

The image of  
**women in**  
Jordanian  
audio-visual media



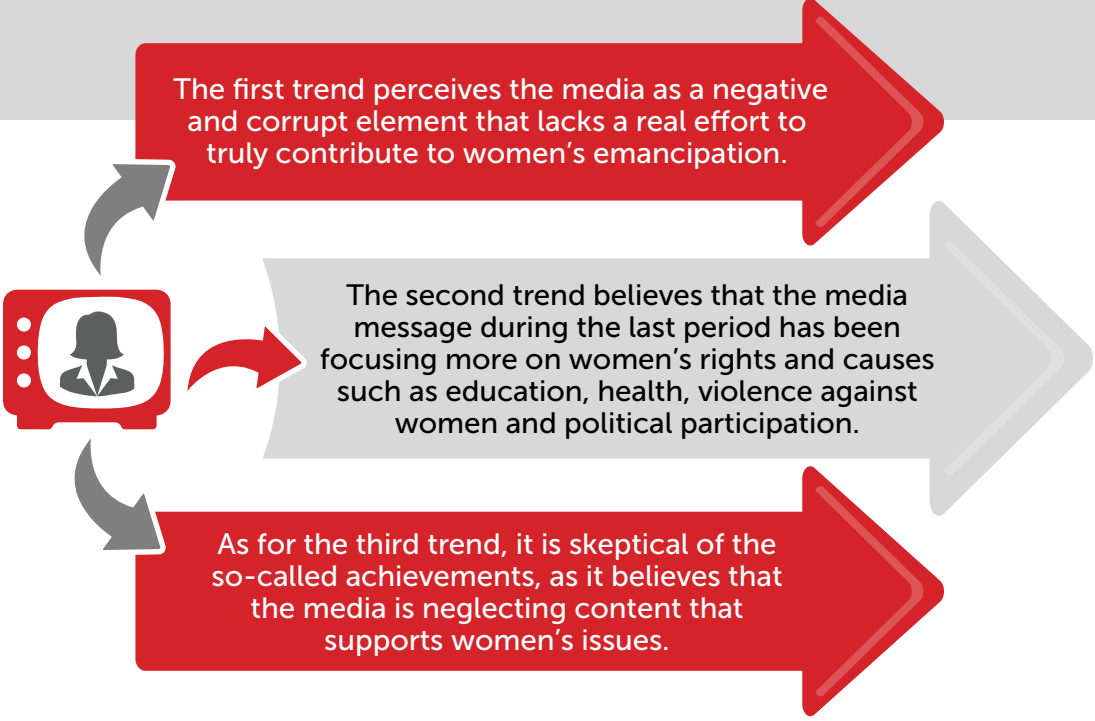
Qualitative analysis based on case studies

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with funding from Hivos

2019

## Introduction

There are three major trends regarding media content related to women's issue.



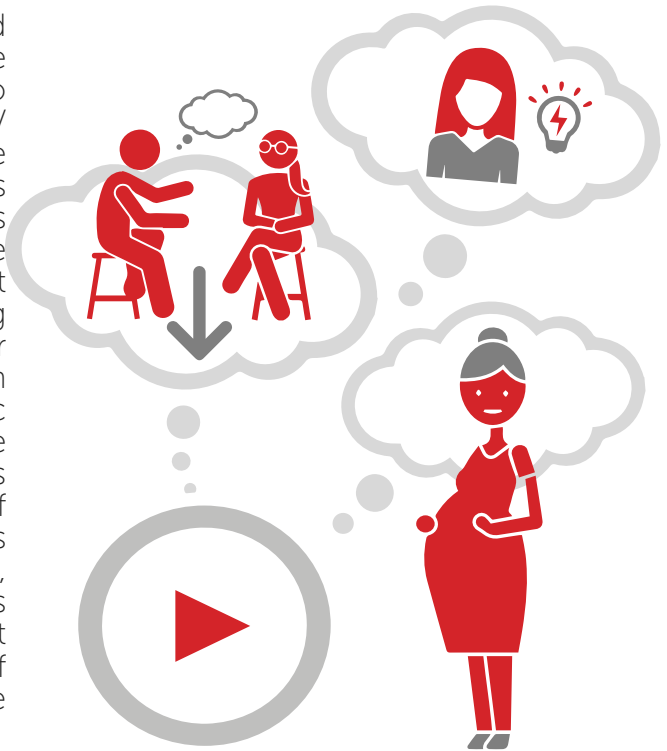
The first trend perceives the media as a negative and corrupt element that lacks a real effort to truly contribute to women's emancipation.

