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**
- **First webinar under the peer learning platform** for private sector companies was held, focusing on business benefits of implementing a flexible workplace environment benefiting both male and female employees. 83 participants from 51 Jordanian companies attended.
- **The finalized business case study on gender diversity in the workplace** focuses on women in non-conventional roles, with the ICT firm Estarta. To be published shortly.
- **Through a guided process based on behavioral economics, social norms campaign topics** were identified with the JNCW to address barriers to women’s economic participation: gender roles, childcare and safety and protection of women in public spaces.
- **Several ongoing research products:**
  -> To promote women’s employment through satellite (remote) work units, the impact of satellite garment factories was assessed, and a methodology for sector assessment developed.
  -> For the wage protection through digital payments roadmap, qualitative research is uncovering drivers, challenges, opportunities in wage digitization from regulatory, employer, employee, government systems perspectives.
  -> The methodology to assess socio-economic impact of microlending on women in Jordan was validated by national stakeholders, considering impact of COVID19 on payment defaults. The study will inform policy decisions in the microfinance sector.

**LEBANON**
- **The law criminalizing sexual harassment** was adopted by the Parliamentary Commission for Administration and Justice in Nov. 2020. The MGF provided technical assistance revising legal outputs.
- **The comprehensive assessment of childcare services provision** is underway. The mapping is developed in collaboration with concerned ministries. The review of laws & regulations was finalized.
- **An inter-ministerial meeting** with gender focal points from Ministries of Public Health; Education and Higher Education; Social Affairs; Labor; Economy and Trade; and Agriculture, discussed progress of activities, synergies and cross-sectoral collaboration.
- **The Crisis Management Training Program for Women Led Businesses and Business Advisors** was launched to provide tools for firm resilience. To date, 62 business advisors and 55 women-led businesses have been trained.
- **The behavior science informed communication strategy** and action plan is ongoing. Target behaviors for women, men and employers have been defined, focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders to validate the approach.
- **The first webinar under the Peer Learning Platform** was delivered in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce of Beirut and Mount Lebanon. The webinar focused on Mental Health and Well-being with attendees from 32 companies.
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.

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MGF Regional Work Program

State of the Mashreq Women report – based on the findings of the report, a blog was published: “What gets in their way? A closer look into why so few women work in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon”

MGF Budget Report

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

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