewish women in the post-high school education rate.
- ◆ Young Arab women could be delaying marriage and childbirth in order to continue their studies: 66% of those aged 18-24 are unmarried; 73% of those in that age cohort have no children. The percentage with children among those with post-secondary education is much lower than among those with 9-11 years of schooling (18% vs. 42%, respectively).

3.2 Positive Attitudes toward Employment of Women among Arab Men and Women

- ◆ Data from the CBS 2005 *Social Survey* indicate that the percentages of positive attitudes about women going out to work held by men and women are identical and quite high. Obviously, we cannot reach conclusions about actual behavior on the basis of declared attitudes, but the data do imply that there could be a positive climate in this regard.
- ◆ Approximately 75% of the men and women believe it important for both spouses to work; among those with post-high school education, the percentage is even higher.
- ◆ In contrast, when there are small children in the family, there is less support for women going out to work: Some 55% of the women and men believe, in that case, that the women should stay at home and take care of their children, and a further 25% of the women and 20% of the men think they should work part-time. Only 20% of the women and 25% of the men think that a woman who has small children should work full time.
- ◆ There are differences according to level of education. Women with post-high school education prefer part-time work to non-employment when there are small children in the family (42.3% vs. 29.7%, respectively), while less educated women, even those with high school education, prefer non-employment. (52.9%)

- ♦ Women who participate in the labor force are more supportive of women going out to work and the solution of part-time work when there are small children in the family than women who do not participate. But even among non-participants, the vast majority (73%) support going out to work, including 35% who express support even for women with small children.

3.3 Low Participation Rate in the Labor Force among Arab Women and Slow Progress over the Years

- ♦ The participation rate in the labor force among Arab women aged 18-64 in Israel is 22.5%: 18.7% (65,400 women) are employed and 3.8% (13,200) are unemployed (not working, but actively looking for a job). Altogether, 284,600 women are not working. The participation rate in the labor force among Arab women is very low compared to that among Jewish women – 22.5% vs. 71.3%.
- ♦ Beyond the currently low participation rate, the problem is that there has been no significant increase in the employment rate over time, and in many sub-groups the problem is becoming more severe. This is so despite the steady rise in education and decline in fertility – two factors that are known to affect women's entering the labor market – and despite the economic growth between 2003-2006, which contributed to an increase of almost one percentage point per year in the employment rate among Jewish women. From 1990-2006, the employment rate among Arab women aged 18-64 rose by 5.4 percentage points only (from 13.3% to 18.7%), compared with an increase of 14.1 percentage points among Jewish women (from 51.3% to 65.4%). Thus, there is an 8.7 percentage point gap between Jewish and Arab women in the increase in employment.
- ♦ The main reason for the relatively moderate increase in the employment rate among Arab women is the fact that in most of the education groups, there has been a decline in the employment rate. Among Arab women with up to 8 years of schooling, there was a rather consistent decline from 6.2% in 1990 to 4.7% in 2006, while among those with 9-11 years of education there was a consistent decline from 14.0% to 9.3%. The employment rate among women with 12 years of education peaked at 25% in 1995 and since declined steadily to 16% in 2006, compared with 20% in 1990. Among women with 13-15 years of education, there was a decline from 46% in 1990 to 34% in 2006. The participation rate among women with 16+ years of education fluctuated greatly, peaking at 71.5% in 2001, and subsequently dropping to 65.2%, which is similar to the level in 1990.
- ♦ The increase in the employment rate among the total population of Arab women, despite the decline in the participation rate in each one of the education-level groups, is due to the fact that the group of women with 16+ years of education (which has the highest percentage of working women) increased fivefold during the period in question. Despite the fact that the employment rate for the group itself declined slightly, it nevertheless brought about a certain increase in the employment rate among the total population of Arab women.
- ♦ In contrast, among Jewish women, there was an increase in the employment rates of all education-level groups (3-10 percentage points) except for women with 0-8 years of schooling, which remained unchanged.

3.4 Differential Reasons for the Decline in Employment Rates among Different Education-level Groups

- ◆ There are various reasons for the decline in the employment rate among women with differing levels of education. Shekhade (2004) and Khaider (2005) attribute the decline in the employment rate among women with low education (up to 11 years) to the impact of macroeconomic and political changes: Reduced demand for unskilled labor due to structural changes in the economy, e.g., a decline in the proportion of traditional labor-intensive industry in relation to high-tech industry; export of manufacturing plants to countries where labor is cheap (e.g., Jordan, following the peace accords), to the detriment of Arab women who used to work at textile factories in their villages; replacement of local workers in traditional branches of the economy (notably agriculture) by foreign workers.
- ◆ The decline in employment among educated women, particularly those with 13-15 years of education, is seen mainly among younger women (aged 18-34) and is due to their postponing entry into employment in order to further their education. Between 1990 and 2006, the percentage of those engaged exclusively in studying increased from 44.4% to 52.9%, an increase of 8.5 percentage points, while the percentage of those working (including women who combine work with studying) declined from 38.0% to 25.9%, a decline of 12.1 percentage points. The high employment rate of Arab women with 16+ years of education (65%) demonstrates that those now studying can be expected to integrate into employment at a later stage, with enhanced human capital resources.

3.5 Difference in Employment Rates by Background Characteristics, 2006

- ◆ **Age:** The highest employment rate is among those aged 25-44 (24%). Among the 18-24 and 45-54 age cohorts, it is 15%; in the 55-64 cohort, it declines to 5.6%. When the women who are studying are included, the rate among those aged 18-24 increases to 41.4%.
- ◆ **Education:** The employment rate rises sharply with education. It is 4.7% among women with 0-8 years of schooling, 9.3% among those with 9-11 years, 16% among those who completed 12 years of education (regardless of whether they passed matriculation), 34% among those with 13-15 years of education, and 65.2% among those with 16+ years of education.
- ◆ **Number of children under 18:** The employment rate is 18.5% among women with no children; it increases to 24.1% among mothers of 1-2 children, and thereafter declines to 7.7% among women with 5 or more children.
- ◆ **Age of youngest child:** The employment rate is 15.9% among mothers whose youngest child is 0-1; it goes up to 21% among mothers whose youngest child is aged 3-9, and thereafter declines to 17.2% among mothers whose youngest child is aged 10-17, who are themselves older than the other mothers.
- ◆ **Religion:** The highest employment rate is among Christian Arab women (38.0%), compared with 19.5% among Druze women, and 15.6% among Muslim women.