The second trend believes that the media message during the last period has been focusing more on women's rights and causes such as education, health, violence against women and political participation.

As for the third trend, it is skeptical of the so-called achievements, as it believes that the media is neglecting content that supports women's issues.

In order to investigate these trends and get a clear understanding on how to position the Jordanian audio-visual media, 4 television channels were chosen and the content of 2 programs on each was analyzed – Jordan TV (Hareer and Yahdus Al Yom programs), Roya TV (Helwa Ya Donya and Nabd Al-Balad programs), Amman TV (Laki and Nostalgia programs) and Alordon Alyoom TV (Ayn Al-Hadath and Kalam Sarih programs). All these programs were monitored over the period of 8 months, 2 episodes weekly from each.

Following the close monitoring and analysis of these programs, some major trends were revealed related to the content shown on these TV channels. First, some of these channels have programs to discuss what they consider as 'women's matters' or topics that would get the interest of women either on account of the theme or because of hosting female interviewees. Second, gender perspective has a weak presence in the programs that deal with public issues, especially politics. Third, the first trend of programs alternates between the conservative view of women – who are considered as only interested in reproduction, household chores, fashion or clothes – and a gender perspective that focuses on the active participation of women in various aspects of the public life.



This clearly indicates that Jordanian televisions are closer to the second trend, which speaks of a positive change in dealing with women's issues without actually addressing them with the required depth or with the emancipation that the third trend calls for.

**We hope that this study will become the base of a dialogue amongst all parties in order to influence the Jordanian media for the sake of consolidating positive points and taking the media to a new level in which women will become at the heart of public issues, in particular those that have an impact on society as a whole – both men and women.**

## The case studies

4 Jordanian TV stations were monitored: Jordan TV, Roya TV, Amman TV and Alordon Alyoom TV. 2 programs were chosen from each TV station and 2 episodes were monitored each week between the months of January 2019 and July 2019. Diverse programs were considered, and included women's shows, talk shows, political shows, local news, social and cultural shows. In addition, other programs were randomly chosen and monitored in order to have a better understanding of the content broadcasted on the studied channels.



### 1. Jordan TV

Jordan TV is the official governmental channel and is part of Jordan Radio and Television Corporation, which includes: Jordan TV, Jordan Sport TV, Radio Jordan, Amman FM and Quran Radio. Jordan TV offers a varied range of political, economic and social shows. On its official website, the television divides its programs to different categories: morning shows, talk shows, religious shows, variety shows, sports shows and children's shows.

Show	Topic	Number of presenters	Number of women
Yom Jdid	Morning show / variety	8	5
Yisaad Sabahak	Morning show / variety	2	1
Settoun Dakika	Politics / Talk Show	1	1
Harir	Women	1	1
Ashab	Youth	2	1

We notice through all the programs surveyed that there are 14 presenters, of which 9 women.



### Morning shows :

Jordan TV presents two morning shows, one during weekdays and another on Fridays. We noticed a prevailing female presence on these shows, which usually discuss light and diverse topics. Yom Jdid, the daily morning show, is hosted by 8 presenters of which 5 women.



### Talk shows :

Jordan TV presents 6 talk shows that address more serious political, economic and social topics. These are: Settoun Dakika, Hisad Al Usbu', Al Souk Haza Al Sabah, Yahdus Al Yom, Mal Wa Aamal and Ayan Ala Al-Quds. Women's appearance in these shows decreases, especially as guests. The latter are mostly men, especially when discussing political and economic matters.



