

The Hashemite Kingdom of JORDAN

Very few women in Jordan work. Only 15 percent of women are in the labor force compared to 67 percent of men. On average in MENA, 22 percent of women participate in the labor market. In addition, of those women who are in the labor force, only three in four are actually employed. Further, only 16 percent of businesses are owned by women and two percent of firms in Jordan have women as a top manager.

A combination of factors contributes to the low labor force participation among Jordanian women, such as legal barriers, lack of safe and adequate transport, lack of affordable quality child care, low levels of financial inclusion and other structural issues. Moreover, mind-set and norms play a significant limiting role.

To respond to these challenges, the Government of Jordan has set an ambitious target of increasing the female labor force participation to 24 percent over the next five years. A **Women's Economic Empowerment Action Plan** was developed to identify the broad focus of required actions, closely linked to the national Jordan Women's Strategy (under development).

The **Mashreq Gender Facility** is supporting the implementation of the Action Plan based on a government-led 18-month country work plan that focuses on lifting constraints to women's access to the work force, by working on areas such as the care economy and safe and accessible public transport in close coordination with relevant stakeholders from both the public and private sector, as well as from civil society and the donor community. Directed efforts will build female leadership in the private sector. With a view to scalability, the Facility will build the evidence base on issues such as digital payments, socioeconomic impacts of micro lending and satellite work modalities. Further, there will be behavior economics informed awareness raising campaigns around relevant issues.



The Jordan Work Plan thus focuses on five pillars of work:

- ⇒ Care economy
- ⇒ Safety in the world of work
- ⇒ Gender responsive private sector
- ⇒ Entrepreneurship
- ⇒ Gender responsive policy making

Data sources:
WDI latest available
World Bank Social
Norms Survey 2018
World Value Survey 2014

The **Mashreq Gender Facility (MGF)** is a 5-year Facility (2019-2024) that provides technical assistance to Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon to enhance women's economic empowerment and opportunities as a catalyst towards more inclusive, sustainable, and peaceful societies, where economic growth benefits all. Through collaboration with the private sector, civil society organizations and development partners, the Facility supports government-led efforts, country level priorities and strategic regional activities that:

1. **Strengthen the enabling environment** for women's economic participation;
2. **Improve women's access** to economic opportunities.

The MGF is a **World Bank Group**-facilitated inter-agency initiative that works in partnership with units across the WBG, aid agencies and donors, governments, NGOs, private sector firms, and researchers. The MGF is supported through the WBG's **Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality (UFGE)**.

At the regional level, the **MGF Steering Committee** is a high-level advisory group that provides overall strategic direction and guidance. It counts on two government representatives per country, regional directors of the World Bank and the IFC and selected development partners and private sector donors with strong commitment to women's economic opportunities in the Mashreq.

Mashreq Gender Facility Country Work Plan Pillars

The care economy

Lack of **childcare** support options is one of the key constraints for Jordanian women's economic participation addressed through MGF. Building on recent legislative amendments in labor law and social security law, MGF supports both the public and the private sector in providing childcare options for working parents.

- * A **more inclusive and family-friendly private sector** with practical childcare options for working mothers.
- * A **nationally adopted support mechanism** for sharing the burden of childcare with working parents.
- * **Improved compliance** and adoption of childcare legislation amongst public servants and private sector employers.

Safety in the world of work

To increase Jordanian women's participation in the labor market, **safe transportation** for women going to and from work, and a **safe workplace environment** are needed.

The MGF supports the implementation of consolidated efforts with multiple stakeholders to raise awareness about and improve compliance with sexual harassment legislation introduced by the Government. This will lead to:

- * **Decreased tolerance of sexual harassment** against women amongst public transport operators and private sector employers.
- * **Improved awareness** of and access to grievance systems for women experiencing sexual harassment in the world of work.

Gender responsive private sector

The private sector in Jordan is increasingly expected to improve its workforce productivity in a responsible manner. MGF efforts lead to:

- * Creating **new employment prospects** for women in different parts of the country through incentivizing **remote work options**.
- * Increasing employment of women in companies through building the business case for the adoption of flexible work, **family friendly and gender equal policies**.
- * Counting on information to **reduce gender pay gap**.



Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is key for economic development and job creation. The MGF seeks to develop well-informed pathways for **women entrepreneurs** in growing sectors to improve their economic opportunities. Of focus are women in **rural areas**, where employment opportunities are rare. MGF support in this area will lead to:

- * Evidence based policy recommendations for improved access to **micro-finance** for women-led businesses.
- * Increased number of registered **female-led home-based businesses** through adoption of simplified registration procedures at municipalities.
- * Diversification of women entrepreneurial activities through using **cooperative modalities**.

Gender responsive policy making

MGF supports well-informed and gender-sensitive government policies and strategies as part of creating an **enabling environment** for women to thrive. By assessing and monitoring the impact of programs and initiatives targeting women economic empowerment, MGF supports the government of Jordan in:

- * Ensuring greater wage protection for women in the private sector through an **enabling digital payments ecosystem**.
- * **Enhanced transparency** and **streamlining** of donor activities supporting economic empowerment of women.
- * **Improved monitoring** of results to meet national and international commitments on the topic of women economic empowerment.

The Facility is supported through the World Bank Group's **Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality** (UFGGE) and in partnership with Canada and Norway. Funding is made possible through generous contributions from the governments of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.



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