- ♦ **Religious observance** (Muslims only): The employment rates among women who describe themselves as religious or very religious are lower than among those who describe themselves as non-observant or not very religious – 12% vs. 21%, respectively.
- ♦ **Type and size of locality**: Most Arab women live in communities that are homogeneous, i.e. all the residents are Arab; 23.8% live in cities with a mixed Jewish-Arab population. The employment rate among women living in mixed cities is higher than the rate in Arab localities with over 10,000 residents and in Arab villages up to 10,000 residents – 20.9% compared with 17.7% and 15.1%, respectively.
- ♦ **Area of residence (district)**: The employment rate in Tel Aviv and the central district is 24.5%; in Haifa and the north it is 20.9%; in Jerusalem, 11.9%; and in the south, 9.0%. Area of residence can represent differences in the labor market and in the opportunities that it offers. However, residence in the south reflects not only a geographical difference, but also an ethnic difference – almost all the Arabs in the south are Bedouin. Residence in Jerusalem refers primarily to East Jerusalem.

3.6 Importance of Education in Increasing Integration into Work: Multivariate Analysis

In order to ascertain the independent effect of each of the background variables, we conducted a multivariate analysis. This enabled us, for example, to examine the effects of education and age separately, in light of the correlation between them (the educated women are younger) and to separate the effects of education and area of residence (women in the south are less educated). The analysis included age, education, age of youngest child, religion, area of residence, and type of locality.

- ♦ **Education**: The multivariate analysis reveals that education is the variable with the greatest independent effect on the employment of women (Arab and Jewish alike). The probability for women with 16+ years of education is greater by 61 percentage points than for women who have only 8 years of education, and the probability of women with 13-15 years of education is greater by 37 percentage points. Education has a far greater effect among Arab women than among Jewish women.
- ♦ **Age of youngest child**: Having small children at home reduces the probability of employment. When the youngest child is under two, the chances of the mother's being employed are 9 percentage points lower than the chances of a mother with no children under 18. When the youngest child is 2-4, the chances are reduced by 7 percentage points, and when he or she is 5-9, they decline by 4 percentage points. In an additional analysis, in which we added the interaction between the mother's education and age of the youngest child, we found that the age of the youngest child has a differential effect upon mothers with different levels of education. At one extreme, when the woman has no more than 11 years of education and, at the other, when she has 13+ years of education, there is almost no difference between her chances of being employed when she has a child under 5 and those of a woman with the same level of education who has no child of that age. In contrast, among women with 12 years of education, the presence of a young child at home has a considerable effect on the

chances of the mother's working: the chances of a mother whose youngest child is 0-1 or 2-4 are lower by 8-14 percentage points than a woman with no children or a woman whose youngest child is 5 or more. This could perhaps be explained by education, employment opportunities, expected wages, and childcare costs. Women with 0-11 years of education have relatively few employment opportunities and therefore the age of the child does not make much of a difference. The opportunities for women with 13+ years of education are greater and they can expect higher wages. Hence, childcare costs are less of a factor. However, women with 12 years of education may have employment opportunities, but the costs of childcare arrangements may be high in relation to the expected wage.

- ◆ **Culture:** The data from the multivariate analysis also enables us to separate the effect of cultural and communal norms from that of factors such as education, age, and the age of the youngest child. As noted in Section 3.5, the employment rate among Christian women is much higher than among Muslims and Druze – the employment rate is double and the gap is 20 percentage points. However, when we control for the other variables, we find that the gap is greatly reduced to 10 percentage points. This indicates that the gap between these groups which may be attributed to socio-cultural factors, is far smaller than is usually thought. Moreover, the gap in employment between Druze and Muslim women fully disappears.
- ◆ **Area of residence:** The large gaps in employment among the geographical areas shown above also decline significantly in the multivariate analysis, since, to a great extent, they, too, are explained by the differences in population characteristics among the areas.

3.7 Differences between Arab and Jewish Women

- ◆ **Fertility rate:** Between 1995 and 2006, the overall fertility rate among Arab women declined from 4.4 to 3.7, while among Jewish women the rate of 2.6 hardly changed. Today, two subgroups among the population of Arab women are similar to the Jewish women: the fertility rate among the Druze is identical to that among the Jewish women and among the Christian women it is even lower (2.2).
- ◆ **Education:** The level of education among Arab women rose consistently and steadily from 1990-2006, particularly among young women. Nevertheless, there are still considerable gaps between Arab women and their Jewish counterparts. The absolute gap between Jewish and Arab women in the percentage of those with 13+ years of education increased during that period and reached 30 percentage points, compared with 25 in 1990. However, the relative gap¹ declined from 76% to 56%.
- ◆ The effect of various characteristics on employment among Jewish and Arab women in the multivariate analysis is very similar, with the exception of two important differences:

¹ We define the relative gap as the ratio between the difference in the percentage of women with 13+ years of education among Jewish and Arab women and the percentage of Jewish women with 13+ years of education among Jewish women at the same level.

- ***The effect of higher education*** – 16 or more years – is far stronger among Arab women. In contrast, the effect of additional education (from 0-8 years to 9-11 or to 12 years) is much lower among Arab women. Evidently, higher education greatly helps Arab women to reduce the gap between them and the Jewish women. In order to assess the impact of the differences in the educational level of Arab and Jewish women we applied the educational distribution of Jewish Women to the employment rate of Arab women in each education group. Our calculations reveal that if the education level of Arab women were raised to that of Jewish women, it would bring the employment rate up to 32.6%, but there would still be a gap of 32.8 percentage points in favor of Jewish women.
- ***Age of youngest child:*** The second difference is in the effect of the age of the youngest child. When the youngest child is aged 0-1, it has a negative effect on both groups, reducing the chance of being employed by 10 percentage points in comparison with women who have no children. However, among the Jewish women, when the youngest child is older, it does not reduce the chance and may even increase it when the youngest child is over 5. In contrast, among Arab women, there is a significant negative effect when the child is 2-4 and even when he/she is in the 5-9 age group.

3.8 Significance of Small Children as a Barrier to Employment for Arab Women

- ♦ The multivariate analysis revealed that the presence of small children has an effect on whether women go out to work. Is the barrier the lack of childcare arrangements for small children (e.g., daycare and home-based childcare services), the relatively high cost in relation to the expected wage, the women's personal preference to take care of their small children themselves, or family expectations (or pressures) to do so (husband, father, and/or other members of the family)? It has been documented that there are limited childcare frameworks available in the Arab sector. However, it is unclear to what extent this is a cause of low employment or the result of it. There are different perspectives in the literature.
- ♦ A number of nonprofit organizations such as Sikkuy (Dichter, Report, 2003–2004) have strongly argued that one of the reasons for the low participation rate in the labor force among Arab women is the shortage of childcare arrangements.
- ♦ Fichtelberg-Barmatz (2004), who examined childcare arrangements for children aged between 3 months and 3.5 years, claims that one of the main reasons why the demand for daycare and home-based daycare services is low in the Arab sector is that few women participate in the labor force and that some of them prefer informal arrangements for their children (having a female family member care for them). However, she notes that the rate of expansion of care arrangements is so low that it does not keep pace even with the small increase in the number of women participating in the labor force.
- ♦ Data from the *Social Survey 2005* show that 68% of the mothers who do not participate in the labor force attributed their not working to looking after their children. In the case of 51% of them, the youngest child was under 3; for 18%, 2-4; and for 31% 5 and above. These mothers were also asked to explain in what sense their small children constituted a barrier to

employment. Eighty-four percent said it was important for them to stay at home and look after the children; 6% noted that their families expected them to stay at home and look after the children. Only 6% said that they had not found an arrangement that suited them (either because of the hours or for other reasons). Almost none of the women said that the (expected) income from work would not cover the childcare arrangements. These findings suggest that it is mainly the women's personal preference (perhaps for cultural reasons) to look after their children themselves and less the lack of childcare arrangements that prevents them joining the labor force. However, it may be that when there are no reasonably priced, good frameworks available, Arab women prefer to remain at home and look after their children themselves because they cannot imagine a suitable alternative.