## Religious shows :

The channel presents 3 programs, which are: Al Mufti, Wamdat Imaniya and Akhberni 'an Al Islam. Women are completely absent from these shows, both as presenters and guests as the topics are addressed from a strict Islamic perspective.



## Variety shows :

Only one program, Hareer, is broadcasted under this title. This is a social program specialized in “women’s” issues and showcases success stories of women. The show presenter by a woman, and most of the production team is composed of women – except for the director who is a man.



### 1. Hareer show

Hareer show is specialized with “women’s” issues and showcases success stories of women. The show is presented by a woman and most of the production team is composed of women; however, the director is a man. During the episodes monitored and analyzed, the show covered a number of diverse sequences that addressed topics such as: the youth and social media platforms, women leaders, charity and voluntary activities of women, women’s initiatives in the business and health sector and women with special needs; in addition to sectors recently entered by women such as aviation.



The following observations can be made regarding the different sequences of the show, which, despite covering a number of sectors, mostly relied on description and lacked analysis. In addition, the different types of women's participation were not clearly highlighted, and the charitable and relief perspectives as well as the empowerment and development perspectives were mixed up. Furthermore, there was a focus on the experiences of elite women rather than on women coming from rural or Bedouin backgrounds. Additionally, the show should try to achieve balance between the image of working and active women who take initiatives and that of women from different social backgrounds - like those working with minimal wages or others who rely on financial assistance. These should be highlighted as the success of a particular group of women does not mean the absence of conditions of injustice, inequality and austerity.

With the exception of the guests for Fushia segment, whose majority works in the fields of fashion and accessories, the show hosted in its different segments more than 40 women from different age groups and diverse educational, social and occupational backgrounds, as follows:



- 3 pioneer women who hold PHDs (one with special needs, another specialized in biology, and a third in engineering).



- 3 women who work in fields that are considered male domain (two women in aviation, and a third in the police).



- 3 women working in the organization or training on organizing charitable bazaars and exhibitions of women's products.



- 17 women working in the field of social and feminist initiatives, or at feminist or charitable organizations, or in the management of volunteer campaigns...



- 4 women working in the field of social communication...  
- In addition to other women working in different fields: a minister, a manager, a teacher...



## 2.Yahdos Al Yom show

The show focuses on local daily topics and discusses them through direct dialogue between officials and citizens. Reports from the field are prepared by a specialized team and the network of local correspondents in order to discuss the best solution with the concerned and competent authorities. The team is composed of women and men (almost equally), with male directors.



Contrary to Hareer show, which the study addressed more in-depth as it covers a number of women topics and interests, Yahdos Al Yom focuses on local issues – most of which are related to infrastructure problems, and to a lesser extent some organizational matters related to the services received by the citizens. It is clear that women's representation in the show is very minimal, in terms of hosts and content. What is worth noting as well is that the topics discussed are limited to infrastructure and services, while not tackling social issues.



Among more than 80 guests in the show, both officials and citizens, there were only 7 women and their participation was divided as follows:



4 women in leadership positions (Labor Director at Irbid, the Director of Missions at the Ministry of Higher Education, the Spokeswoman of the Food and Drug Corporation),



a journalist



and two citizens.



## 2. Roya TV

Roya private channel was launched in 2011. It offers a variety of shows and is considered a reformist in its style and the topics it addresses. The presence of women is strong and clear as female presenters host most shows – of 9 shows surveyed, there were 31 presenters, of which 18 women. The programs are diverse and include series, news and others such as comedy, politics, economics and youth.



Show	Topic	Number of presenters	Number of women
Manhaj	Educational	1	0
Matbakh Roya	Cooking	6	4
Extra time	Sports	2	1
Caravan	Youth	6	2
Hatha Al Sabah	Morning show / Variety	3	2
The News	Politics	4	3
Helwa Ya Donya	Morning show / Variety	2	1
Nabd Al Balad	Politics	2	1
Donya Ya Donya	Morning show / Variety	5	4



## 1. Helwa Ya Donya Show

Helwa Ya Donya is a socio-cultural show with 4 main sequences; guests, reports, reports from Palestine and Jordan, and culture. The show is presented by 4 women and 1 man.



