



## Achieve gender equality and empower all woman and girls.

Ambassador of SDG5:  
Dr. Sofia Bahr, after a professional career focused on education and employment development strategies, she is an Education senior expert working on skills development projects in Africa region and vice president of the Tunisian Association Women Engineers on charge of the Education committee.



The prime minister of Tunisia: Prof. Najla Bouden is a woman. She is a professor of higher education at the National Engineering School of Tunis at Tunis El Manar University, having specialized in geosciences. Her work has focused on seismic hazards, which led her to train many executives of the Tunisian Petroleum Activities Company. She held also senior roles at the Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. In 2011, she was appointed Director General within the Ministry, then in 2015 held a position in the cabinet of Minister. In September 2016, she was responsible for the \$70 millions World Bank-funded program "PromEssE" to reform and "modernize" university education in order to help alleviate widespread unemployment among Tunisian graduates, a major social issue in the country.



The UTM has a strong portfolio of actions and projects involving women in the STEM field. We have lately participated in the COLLABORATIVE project in partnership with the PURDUE UNIVERSITY, USA, The National Science Foundation NSF, USA and many international partners.

This project involves research in four countries (Jordan, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia) to assess the contextual factors that encourage women's participation in engineering in tertiary education and as a career. In three of the four countries identified (Jordan, Malaysia, and Tunisia), women's participation in engineering is much higher than in the US, despite social, political, and

economic restrictions on women's participation in public life. In the fourth country (Saudi Arabia), women's engineering participation is also on the rise. This project seeks to understand the links between cultural context and expanding women's STEM participation by studying the drivers of women's participation in these contexts. The research is significant because it promises to document factors that encourage women's successful participation in STEM in social, political, and cultural contexts that are very different from the US. These explorations of women's success, in turn, promise to shed light more generally on how context shapes women's participation in STEM in ways that inform our efforts to broaden participation in the US.

A study undertaken by researchers from the national School of Engineering of Tunis at our University highlighted that Tunisian policymakers have historically embraced gender equality (Murphey, 2003). Yet recent studies found that Tunisian engineers indicate that traditional gender perceptions and expectations tied to familial roles did not fit with women's engineering participation (DeBoer, 2007; Zghal, 2006). The overall educational enrolment figures are approximately equal for women and men in the secondary (89% for boys and 93% for girls, respectively) and tertiary (25% for men and 21% for women) levels (UIS, 2015). Researchers in STEM fields are nearly half women (UIS, 2015).

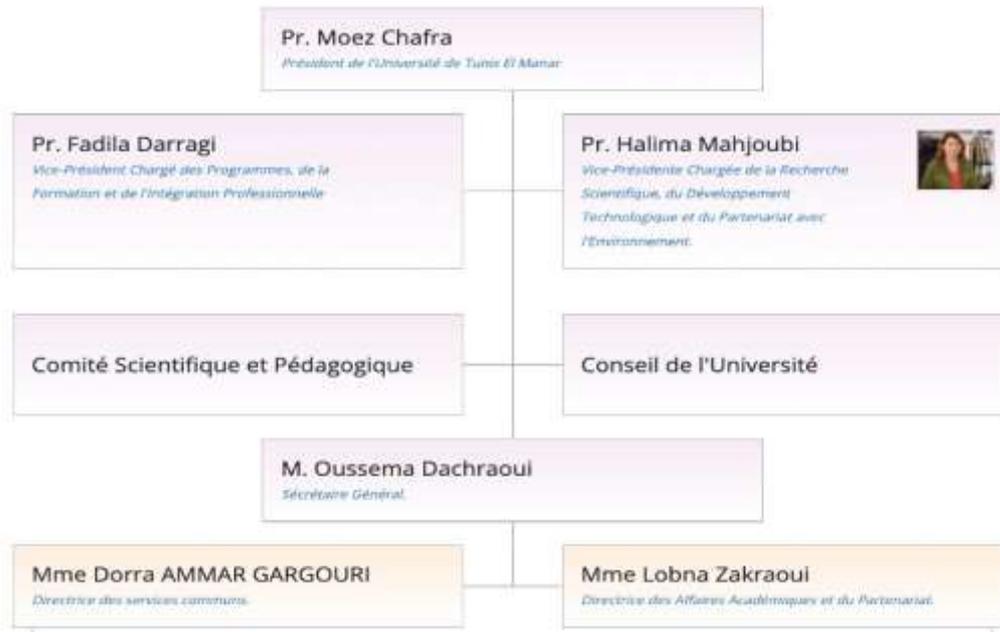
The overall population female-male literacy gap (71% for women, 87% for men) is smaller among those ages 15-24 where (96% for women, 98% for men, UIS, 2015). Tunisia's secularism, active civil institutions, and the longstanding involvement of groups like the National Tunisian Women's Union have improved women's general employment and their engineering participation.



Compared to Muslim majority countries, Tunisia has **one of the highest values in the gender equality perception index** (which combines the responses to different questions on gender equality) and where the support for gender equality is even stronger among younger generations. Particularly for our university the ratio of female students is very high approaching

70% of the total population of students across all disciplines. We think the UTM has much to teach to the world about gender equality.

As per the university structural diagram, the main governance board of the UTM constitutes of 4 women including two vice presidents and 2 men



Most innovation initiatives at the UTM Innovation centre were launched by women ( students or staff). Namely the first spinoff to populate our center was launched by Prof Mariem Jaidane : DBSens (advanced technology in acoustic engineering). The second more mature invention/Patent in our centre was launched by Prof Halima Mahjoubi BloodPulse innovative Pain Relief System using Biophysics technologies.

The number of publications in SDG5 is gradually increasing during the last few years and the publications are attracting a big number of citations

