

*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 through August 2022. Next issue will be circulated in December 2022.*

الله أكبر

IRAQ

- A series of **webinars on marketing online and managing business during crises** were held in collaboration with the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce in June and July 2022. Around 900 attendees, around 85% female, participated in a total of five webinars and 97% of attendees reported being highly satisfied with the webinars, with the sessions that discussed digitization and social media use being the most appreciated ones. Participants highlighted the need to improve women's access to finance.
- To support the Government of Iraq on a **pilot gender responsive budgeting activity** covering MOLSA, the MGF team produced technical tools on approaches to GRB, best practices and lessons learned from other countries in addition to outlining a TOT manual to be delivered to relevant stakeholders. A peer-to-peer learning event with the Government of UAE was planned but had to be postponed due to health reasons.
- In Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the Ministry of Planning established a taskforce for **Gender-Responsive Public Procurement (GRPP)**. In preparation for producing policy recommendations, the MGF team conducted desk research on female entrepreneurs and public procurement in KRI, and a series of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with government stakeholders, female lead business and banks.



JORDAN

- The MGF is providing technical support to the GoJ to identify and prioritize **legislative entry points for improving Jordanian women's access to economic opportunities** aligned with the Jordan Economic Modernization vision. An introductory workshop on the Women, Business and the Law report, published annually by the World Bank and in which Jordan scored 46.9 out of 100 in 2022, was held in July and will be followed by a technical deep dive in September.
- Three **training sessions were held for 20 Aspiring Female Leaders from the private sector**, covering leadership skills, communication and critical thinking skills. The training is part of the IFC-led Leader4Equality activity, enabling private sector firms to adapt best practices for improving gender diversity and inclusive workplaces. Training sessions were held in partnership with the JNCW and Int@j.
- A coordination meeting was held with the government team representing MoL, MoDEE, CBJ and JNCW, following up on the **digital payments transformation plan for workers in the private sector**. Participants agreed on criteria for developing a roadmap that considers the enabling environment, availability of financial products band services, private sector readiness, workers attitudes and perceptions as well as feasibility and impact of digital transformation, especially on women's employment.



LEBANON

- The Leaders4Equality (L4E) initiative has successfully **completed 10 tailor-made Diversity and Inclusion Coaching Sessions** to the 10 companies of the cohort. L4E also delivered a day-long **peer2peer knowledge day**, where all cohort companies shared their progress, challenges and lessons learned as a result of the D&I sessions' guidance. Additionally, the L4E initiative has delivered three capacity building sessions tailored to the needs of 20 female aspiring leaders from companies in the cohort. A closing event is planned for December.
- The **Access2Markets Booster program** kicked off with the **export readiness training for WSMEs**. 24 selected Business Advisors have been trained on leadership, coaching and soft skills which they will apply in the upcoming one-on-one coaching sessions with the cohort of 64 Women-led SMEs.
- **Company insights** were published on the MGF website showcasing three leading Lebanese **private sector companies that have taken strides to advance gender equality within their workplaces**: Holdal Group, Malia Group and ITG Holding. The company insights dive deep into the topics of advancing gender diversity through effective anti-sexual harassment mechanisms, fostering productivity and well-being through family-friendly policies, and promoting and supporting women in leadership positions.



MGF Regional Work Program

SPOTLIGHT ON: INNOVATING FOR RESULTS

Over the last few months, the MGF regional team partnered with the World Bank’s Mind, Behavior, and Development Unit (eMBeD) to complement on-going government engagement around childcare in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. Current gross pre-primary enrollment rates in the Arab world is 28%, less than half the global average of 61% (UNESCO 2022). In light of the overwhelming global evidence regarding benefits of early childhood education on children’s learning and welfare outcomes and on women’s labor force participation, supporting country-level efforts to increase the access to quality childcare has become one of the key priorities of the regional MGF workplan.

To motivate more demand for childcare in the region, the MGF World Bank team is partnering with government counterparts to develop an evidence-based, behaviorally-informed social media campaign that leverages user-generated online content to positively shift society’s—and specifically parents’—views towards pre-school enrollment. Relying on user-generated content on social media is expected to signal to parents the social acceptability of sharing early childhood care and education with specialized centers or classrooms outside the family unit, as well as inspire expanded social norms around care responsibilities. Since the campaign approach is an innovative one that the MGF is keen to test and evaluate, the implementation will be staggered across the three Mashreq countries—starting with Jordan, followed by Lebanon and Iraq. This phased approach pertains to both the country in which the campaign will first be launched, as well as to the age group of children covered in the campaign messages. Initially, the campaign will target kindergarten enrollment given its unique set of concerns and developmental advantages, which differ from nurseries. After the pilot stage, the MGF team will also address parents’ behavioral and social barriers to the uptake of nurseries for younger children aged 0-3. These efforts aim to promote and reinforce the impacts of the Mashreq governments’ investments in promoting childcare services and boosting future national learning and socio-economic outcomes.



MGF Budget Report

Reporting Period: June 1, 2019 – September 1, 2022

Received to Date

Donor	Amount Received
Canada	10,662,540.00
Norway	2,894,460.00
Total received	13,557,000.00

Committed to Date

Funds Allocation	Estimated amount
Iraq Work Plan	2,350,000.00
Jordan Work Plan	2,650,000.00
Lebanon Work Plan	2,500,000.00
Regional Work Plan	2,600,000.00
Total committed	10,100,000.00

Available Funds

Available balance	3,457,000.00
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Iraq Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$ 2,350,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$ 1,714,767.17
Available balance	\$ 635,232.83

Jordan Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$ 2,650,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$ 1,972,084.17
Available balance	\$ 677,915.83

Lebanon Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$ 2,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$ 1,773,059.23
Available balance	\$ 726,940.77

Regional Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$ 2,600,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$ 1,893,330.32
Available balance	\$ 706,669.68

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** that counts on generous contributions from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.

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