This variety morning show has one of the highest numbers of viewers. It is also a successful show, on account of its diverse sequences, guests and topics. As for the image of women, the program – like all other visual media content – needs more work towards adopting a gender perspective when addressing women’s issues. Nonetheless, the show is considered balanced and positive.

**The show hosted 33 women, out of 70 guests, in its different sequences (roughly half the number) from different age groups (ranging from a child gymnast to an -80year-old woman from Akka). It also hosted rural women, and others working in diverse fields, including HRH Princess Alya. Furthermore, the show interviewed two women with special needs.**





## 2. Nabd Al-Balad show

Nabd Al-Balad is a socio-political show that tackles the latest concerns of Jordanians. The show is hosted by a man and a woman. The show introduces itself as a socio-political program that addresses diverse topics, of which Arab, Jordanian and Palestinian affairs, in addition to other local matters. What can be noticed is that, unlike other variety shows, the episodes – randomly chosen for the case study – did not host any woman to discuss any of the topics addressed.

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The show is an example of women's exclusion from public affairs, especially when it comes to politics. In parallel, there are other variety or women's shows that host women from different political levels (ministers, deputies or social activists) to speak about general and political affairs. Therefore, is politics still considered a 'male domain' despite what women have achieved on the scientific level and in public participation, in addition to being appointed seats on all levels of political and public representation?



### 3. Amman TV

A private channel, which content mainly focuses on entertainment and religious programs. We noticed that there is a strong women's presence as presenters. However, this is not necessarily something positive, as we shall notice at a later stage, because this female presence often reproduces a number of conservative stereotypes about women. The major shows on the channel are: Laki, Sah Sih, Nostalgia, Fadfidli, Salam Al Ruh, Bisaraha, Hammak Wa Hammi and Al Roa Wal Ahlam.



Show	Topic	Number of presenters	Number of women
Nostalgia	Talk show	1	1
Fadfidli	Talk show	1	0
Laki	Women's issues	3	3
Bhar Wa Nar	Cooking	5	5
Sah Sih	Morning show / diverse	2	2

**As you can see, there are 11 women presenters and only 1 male presenter for the 5 shows that we studied.**



## 1. Laki show

A women's show presented by 4 ladies, with mostly female hosts and a women's audience. The show is divided into a number of sequences: motherhood, elegance, fitness, nutrition, social media and a number of reports.



### Sequences that consecrate / oppose gender stereotypes



Elegance sequence: This sequence carries a lot of stereotypes, in particular that women are mainly concerned about their appearance and elegance. Additionally, this sequence promotes the culture of consumption and industries working in the fields of beauty – ranging from cosmetic surgery to other cosmetic procedures that are usually very costly. More than 4 episodes discussed hair extensions through either broadcasting ads for a specific company or hosting its manager or hairdressers that work for it.



Fitness sequence: This sequence showcases fitness exercises and hosts different types of athletes to talk about their achievements, in particular in fields that are considered 'uncommon' for women. A football player, a fencing player, an archer, and others from sports that are usually considered for males.

**In order to monitor the image of woman and her media appearance in this program, 3 major sequences were chosen: motherhood, social media and reports.**



## Motherhood sequence :

This is the most serious sequence of the show; it addresses topics related to children and mothers. Despite the important information shared and the specialized guests hosted – most of which are women – this sequence strengthens gender stereotypes related to women having to take care of children and house chores, with men or husbands just helping or supporting. Over the course of 14 episodes, 10 guests were women and 4 were men. The women had different specializations, as follows: 2 medical doctors (1 neurologist and 1 pediatrician), 2 mental health experts (1 psychiatrist and 1 psychotherapist), 2 education experts (of which 1 family orientation coach), 1 speech therapist, 1 nutritionist, 1 social activist in the field of children’s protection. As for the 4 men hosted during the monitored episodes, all of them were doctors.