- ◆ Schlosser (2006) found that providing free preschools in Arab localities for children aged 2-4 on an experimental basis increased the mothers' participation in the labor force by 7 percentage points, particularly among the educated (12+ years of education).

3.9 Employees' Quality of Employment: To what Extent are Educated Arab Women Employed in Occupations Commensurate with their Education?

- ◆ The findings of our analysis show that the percentage of Arab women with a post-secondary diploma (academic or otherwise) employed in academic, professional, technical, and management jobs is higher than the equivalent percentage among Jewish women with the same level of education (75% vs. 61%).
- ◆ However, most of the Arab women with academic degrees (54.2%) are employed in professional and technical jobs and not in managerial or academic positions. This may partly be accounted for by the fact that a high percentage (42%) of them are employed as elementary school or kindergarten teachers, occupations that are classified as professional rather than academic, even though teachers' seminaries nowadays award academic diplomas.
- ◆ A comparison of Arab and Jewish women with academic degrees shows that the percentage of women employed in academic and managerial occupations is higher among Jewish women (44.0% vs. 33.4%, respectively) whereas the percentage of those employed in professional and technical positions is greater among Arab university graduates (54.2% vs. 25.4%).
- ◆ On the subjective perception level, 58% of all employed Arab women believe that their occupation is related to their education to a great extent (12.6%) or to a very great extent (45.3%). This percentage is 13 percentage points higher than among Jewish women and 36 percentage points higher than among Arab men. It is important also to note that the percentage increases with the level of education and reaches approximately 90% among women with 16+ years of education, compared to 69% of Jewish women with similar education.
- ◆ Another measure of quality of employment is job satisfaction. Job satisfaction among Arab women is greater than among Arab men but falls short of that among Jewish women – 79% are satisfied or very satisfied with their work, compared with 71% of Arab men and 86% of

Jewish women. The satisfaction levels do not differ greatly according to the levels of education.

- ◆ Abu-Bader and Gottleib (2007) found that the percentage of Arab men with an academic education who are employed in an occupation that is not commensurate with their education (i.e., one that is not academic, managerial, professional, or technical) is far greater than the percentage of women (22.5% vs. 9.7%). In the case of non-academic post-high school education, the figures are 28.7% vs. 3.8%).
- ◆ It is frequently claimed that there is discrimination against Arab citizens seeking work, particularly the more educated among them (see, for example, Levi, 2006; Khaider, in the Sikkuy report for 2004-2005; Shekhade, 2004; Gera, 2005). It is possible that the discrimination referred to by the researchers and others is felt less among women than among men, since women tend to go into professions for which there is a demand within the Arab sector more than men do and consequently encounter less discrimination.
- ◆ This situation raises at least two issues regarding the future: (1) According to Khattab (2002), educated Arab men who are unable to find work in their own professions seek work in other professions, such as social work, teaching, and nursing, where women have achieved dominance. This leads to competition for the same positions and creates tension within the Arab population. If the rate of educated women continues to grow and their employment rate increases, it will certainly intensify the challenge of finding suitable work; (2) In time, we can expect the professions in which work is available within the sector to reach saturation level.

3.10 Who are the Unemployed?

- ◆ In 2006, there were 13,200 Arab women (3.8%) not employed and looking for work (group 1 in Table 2). The vast majority of them (84%) live in Haifa and the north. The unemployment rate (which is calculated as the percent of those not employed and looking for work divided by the percentage of participants in the labor force) among Arab women was 16.9% vs. 8.3% among Jewish women.
- ◆ Sixty-one percent have been unemployed for more than a year.
- ◆ Most of the unemployed women (approximately 70%) are young (up to 34); two-thirds of them do not have children and two-thirds have post-secondary education. About a third had worked during the previous year or at some time during the three previous years. Those who have never worked (45%) are mainly young women who have not yet had time to enter the labor market and whose education will probably compensate for the absence of work experience.

3.11 Who are the Non-Participants?

- ◆ The population of Arab women aged 18-64 who do not participate in the labor force comprises 270,300 women. Some 29,000 of them are studying and are evidently unavailable for work in the short term and have therefore been excluded from the analysis. In other words, our analysis relates to 241,000 women.

- ♦ The population of non-participants is very heterogeneous. On the one hand, there is a very large group of Arab women with very significant barriers and, on the other, there are groups with much higher potential. In general, 42% have no more than 8 years of schooling, 16% cannot read or write even in Arabic, 52% do not speak Hebrew, 77% have no work experience, 40% have at least 3 children, and 40% have small children aged 0-4. However, almost half (48%) of the women who do not participate in the labor force are younger than 34 and over a third (38%) have 12 or more years of education. In contradiction to the widely held view that women who do not participate in the labor force and are not studying are, in most cases, mothers who are raising their children, it emerges that 34% of the non-participants have no children under 18 and 13% of them have children aged 10 or more (see Table 1).

Table 1: Resources and Barriers to Employment among Arab Women Not Participating in the Labor Force

| Barrier | | Resource/Not a Barrier |
|---|------------------------|---|
| 45–64, 29% | ← Age → | 18–34, 48% 35–44, 23% |
| 0–2, 20% 3–4, 19% | ← Youngest child → | No children, 34% 5–9, 14% 10–17, 13% |
| 0–8 years, 42% 9–11 years, 21% | ← Education → | 12 years, 29% 13+ years, 8% |
| Worked more than 10 years ago, 10% Never worked, 77% | ← Employment history → | Worked in past year: 1% Worked in past 10 years, 12% |
| Cannot read and write, 16% | ← Arab literacy → | Yes, 84% |
| Cannot speak, 52% | ← Spoken Hebrew → | Yes, 48% |
| Cannot read and write, 49% | ← Hebrew literacy → | Yes, 51% |
| Cannot read and write, 60% | ← English literacy → | Yes, 40% |
| Do not use, 87% | ← Computer skills → | Use, 13% |
| Do not use, 95% | ← Internet → | Use, 5% |
| No, 82% | ← Driver's License → | Yes, 18% |

3.12 Which Groups have Relatively High Placement Potential and What are the Implications of their Integration into Employment with Regard for the Increase in the Extent of Employed Arab Women?

