

2. Country Report of Brunei Darussalam¹

2.2 Current Status of Women Entrepreneurs of Brunei Darussalam

The Global Gender Gap Report 2017² benchmarks 144 countries on their progress towards gender parity across four thematic dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment. Brunei ranked 102th out of 144 in the global rankings. In the rankings by sub-indices, Brunei ranked 61th under Economic Participation and Opportunity, 78th under Educational Attainment, 111th under Health and Survival, and 140th under Political Empowerment.

In terms of income disparities, the Labour Force Survey 2014 Report³ by the Brunei Economic Planning and Development Department (JPKE) indicated that at the national level, males are on average paid more than females at BND1958 per month for males and BND1650 per month for females. This is consistent across all industry groups with the exception of ICT, construction, accommodation and food service activities, public administration, human health and social work activities. For example, in the ICT industry, the average monthly income for females is higher at BND2080 than it is for males at BND1739.

The 2011 Final Report of the Economic Census of Business Enterprises⁴ by the Brunei Economic Planning and Development Department (JPKE) covers all registered enterprises in the country and contains key information relating to economic activities undertaken by enterprises during the reference year 2010. The data from the census is used in the compilation of the national accounts, particularly in the estimation of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This census does not cover the informal economy which consists of a diversified set of economic activities and unregistered enterprises that is not regulated or protected by the country. This implies that the size of ICT or ICT-related enterprises of the informal economy of Brunei might be bigger than is documented.

In a coffee table book by B2B Magazine, entitled ‘Entrepreneurship Rising – The Brunei Edition 2017’, it is encouraging to note a good number of young entrepreneurs taking the bold step to find their niches and create their businesses in ICT and non-ICT areas. However, it is observed that women-owned MSMEs are often of a smaller scope and scale compared to enterprises owned by

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² <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2017>

³ http://jpke.gov.bn/DEPD%20Documents%20Library/DOS/Labour%20force%20survey_KTK/ES_LFS_2014.pdf (p.182)

⁴ <http://jpke.gov.bn/DEPD%20Documents%20Library/DOS/Economic%20Census/2011/final%20report/FINAL%20REPORT%20BE%202011.pdf>

men. This pattern is consistent across ASEAN countries, as noted by 2017 OECD Report on women entrepreneurship⁵.

Table 3 shows the Brunei workforce by industry, gender, job type, drawn from the 2011 Economic Census of Business Enterprises¹⁹. A total of 5,566 registered enterprises were covered in the census with a workforce of 99,607 employees which includes owners, full-time and part-time employees. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) made up 97.5% of the total number of active enterprises, where 65.1% or 3,623 enterprises are small, 32.4% or 1,804 are medium-sized enterprises and a mere 2.5% or 139 enterprises are large-sized enterprises.

In the ICT industry, there are 2,345 employees, consisting of owners, full-time and part-time workers, which make up only around 2.35% of the total workforce in Brunei business enterprises. Owners of business enterprises, classified as working proprietors or active business partners, make up 3.3% of the total workforce in the ICT industry while 91.2% are full-time and 5.5% are part-time workers.

Females make up 29% or 909 of the 2,345-strong workforce in the ICT industry. Out of the 78 owners of ICT business enterprises, only 29% are women owners or entrepreneurs. Out of 2,139 full-time employees, around 41% or 868 females working full-time and out of 128 part-time employees, 22% or 28 females work part-time.

The proportion of women owning ICT or ICT-related enterprises at 29% is below the national average of 34% and ranks 12th out of 15 industry groups, overtaking only human health and social work activities (19%), transport and storage activities (22%), and construction (22%). The proportion of full-time female workers at 41% is above the national average of 31% and ranks 7th out of 15 industry groups while the proportion of part-time female workers at 22% is below the national average of 32% and ranks 12th out of 15 industry groups.

⁵ http://www.oecd.org/southeast-asia/regional-programme/Strengthening_Womens_Entrepreneurship_ASEAN.pdf