## Social media sequence :

this is a diverse section that mainly relies on the topics discussed on social media, both locally and internationally, in addition to other matters. This sequence is usually presented by 2 or 3 women. As for guests, women are the majority – for the episodes monitored, there were 10 women and 3 men. As for the backgrounds of the hosted women, most of them are highly educated or hold leadership positions (2 social initiators, the founder of the mobile learning initiative, the director of a NGO, the secretary general of the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), the director of educational programs, the director of public relations... in addition to a cancer survivor and a woman graduate from Queen Rania Teacher Academy.) As for the men, 2 of them are artists (Drama and Caricature), and the 3rd is the founder of a social initiative.





## Reports section :

this section tackles very traditional topics – with a few exceptions – as it focuses on beauty and fitness.



## 2.Nostalgia show

A talk show that hosts a number of prominent and known personalities in locations that trigger their memories. The past is brought back in order to explain how it shaped the future of many of them. The show is presented by Rahaf Sawalha. In the episodes monitored for the sake of this report, 2 women were hosted (Former minister Maha Al-Khatib and former senator Hayfa Al Najjar) and 11 men: Abd Alrafouf Al-Rawabdeh, Mamdouh Al-Abadi, Faysal Al-Fayez, Aqel Baltaji, Kamal Abu Jaber, Jawad Al-Anani, Taher Al-Masri, Samir Mutawe', Zeid Hamze, Fayez Al-Tarwaneh, and Ihsan Shurdum.

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الحنين إلى الماضي

The show addresses the memories of personalities who have held official political positions, and their relations with specific memories related to their childhood or youth and the impact specific places or events have had on their educational, cultural and political development. The show is important because it monitors the political history of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, not just that of the speakers, in addition to the events and challenges the country has faced. Nonetheless, the number of female guests, 2, is lower than that of males, which reached 11. This might be due to the fact that guests belong to a generation that lacked a wide participation of women in politics. However, it is important that the show sheds the light on women.



## 4: Alordon Alyom channel

A private and recent channel, this television focuses on variety shows, in addition to some political and economic talk shows of which: Sabah Al-Watan, Karasi, Fi Ayn Al-Hadath, Al-Ordon Al-Yom, Lifestyle, Kalam Sarih, Alam Al-Riyada.



Show	Topic	Number of presenters	Number of women
Karasi	Variety show	4	2
Fi Ayn Al-Hadath	Politics	1	0
Al-Ordon Al-Yom	Local news	1	1
Lifestyle	Variety show	1	1
Kalam Sarih	Talk show	1	1
Alam Al-Riyada	Sports	2	0

Based on the table above, women presenters constitute half of show presenters. However, they are absent from political shows (Ayn Al-Hadath), and sports shows (Alam Al Riyada).





## 1. Ayn Al-Hadath

A socio-political show that addresses major political and social issues that interest and affect Jordanians. The show is presented by a woman and a man; it is considered of the most important shows of the channel as it addresses local as well as Arab affairs that concern Jordanians. However, like most political shows on Jordanian televisions, women are almost never hosted, as if politics were strictly a 'male domain'. Among the 28 guests during the monitored episodes, there was only 1 woman.




## 2. Kalam Sarih show


This is a social program that addresses social issues faced by Jordanians and is presented by a woman. The topics tackled are diverse and with different levels of importance as they directly affect all social groups through the impact they have on the lives of individuals, as opposed to politics that usually affects the elite more than the wide public. Due to the nature of the show, there is a wider presence of women both as presenters, guests, speakers and specialists.





There were 16 men and 9 women, out of 25 guests. The backgrounds of women were as follows: a lawyer, a minister, the director of a NGO, the Department director at a higher government council, the mother of a special needs child, an indebted woman, and 3 women with lack of family support.