Below we describe several groups with higher employment potential. The categories are not mutually exclusive and there is some degree of overlap among them.

Women with a Declared or Demonstrated Interest in Working (Group 2 in Table 2)

Among the women not participating in the labor force, a large group of 40,000 stated that they were interested in starting work "at once" if they were offered a suitable job. If we add to this figure the unemployed who are looking for work (actively express motivation to work), we have a total of approximately 53,000 women, constituting 81% of those employed. What this means is that if they all integrated into work, the employment rate for Arab women would increase by 81%. Most of these women (approximately 80%) live in Haifa and the north. Approximately 80% are young women under 44, some 60% have 12+ years of education, all can read and write in Arabic, and about 70% know Hebrew. A considerable number have work experience: 7% had worked during the previous year and 32% had worked during the previous ten years, albeit not in the most recent year. Still, lack of computer skills in general, and of Internet proficiency in particular, constitute a barrier for 71% and 83% of them, respectively. As a group, the unemployed women and those who are not in the labor force but would like to be have fewer barriers to employment than those who do not participate at all and it is potentially possible to help overcome those barriers that they do have.

Women with 12 Years of Education Not in the Labor Force (Group 4 in Table 2)

Women with high-school education (12 years) who do not participate in the labor force (excluding those not working due to studies) form a group of 69,000 women. They account for 29% of the non-participants in the labor force and, if they all integrated into work, they would constitute 109% of those currently employed. About 70% of them are under 34. Thirty-two percent have no children, but 24% have a small child aged 0-1. All the women with high-school education can obviously read and write in Arabic. Seventy percent speak Hebrew and 77% are able to read and write in Hebrew. Computer literacy is more problematic – only 23% use a computer and even fewer women – 11% – use the Internet. Twenty-two percent have work experience, albeit not in the past year, but in the previous ten years. If we consider motivation to be a resource, then 23% have such motivation, as expressed by their statement of willingness to start a suitable job "at once."

Women with 13+ Years of Education Not in the Labor Force (Group 5 in Table 2)

Women with post-secondary education (13+ years) – are a relatively small group of 19,300 women. They constitute 8% of the non-participants in the labor force and 29% of those employed. Eighty-five percent of them can read and write in Hebrew and 77% can speak Hebrew (their greater skill at reading and writing can be explained by the fact that they learn Hebrew as a foreign language in school but do not often use it). Thirty-seven percent know how to use a computer and 23% can use the Internet. Forty-six percent have worked in the past ten years, albeit not in the last year. Given their advantageous resources, compared with other groups, and the high employment rate of women with post-secondary education, the question is, what are the barriers that impede this group from working? The answer would appear to be the children barrier: 53% of them have at least one small child under 4.

Young Women Aged 18-24 (Group 6 in Table 2)

- ♦ The population of Arab women includes 82,000 young women aged 18-24. Eleven percent of them are employed, 27.6% are studying, 2.8% combine studies and work, 5% are seeking work, while 53.2% are not working, nor employed, nor looking for work. They number 43,500 and constitute 18% of the non-participants in the labor force and, if integrated into work, 67% of those working.
- ♦ Most of the young women who are not in a study framework, not working, and not looking for work are educated: 54.2% have completed high school and 8.4% have 13 or more years of education. Forty percent of them have children, mostly under two, but most do not and 51.4% are not even married.

Table 2: Groups with Relatively High Placement Potential and Their Contribution to the Increased Employment Rate among Arab Women

| Group | Number | Percentage of the Employed Women | Rate of Employment among Arab Women if Added |
|--|--------|----------------------------------|--|
| Employed | 65,400 | -- | 18.7 |
| 1. Unemployed | 13,000 | 20 | 22.4 |
| 2. Not participating, want to work | 40,000 | 61 | 30.1 |
| 3. Work part time, want to increase hours | 12,000 | 18 | -- |
| 4. Neither participating nor studying; 12 years education | 69,000 | 109 | 38.4 |
| 5. Neither participating nor studying; 13+ years education | 19,000 | 29 | 27.0 |
| 6. Aged 18–24, neither participating nor studying | 44,000 | 67 | 31.2 |

In Table 3 below, we provide an additional perspective on the patterns of participation rates by sub-groups that can also provide a useful basis for targeting national and regional efforts to promote employment. The table enables us to identify the distribution of participation rates over 43 groups categorized by education, age, and geographical area to ascertain the size of the various groups not participating.

Table 3: Ranking of Groups of Arab women Aged 18–64 as Defined by Age, Education, Geographic Area and Labor Force Participation Rate

| Participation Rate | Age | Years of Education | Geographic Area (district) | No. of Non-participants |
|--------------------|-------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 70–80 | 35–44 | 13+ | South | (100) |
| | 18–44 | 13+ | North and Haifa | 8,800 |
| | 18–44 | 13+ | Center | (1,600) |
| 60–69 | 45–64 | 13+ | North and Haifa | (1,300) |
| | 45–64 | 13+ | Center | (400) |
| | 50–59 | 45–64 | Jerusalem | (700) |
| 40–49 | 35–44 | 13+ | Jerusalem | (1,200) |
| | 18–34 | 13+ | South | (800) |
| | 18–34 | 13+ | Jerusalem | 4,100 |
| 30–39 | 35–44 | 12 | North and Haifa | 9,800 |
| | 18–34 | 12 | Center | 4,600 |
| | 45–64 | 12 | North and Haifa | 2,800 |
| 20–29 | 45–64 | 13+ | South | (100) |
| | 45–64 | 9–11 | Center | (1,300) |
| | 35–44 | 12 | Center | 2,300 |
| | 18–34 | 12 | North and Haifa | 31,700 |
| | 18–34 | 0–8 | Center | (1,500) |
| | 45–64 | 12 | Center | (1,100) |
| | 18–44 | 12 | South | 3,900 |
| 10–19 | 35–44 | 0–8 | North and Haifa | 12,700 |
| | 45–64 | 9–11 | North and Haifa | 5,500 |
| | 35–44 | 9–11 | Jerusalem | 2,000 |
| | 35–44 | 9–11 | North and Haifa | 9,100 |
| | 35–44 | 12 | Jerusalem | 3,200 |
| | 18–34 | 9–11 | North and Haifa | 17,100 |
| | 18–34 | 0–8 | North and Haifa | 10,800 |
| | 18–44 | 9–11 | Center | 4,400 |
| | 35–44 | 0–8 | Center | 2,200 |
| | 45–64 | 12 | Jerusalem | (1,900) |
| | 18–34 | 9–11 | South | 2,300 |
| 0–9 | 45–64 | 0–8 | Center | 5,900 |
| | 45–64 | 0–8 | North and Haifa | 33,800 |
| | 35–44 | 0–8 | Jerusalem | 4,400 |
| | 18–34 | 9–11 | Jerusalem | 6,400 |
| | 45–64 | 9–11 | Jerusalem | 2,100 |
| | 18–34 | 0–8 | South | 8,000 |
| | 35–44 | 0–8 | South | 4,100 |
| | 45–64 | 0–8 | Jerusalem | 8,400 |
| | 18–34 | 12 | Jerusalem | 7,600 |
| | 35–44 | 9–11 | South | (300) |
| | 45–64 | 0–8 | South | 4,500 |
| | 45–64 | 9–11 | South | (100) |
| | 18–34 | 0–8 | Jerusalem | 6,100 |

