

This Newsletter presents highlights of the progress made under the **Mashreq Gender Facility (MGF)** through the three country work programs – Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon - and the regional work program. It also reports on budget. The period for this quarterly Newsletter is June to August 2020. Next issue will be circulated early December 2020.

Implementation of the MGF work has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic which has caused some adaptations and delays.



IRAQ

- **Access to finance:** Partnership established with Commercial Banks' League to deliver tailored training courses for women on business and finance (in collaboration with IFC). A **\$500,000 loan initiative** has been launched by the League in collaboration with the MGF providing no-collateral loans.
- Regulation on **preferential treatment in public procurement** for businesses owned by women or that employ women drafted by the Ministry of Planning, Baghdad. Similar regulation in process in KRI.
- Assessment of existing **digital mentorship and knowledge exchange platforms** conducted to inform the design of such a platform for Iraq/KRI.
- **MOU signed between IFC and the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce** to launch **peer learning platform** for raising the capacity of firms to increase workforce gender diversity through a series of demand-driven webinars.

The scope of technical assistance for several activities has been defined and will be contracted, such as: **content of educational curriculum and teacher training** to promote young women's economic empowerment with a pilot intervention; trainings on **gender sensitization of incubators and accelerators, and investment readiness for female-led startups.**



JORDAN

- A skeleton design was developed for the **app to report on infringements of the transport Code of Conduct**. Signing and dissemination of the Code has been approved as a prerequisite for transport operators upon obtaining needed licensing and will be linked to app reports.
- A **training needs assessment survey** for companies was launched to inform the identification of webinars to be held through the **peer learning platform**, to raise capacity to increase workforce gender diversity while addressing issues relevant to COVID19.
- A firm was hired to develop **business case studies on workforce gender diversity** in the workplace, shedding light on company practices to address topics as sexual harassment, flexible work and women in non-conventional jobs.
- A stakeholders mapping and plan for promoting **women's employment in the private sector through satellite (remote) work units** was developed to support MoL in the expansion of the satellite work unit program from the garment industry to include two new economic sectors.
- Research on ensuring **wage protection through digital payments**, especially for female workers started to investigate how key barriers such as employer readiness, social attitudes and legislative framework can be improved to realize wage protection through digital transfers.



LEBANON

Implementation has been further affected by the early-August explosion in the Port of Beirut.

- A **comprehensive assessment of the demand & supply of childcare** provision, including employer-provided care, was launched aiming to contribute to a framework for enhancing access to affordable, high-quality care services. This will facilitate women's participation in the work force and, potentially, create jobs.
- **Crisis Management Training for Women Entrepreneurs and Training of Trainers** underway: rapid needs assessment completed, curriculum drafted and timeline for (virtual) delivery completed.
- The **behavior science informed communication strategy** and action plan to support positive social norms around women's work is ongoing with a completed literature review and campaign analysis.
- To **raise capacity to recruit, retain and promote women in their workforce**, and increase resilience in response to COVID-19 and the economic crisis, a series of webinars for members of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture for Beirut and Mount Lebanon identified. To be delivered virtually via peer learning platform.
- Provided technical assistance in parliamentary commissions for the **revision of legal outputs criminalizing sexual harassment**. Process led by NCLW. Drafted provisions to be inserted in Penal Code, additional inputs provided to Labor Code, Code of Employees.

MGF Regional Work Program

DIALOGUE & PARTICIPATION

The MGF Secretariat coordinated the launch of the State of the Mashreq Women Report and the participation of WB Regional Director Saroj Jha's as keynote speaker in the July 1 Arab International Women Forum event "The Role of the World Bank in Coordinating Responses to Economic Challenges Further Aggravated by COVID-19 in the Mashreq Region" building on the findings of the Report.

DATA & KNOWLEDGE

State of the Mashreq Women report – The report was launched in a virtual event on June 23 with over 450 participants joining by webex and live streaming. Chaired by the WBG Gender Director Caren Grown, with the WB and IFC Regional Directors Saroj Jha and Beatrice Maser, the report was presented by WBG co-authors Matthew Wai-Poi and Miriam Muller. A panel discussion with Ragui Assaad (ERF), Salma Nims (JNCW), Charlotte Karam (AUB) and Rima Assi (McKinsey) focused on women's economic activity and entrepreneurship in the Mashreq compared to the region and the type of policies required to respond to existing challenges. Also discussed was the role of social norms in society, among employers and employees as well as the role of women in the digital economy. Representatives from the governments of Canada and Norway emphasized the need for evidence-based programming to support women's economic opportunities.

INNOVATING 4 RESULTS

Enhancing forcibly displaced women's access to economic opportunities – Inputs on female refugees/IDPs' economic empowerment in the private sector provided for three policy notes by the WB's Refugee Investment & Matchmaking Platform. One note focuses on investment selection criteria, suggesting to tap into the potential of refugee/IDP women and nudge investors towards making a difference in the lives of these women, many being heads of households who need to provide for their families. It points to the need to develop a set of refugee- and gender-criteria, providing a way to measure the potential impact of investments on the wellbeing of displaced women, while also respecting the principles identified by the Charter of Good Practice on the Role of the Private Sector in Economic Integration of Refugees. All three notes will be disseminated in September.

MGF Budget Report

Reporting Period: June 1, 2019 – September 1, 2020

MGF TOTAL BUDGET. Aggregate totals, to date.

Received to Date

Donor	Amount Received
Canada	7,458,697.00
Norway	2,101,972.47
Total received	9,560,669.47

Committed to Date

Funds Allocation	Amount Committed
Iraq Work Plan	1,500,000.00
Jordan Work Plan	1,500,000.00
Lebanon Work Plan	1,500,000.00
Regional Work Plan	1,500,000.00
Total committed	6,000,000.00

Available Funds

Available balance	3,560,669.47
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Iraq Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$	1,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$	291,823.36
Available balance	\$	1,208,176.64

Jordan Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$	1,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$	616,943.87
Available balance	\$	883,056.13

Lebanon Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$	1,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$	564,133.10
Available balance	\$	935,866.90

Regional Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$	1,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$	523,990.76
Available balance	\$	976,009.24

disbursements = actual expenditures & committed budget

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. Working with the private sector, civil society organizations and development partners, the MGF supports **government-led efforts, country level priorities** and **strategic regional activities** that: (i) Strengthen the enabling environment for women's economic participation; and, (ii) Improve women's access to economic opportunities.

The MGF is a **World Bank - IFC initiative** in collaboration with the governments of **Canada** and **Norway**. It is mainly supported by the **Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality** (UFGE) with contributions from the governments of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

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