## Descriptive summary

TV channel	Jordan TV 	
<b>Show</b>	Harir	Yahdos Al Yom
<b>Type of show</b>	Women – Social	Local talk show
<b>Presenters</b>	1 woman	2 women and 1 man
<b>Guests</b>	40 women (to be added to them the guests of the permanent sequence Fushia, which amount to 14 women).	More than 80 guests, of which 7 women only
<b>Topics</b>	<p>Diverse topics, but mostly women’s participation in charity work, voluntary activities and bazaars. This is followed by social communication and women’s participation in academics and science, women who work in fields in which females are rare (aviation and police) and women with special needs...</p> <p>The following topics were absent: politics and economics (unless women’s small project initiatives or charity work are considered a contribution to economics in its wider understanding.</p>	<p>Local issues, most of which are related to the infrastructure; and to a lesser extent some organizational matters and services received by citizens. Women’s participation was marginal in the show and was mostly related to the themes of education and health.</p>

TV channel	Roya TV 	
Show	Helwa Ya Donya	Nabd Al-Balad
Type of show	Socio-Cultural	Political-Social
Presenters	4 women and 1 man	1 woman and 1 man
Guests	More than 70 guests, of which nearly 30 women	28 guests, of which no women
Topics	<p>The show tackled a big number of topics: arts, justice, women’s participation in leadership positions, popular and artisanal crafts, traditional marriage, people with special needs, voluntary and charity work, and technology. Women participated in all sequences of the show. It is worth noting that the show does not directly address politics (with a few exceptions) nor economics</p>	<p>Most episodes focused on local Jordanian politics, such as Jordan’s loan from the world bank, the general amnesty law, unemployed activism, challenges facing the Palestinian cause, political and parliamentary matters. We noticed that no woman was hosted in any of the episodes monitored for the sake of this report.</p>

TV channel	Amman TV 		Alordon Alyom TV 	
Show	Laki	Nostalgia	Ain Al-Hadath	Kalam Sarih
Type of show	Women	Talk show	Political-Social	Social-Talk show
Presenters	4 women	1 woman	1 man	1 woman
Guests	More than 42 guests, of which 35 women and 7 men	Out of 13 guests, 2 were women and 11 men	28 guests, of which 1 woman and 27 men	25 guests, of which 16 men and 9 women
Topics	The show addressed medical and psychological topics related to mothers, arts and other social and development topics. Women participated in all of the show's sequences and topics.	The show focuses on narrating the personal memories of renowned political personalities and leaders. It hosted 2 women.	The show addresses local and Arab politics, in addition to some local social matters that interest the public opinion. The show only hosted 1 woman.	The show addresses local issues with political, legal and social ramifications. The women guests tackled the following topics: sexual harassment, mother's day, indebted women, torture of children and people with special needs.

## Conclusion and recommendations :



The observations have revealed that the image of women in Jordanian media and on the TV channels and shows that were monitored is vague. There are attempts to change gender stereotypes but at the same time other gender stereotypes are strengthened as well as the consumption culture that considers women as their first consumer and as the best tool used to sell their products. Despite the notable progress in terms of women's appearance on Jordanian televisions as female presenters constitute the majority; nonetheless, this does not necessarily reflect feminist views of women but rather can further strengthen the traditional paternal structure.

Arab channels, in particular Jordanian, suffer from different challenges that have a negative impact on how the topic of women is addressed; ranging from funding, advertising, media planning and the absence of a clear message to the public. The absence of a clear message addressed to the public, which is due to the absence of a clear political program that complements the media, leads to a struggling content and its divergence according to the journalist's background and his/her personal views. This is where the role of Jordanian and Arab male and female journalists is crucial to determine the image that reaches the public, in particular when it comes to women. By giving male and women presenters the freedom to fill their airing time, they will be enabled to spread new and progressive ideas that would break negative stereotypes instead of enforcing them.

The media scene in Jordan requires a lot of effort in order to build on the different efforts aiming at improving the image of women in the media. For this to happen, media institutions and workers in this field should start by sharing more progressive images of women and gender roles instead of traditional patriarchal ones in order to improve the images they share with the Jordanian and Arab public through their platforms and social media.

## Recommendations



- Develop a clear media policy, with gender at its heart.
- Programs are implemented based on this policy, related to openness and balance in both international and local relations.
- Strengthen local positive values and work on changing negative values related to women.
- Train media professionals on gender-based content, and adapt their performance and programs based on this content.
- Promote women's participation in the discussion of different social matters, and not only those that are stereotyped as related to women.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the  
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