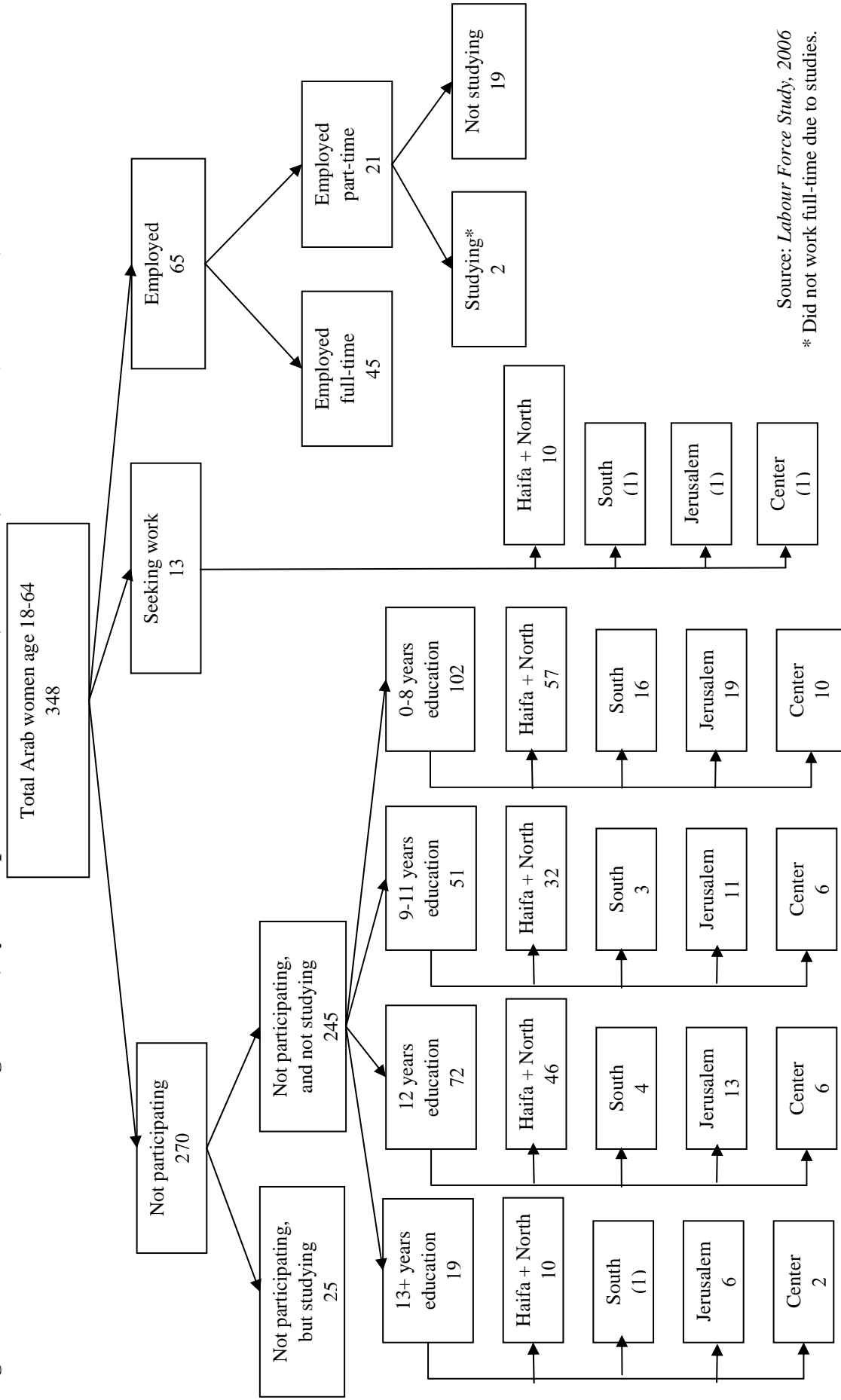
Source: *Labour Force Survey, 2006*

* Excluding those who are not in the labor force and were not working during the previous three months or more due to studies.

† Data with low statistical reliability (relative sampling error between 25% and 40%) are shown in parenthesis.

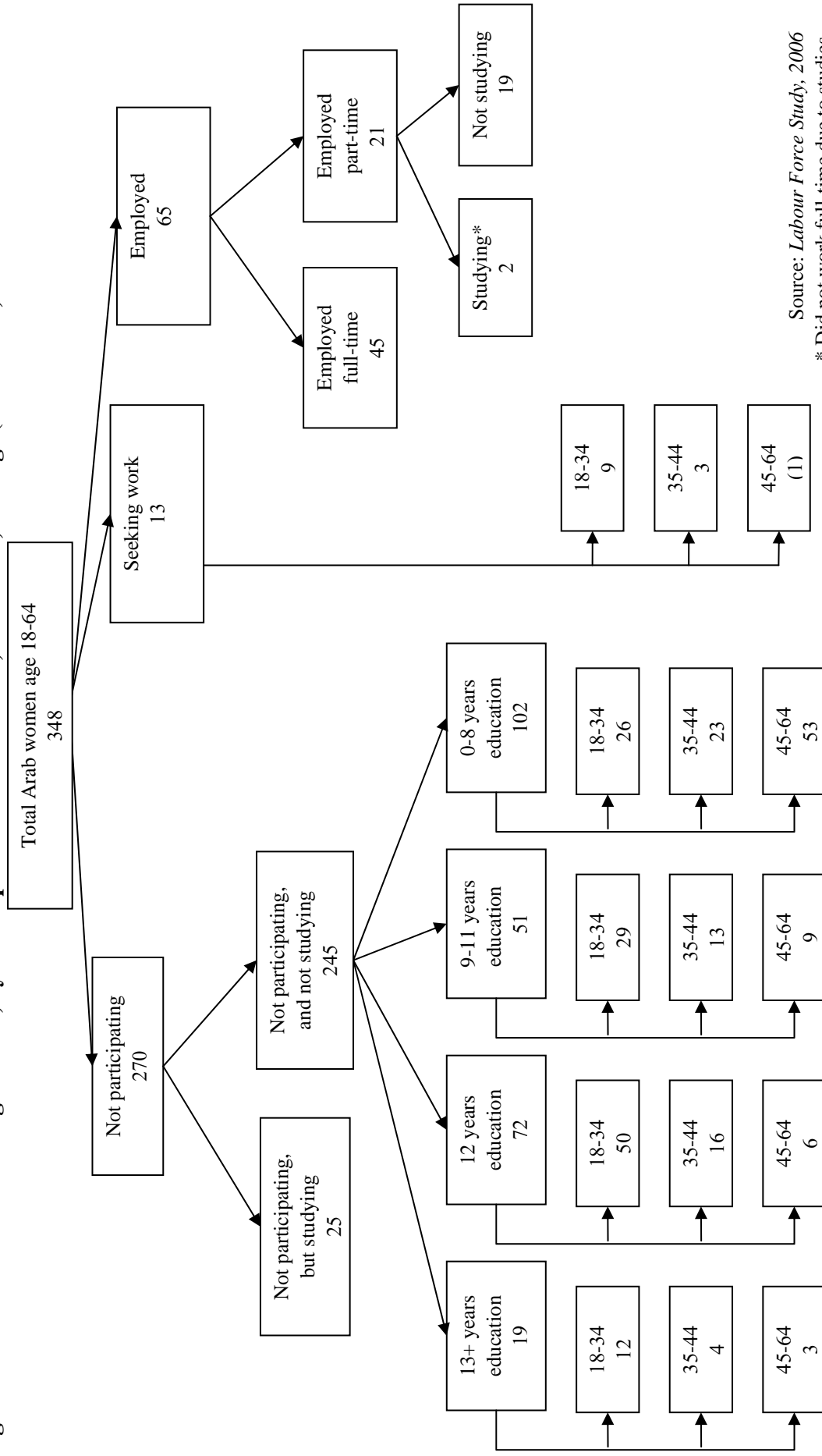
The following five figures provide an additional planning tool that maps out the population of Arab women by those employed, seeking work or not participating in the labor force, by selected background characteristics. Figure 2 shows the situation by education and district, Figure 3 by education and age, and the remaining three by number of children and age of the youngest child, in the center of the country, Haifa and the north, in the southern district, and in Jerusalem. These figures provide an additional insight and a quick picture of the extent of the challenge of integrating Arab women into employment.

