

**Jasmine Association is a non-profit organization representing women with small and medium businesses in Israel.**

## JASMINE ASSOCIATION

Jasmine is a non-profit organization that was established in 2006 with the aim of promoting Jewish and Arab women-owners of small and medium sized businesses. Jasmine represents women from all sectors of Israeli society: Jewish, Ethiopian, Ultra-Orthodox, Arab, Druze, Bedouin, Christian and more.

The Chairperson of Jasmine is Ms. Ofra Strauss, Chairperson of Strauss Group. CEO of the organization since its inception is Ms. Kiram Baloum. Kiram, an Arab-Israeli woman and community leader with significant management experience in the private and public sectors. Jasmine today has more than 5,000 women-members, all entrepreneurs and owners of small and medium sized businesses.



Kiram Baloum

Jasmine, as an official platform recognized nationally and internationally, meets and facilitates the needs of business women. It represents them in front of policymakers; aids in connecting them with banks, credit companies and large economic bodies and promotes their business activities by means of networking, acquiring know-how and building a widespread marketing network and a communal consumer club.

In the years of the organization's activities, in light of focus groups and studies conducted among women from different sectors in Israel owning small and medium sized businesses, it became apparent that women deal with economic, judicial and cultural obstructions, including: defeatist laws, difficult access to capital, low occupational mobility, lack of occupational qualification, structured personal barriers, and lack of support and focused aid from large institutions. These studies show that women owned businesses suffer from significant economic, business and managerial weakness in comparison to those owned by men, especially in specific sectors such as new immigrant, Arab and orthodox women.

With these insights, Jasmine works to formulate market strategies, create strategic cooperation and business networks, represent women owned businesses in front of large companies and Israeli policymakers and help the women business-owners in every stage on their way to success.

## Jasmine's Challenges

Jasmine has identified the main obstacles facing a woman business-owner which challenges her in achieving economic security and utilizing opportunities to grow her business. Jasmine has found that women from different population sectors often share the same difficulties in business ownership and finding gainful employment. These challenges include cultural and tradition-based resistance, lack of training, lack of access to business networks and funding, fear of discrimination, geographical barriers, and an absence of supportive infrastructure.

Jasmine's practices are unique as its programs are designed around the needs and barriers shared by women business owners from all sectors. Jasmine has built a network of support and economic collaboration among women from all Israeli sectors, modeling co-existence. Jasmine pays special attention to the cultural, social and economic challenges that women are faced with, while promoting their own businesses.

## Over the past year, Jasmine focused on three major initiatives:



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Building tools and establishing a connection between women-owned businesses and supply chains of large companies, in a bid to expand the supplier-base of large businesses and expand business opportunities for women-owned businesses. Under this initiative, it was decided to collaborate with the U.S.-based organization WEConnect International, and to launch a business certification program in order to assist women-owned businesses to become accessible, relevant suppliers for larger businesses.

WEConnect helps women succeed in global markets by connecting small women-owned business with business opportunities. In tandem WEConnect helps businesses and companies assimilate diversity practices within their supply chains so that more businesses will use the services of women owned businesses in that context. The network of colleagues of the organization represents more than \$700 billion dollars of annual purchasing power.



### Jasmine's annual conference for women-owned businesses

Held annually, the Jasmine Conference is the peak event of its yearly activities. This conference places on the agenda core issues of the women-owned small business sector, the challenges facing them and possible solutions.

The conference this year, which will be held on Thursday, November 27, 2014, at Kfar Maccabiah, Ramat Gan, is entitled "Women-Owned Businesses as an Economic Growth Driver". It will address the important contribution of this sector to the development of global economies in general and particularly to the Israeli economy.

The conference will be devoted to 490 thousand small and medium businesses in Israel of which about 4% are women-owned, and to the actions that should be taken in order to make them an important, strong growth driver in the economy. A considerable part of the discussion will be devoted to the challenge of integrating women-owned businesses into the procurement-base of businesses and the government.

The conference will be attended by hundreds of women business owners along with dozens of representatives of leading businesses, government officials and public figures



### Jasmine Forum meetings

In the past year we established the Jasmine Forum for Women Business-Owners that holds meetings in groups of up to 100 people, between women business-owners who are just starting out and female entrepreneurs and business owners who have become successful on an international scale.

The Forum, which was established as a learning, inspiration and networking venue, hosts female business leaders from around the world who come to Israel in order to meet with the forum members, tell their personal story and teach, based on their experience, business initiatives and female economic empowerment from around the globe.



# Facts & Figures:

Women owned businesses are considered to be a growth driver of the sector of the economy in which they are active. They grow more quickly than men owned businesses and faster than the general average. Growth of women owned businesses in the United States alone is 1.5 times higher than the national average. In the past 15 years they grew by 44% in employees and revenues – twice the growth rate of men owned businesses. In 8 out of 13 leading industries in the United States, women owned businesses generate higher growth percentages than that of men owned businesses, and in the two top industries (transportation and construction) women owned businesses generate the same sales revenues achieved by long-standing men owned businesses. In this period they added more than 600 thousand jobs.



**In Israel, 1.5 million women are employed**, accounting for almost 50% of the employment market. The gap between men and women in the participation rate has decreased significantly over the past three decades, however salary gaps remain in favor of men by high margins.



**92% of working women in Israel** are hired employees. 8% are self-employed. Self-employed women constitute 27% of all self-employed people (close to 40% in the United States).

**The gap between men and women** in the participation rate decreased significantly in the last 3 decades wage gaps remain, however, in favor of men at higher rates.

**Participation rate of Arab women** in the labor market stands at almost 25% of all Arab women, compared to more than 70% of Jewish women and more than 56% of ultra-Orthodox women.



**99% of Israeli businesses** are regarded as small and medium businesses (approximately 490,000 businesses). These businesses constitute over 49% of the GDP. 55% of employees in the private sector are employed in them (compared to two-thirds in developed countries).



**While the proportion of women employed in Israel** is more than 50%, the rate of women owned businesses remains very low. In Israel, 4% of all businesses are owned wholly by women. 29% of all businesses in the United States are owned by women.



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## Promoting Jewish & Arab Women-Owned Small Businesses



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דואר ראשון והרחובות

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Konrad  
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