

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 March to May 2021. Next issue will be circulated early September 2021.

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



## IRAQ

With several changes among government counterparts in the last few months, work focused on reviewing progress and identifying priorities for the second phase of the MGF in Iraq. Therefore, most of the progress has been related to private sector led activities:

- A first webinar for the **Peer Learning Platform** was held in partnership with the Iraqi Private Banks League in March 2021. The webinar focused on the business benefits of gender diversity topics including **flexible work, family friendly policies**, and **women in non-conventional jobs**, attracting 60 participants from 33 different companies.
- The “**Journey to Gender Diversity Competition**” was launched to recognize private sector firms with gender diversity goals. Two winners were selected for introducing more flex work & family friendly policies and increasing the number of women in leadership positions. Winners will receive IFC advisory services.
- TOT curriculum for a gender sensitization and **investment readiness training for incubators and accelerators** was finalized.
- The first of three **case studies on workplace policies** to attract, retain and promote women in the private sector was completed featuring the Nafith Logistics company on **women in non-conventional jobs**.



## JORDAN

- A **third webinar** under the **Peer Learning Platform** was held in April 2021 in partnership with int@j and JNCW. The webinar focused on the business benefits of implementing **anti-sexual harassment policies** at the workplace and featured Umniah as a case study. 35 participants attended.
- The **training on gender considerations of the Code of Conduct for safe public transportation** for women and girls was carried out with MoT, LTRC, GAM, Bekhedmetkom, MoDEE, PSD and ASEZA. The violations reporting mobile app name was endorsed, preparations for the launch are underway.
- To promote women's employment through **expansion of satellite (remote) work units**, IT outsourcing and food manufacturing sectors were identified as target sectors and discussed across the national technical team. An implementation workplan will be developed to guide the expansion.
- A qualitative assessment of available and preferred types of **access to information on the registration of home-based businesses** revealed a demand for interactive information through a website or an app to reduce registration burden and provide official, streamlined information.
- A mixed-method study on the **socio-economic impact of microlending on women** business borrowers was kicked off in coordination with JNCW, CBJ and Tanmeyah.

A forum was held on the **value of diversity and inclusion in business leadership** targeting 20 male executives from **Jordan** and **Lebanon**, focusing on practical ways men can maximize the benefits of a diverse and inclusive board and senior leadership team.



## LEBANON

- The **DigitalAG4Her hackathon** competition was launched to crowdsource and support innovative ICT-based solutions that support women working in agriculture. 52 applications were received, 20 teams were shortlisted to further develop solutions that enhance efficiency, equity and environmental sustainability in the agri-food sector in Lebanon.
- A **third webinar** under the **Peer Learning Platform** was held in May 2021 in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce of Beirut and Mount Lebanon. It focused on the business benefits of implementing **anti-sexual harassment policies at the workplace**. 35 participants attended.
- A “**Journey to Gender Diversity Competition**” was launched to recognize private sector companies with gender diversity goals. Two winners were selected to receive advisory services from IFC.
- A **Market Study mapping the entrepreneurship space for women** was concluded. It identified regional and international demand trends and included the development of an action plan to facilitate export opportunities.
- A total of 87 business advisors and 156 women-led business completed the **Crisis Management Training Program** and all businesses were matched with advisors for one-on-one coaching sessions.

## MGF Regional Work Program

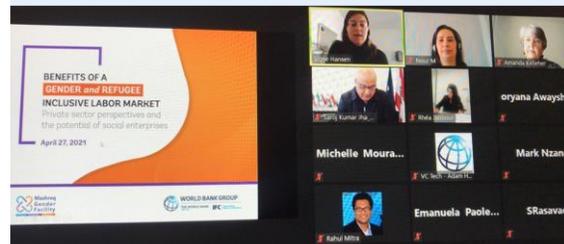
### SPOTLIGHT ON: INNOVATING 4 RESULTS

#### Webinar series DISPLACEMENT x GENDER x ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The first webinar, on April 27, focused on private sector perspectives and the potential of social enterprises. It was attended by 80 participants from governments, private sector, NGOs, CSOs, and development partners. WB Regional Director Saroj Jha emphasized the institutional priority of women's economic empowerment, in particular vulnerable women like refugees. IFC's regional forced displacement focal point, Selma Rasavac, emphasized the importance to work across stakeholders for a comprehensive support to refugee women to increase their financial inclusion, employment and entrepreneurship. As panelists, Oryana Awaishah (Jerash Garment), Amanda Kelleher (Luminus Education) and Michelle Mouracade (Alfanar) brought private sector and philanthropic perspectives to the conversation.

The webinar identified areas where policy and programmatic support is required: (i) Identify and address specific challenges women refugees face such as transport, childcare and skills development; (ii) Clarify rules of hiring non-Syrian refugees; (iii) Facilitate process for refugees to get permits to leave camp to get to work; (iv) Encourage start-ups to register in the host country, for increased tax revenue; (v) Focus on businesses' needs for the right skills over nationality, which would help unlocking the potential of refugee women to contribute to economic growth; and (vi) Strengthen social enterprises through long-term grants and technical assistance, to ensure that they are investment ready and connected to funding opportunities, such as impact investors. The next webinar, in late summer or early fall, will focus on barriers related to (lack of) documentation and IDs.

*The series seeks to facilitate knowledge sharing and discussion on intersectional challenges and opportunities for the public and private sector related to economic empowerment of refugee/internally displaced women in the Mashreq. By bringing a gender lens to refugee/IDP interventions, and a refugee/IDP lens to gender interventions, the series shed light on the specific situation of people who are both women and displaced.*



## MGF Budget Report

**MGF TOTAL BUDGET.** *Aggregate totals, to date.*

#### Received to Date

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

#### 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
<b>Total committed</b>	<b>6,000,000.00</b>

#### Available Funds

<b>Available balance</b>	<b>7,557,000.00</b>
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Reporting Period: June 1, 2019 – June 1, 2021

#### Iraq Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$	1,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$	750,952.55
<b>Available balance</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>749,047.45</b>

#### Jordan Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$	1,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$	1,098,643.85
<b>Available balance</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>401,356.15</b>

#### Lebanon Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$	1,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$	1,058,619.96
<b>Available balance</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>441,380.04</b>

#### Regional Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$	1,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$	1,094,259.29
<b>Available balance</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>405,740.71</b>

*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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