Figure 2: Total Arab Women Aged 18-64, by Participation in Labor Force, Education, and District (Thousands)



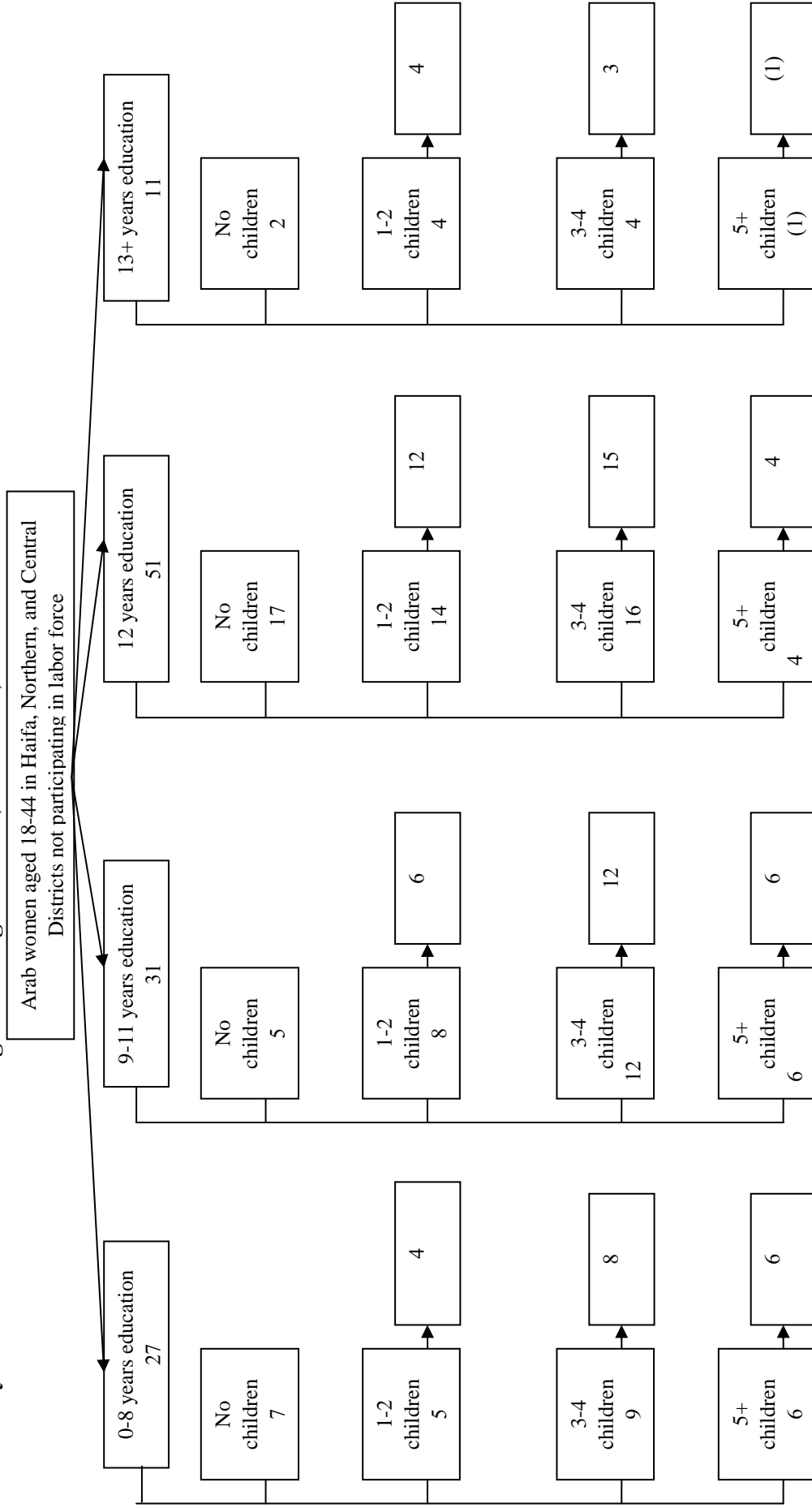
Source: *Labour Force Study, 2006*
 * Did not work full-time due to studies.

Figure 3: Total Arab Women Aged 18-64, by Participation in Labor Force, Education, and Age (Thousands)



Source: *Labour Force Study, 2006*
 * Did not work full-time due to studies.

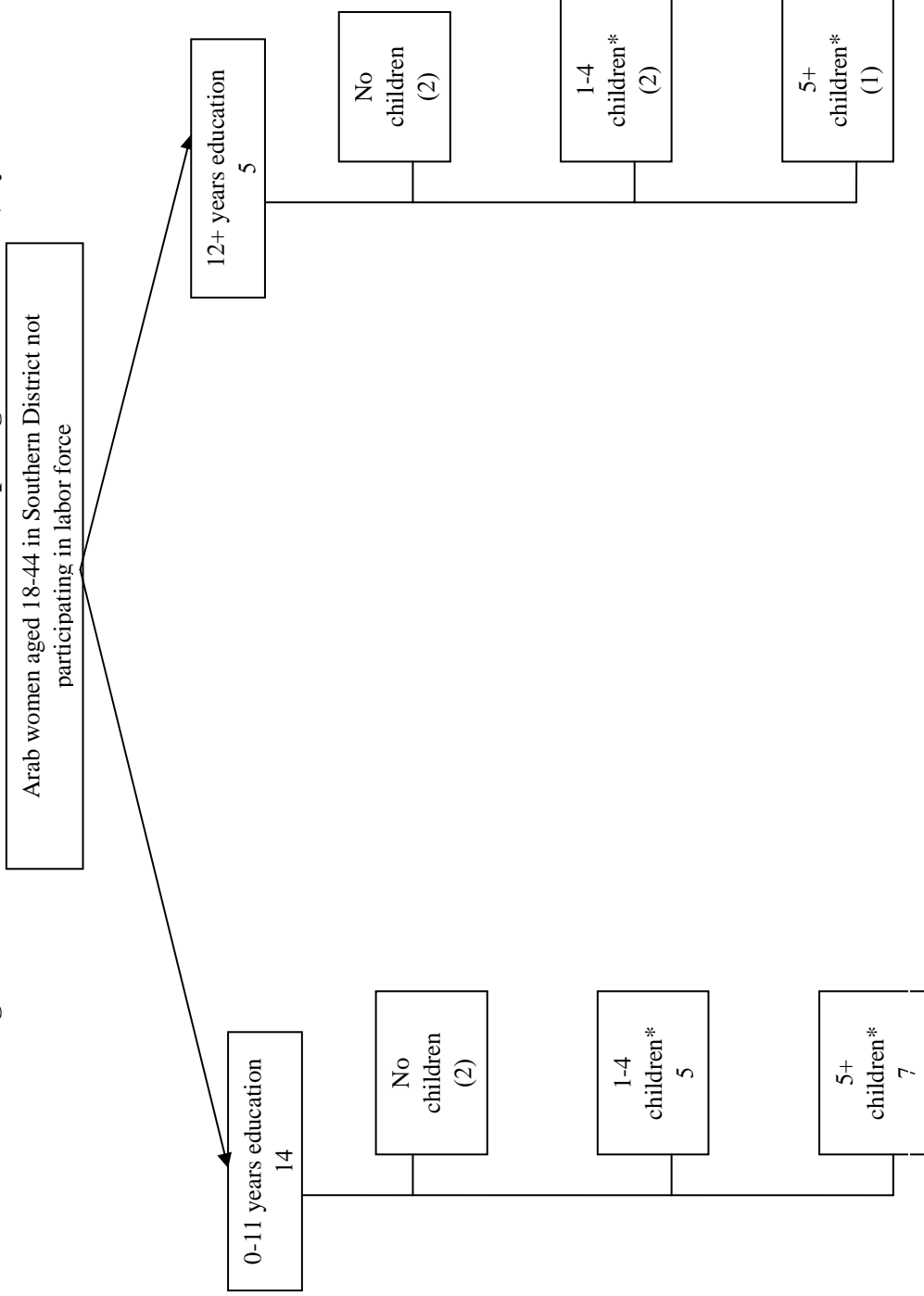
Figure 4: Total Arab Women Aged 18-44 in Haifa, Northern, and Central Districts Not Participating in Labor Force, by Number of Children and Age of Youngest Child (Thousands)



Source: *Labour Force Study, 2006*

Boxes beside those with the number of children indicate the number of women whose youngest child is under 10.

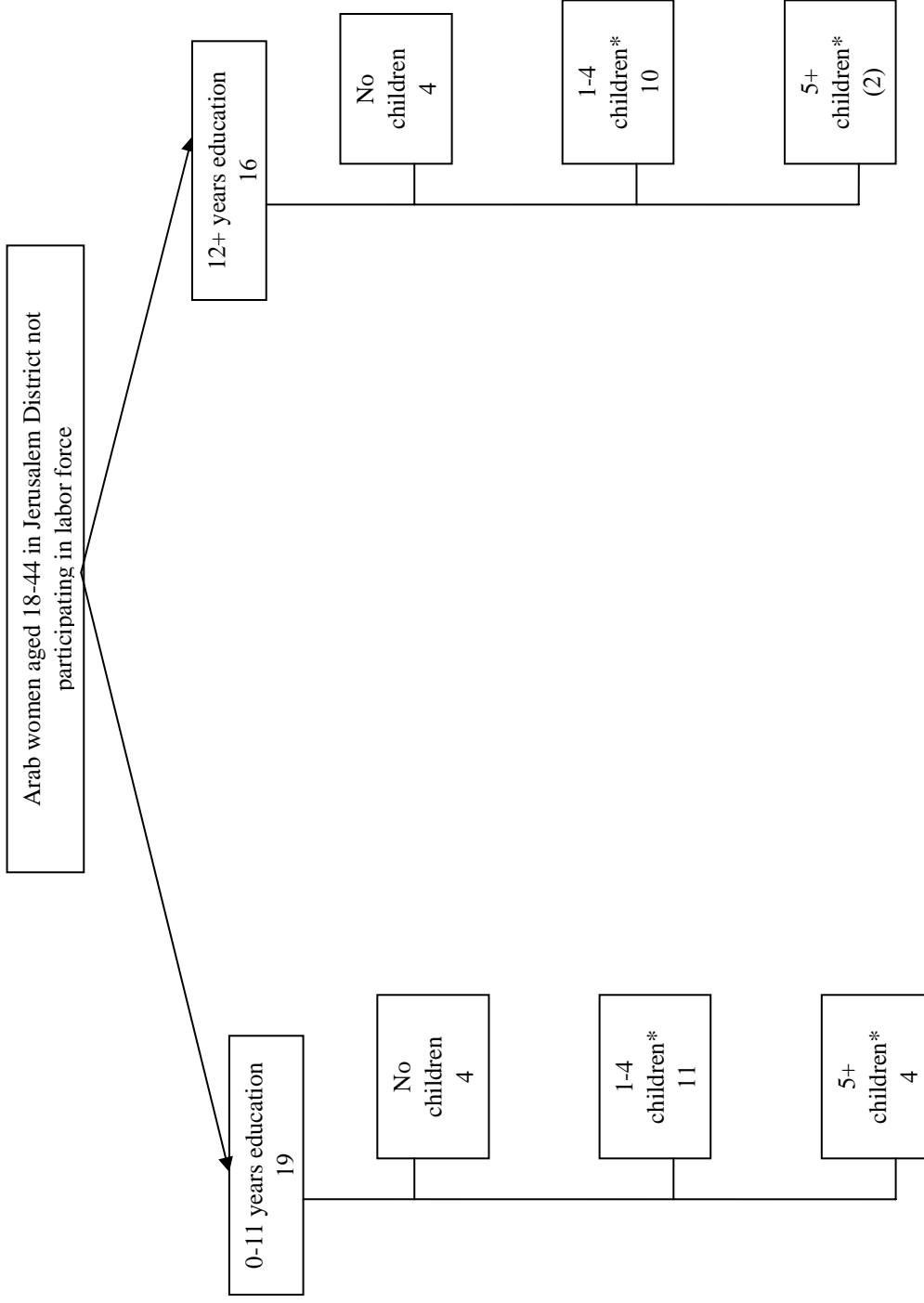
Figure 5: Total Arab Women Aged 18-44 in Southern District Not Participating in Labor Force, by Number of Children (Thousands)



Source: *Labour Force Study, 2006*

*Almost all these women (over 96%) have at least one child under 10.

Figure 6: Total Arab Women Aged 18-44 in Jerusalem District Not Participating in Labor Force, by Number of Children (Thousands)



Source: *Labour Force Study, 2006*

* Most of these women (over 85%) have at least one child under 10.

4. Models of Special Programs to Promote the Employment of Arab Women

In the report, we reviewed some of the key policy initiatives and some of the key field programs that are the focus of current efforts to promote the employment of Arab women.

The employment of Arab women is affected by national policies with respect to the employment of women in general, of disadvantaged women, and specifically Arab women. In recent years, growing efforts have been made to develop special programs for Arab women and to adapt existing programs. We made an effort to identify the key programs in the field, interviewed the key program implementers, and reviewed available evaluation studies.

Broadly speaking there are three types of strategies: the business model, vocational training, and preparation for work and placement.

4.1 The Business Entrepreneurship Model

The most widespread model is the business entrepreneurship model, which is designed to promote small businesses and self-employment in and outside the home. It includes the following components in some form:

- ◆ Personal empowerment and internalization of the norms of the business world
- ◆ Business training, e.g., building a business plan, pricing, marketing, and so forth
- ◆ Vocational training, with a limited amount of hours and in a variety of occupations, which is designed to ensure that the women have professional knowledge in their chosen fields. The program also helps with the placement in salaried jobs of participants in the entrepreneurship course who are not yet ready to set up a business.
- ◆ Personal mentoring to help with the first steps of planning the business
- ◆ Individual or group supervision to help solve problems that arise when setting up and running a business
- ◆ Loans with preferential terms to overcome disadvantaged women's apprehensions about taking bank loans and the reluctance of banks to provide them
- ◆ "Businesswomen's club" – an emotional support and consultation framework and basis for networking for businesswomen, and counseling activities aimed at helping the businesses to survive, streamline, and develop

4.2 Vocational Training Model

- ◆ The universal vocational training programs implemented by the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Labor are unsuitable for Arab women since they are in Hebrew and require that the women travel outside of their villages, which is difficult given the infrequency of the public buses and cultural restrictions, and study together with men. Adjustments had to be made to better meet the needs of Arab women and motivate them to participate in vocational training (see below).

4.3 Preparation for Work, Placement, and Post-placement Support

A commonly held approach to job placement for members of disadvantaged groups maintains that the fastest and most efficient way is to place them in work quickly, with perhaps a short training focusing on specified needs of employers. The third model places the emphasis on three components: (1) Getting ready for work, including empowerment, boosting motivation to work, creating a balance between a career and parenting and family commitments, provision of job-seeking tools and information about rights at work; (2) Assistance in finding work; and (3) Individual and group supervision by the program coordinator.

All three strategies were originally developed for promoting employment among disadvantaged Jewish groups and adapted to the cultural-social-geographic characteristics of Arab women. Listed below are several measures adopted by the program directors that served to customize the programs for Arab women:

- ◆ Before the program started, efforts were made within local communities to emphasize the importance of women entering the labor force. One of the primary goals in spreading this message was to gain the consent of the men with influence within the extended families and the male leadership within the community. This was done in order to prevent potential antagonism by husbands, fathers, brothers and/or the local leadership and to create a supportive climate for the program in the village.
- ◆ For the most part, the programs were conducted in Arabic, and all professional terminology was translated from Hebrew to Arabic by the instructor.
- ◆ Women participated in separate groups without men, thereby following the tradition of separation of the sexes, which also allowed for a freer and more open discussion among the women.
- ◆ Program coordinators, facilitators, and consultants were mostly Arab professionals as the work with the participants is based on intimate familiarity with their characteristics and the socio-cultural environment in which they live. The issues discussed in the empowerment and work-readiness part of different programs related to the real problems with which Arab women have to cope in everyday life.
- ◆ The participants usually came from several villages, as the number of suitable candidates in one village was often not enough. Transportation was provided for two reasons: to overcome cultural restrictions on women traveling outside the village and because inter-village public transportation is infrequent and inconvenient and is likely to discourage participation..
- ◆ The choice of the locality where the program was held also involved cultural considerations. Thus, for example, a course for making jewelry for Bedouin women was held in the village, because it is commensurate with traditional female activities. On the other hand, photography and DJ training was conducted in a Jewish city not far away in order to avoid drawing unnecessary public attention to the unusual sight of women walking around with video cameras on their shoulders.

- ◆ The organizational model of the business entrepreneurship strategy was adapted to the limitations of Bedouin women who tend to have little education, do not speak Hebrew, are unable to leave their village, which is often located in the periphery, and do not have the background to effectively cope with competitive market conditions. The adaptation was that they engaged in the production phase only while a supportive "cushion" of services, such as purchasing materials, guidance with product design, and above all marketing, were supplied to them, for which they had to pay a nominal fee.
- ◆ This strategy also turned some of the barriers of traditional Arab women into advantages by cleverly using niches in the market and creating new employment opportunities. Two examples illustrate this.
 - 1. Traditional celebrations, family or otherwise, are carried out with a strict separation of men and women. Therefore, because the photographers at these events are all men, there are typically no photos of the women at these events. This created an opportunity for training women as self-employed video photographers, thereby satisfying a need in the community as well as assisting women in entering the labor market.
 - 2. Older uneducated Bedouin women lack skills that are required in the modern economy, but they are skilled in traditional handicraft. Using the current demand in the world of fashion in Israel, as well as in Europe, for traditional handicraft interwoven with modern design in the production of dresses, purses, etc., these women, who had never held a job, were organized as self-employed in an adjusted model of entrepreneurship described above.
- ◆ The goal of employment promotion strategies developed for young and educated women, by contrast, is to help them integrate into the modern economy. These programs combine the modern with the traditional: the women learn modern skills (e.g., computer skills) and acquire a modern orientation toward work, while the organizational framework may still be in accordance with traditional restrictions (e.g., studying in a separate framework for women only).
- ◆ Although the main goal of the various strategies is employment, vocational training and completion of education or other studies are also positively regarded as interim outcomes. From the long-term perspective, it is understood that if an Arab woman is prepared to go out of the house to participate in a program aimed at promoting employment, this indicates that she is motivated to change her life and that she is now on the path toward greater economic independence.

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