

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 2021. Next issue will be circulated early December 2021.

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



IRAQ

- Findings and preliminary analysis of the **gender-responsive public procurement** law and the draft legal framework of public procurement were completed and presented in a high-level discussion with stakeholders from MOP. Based on the discussion, the GOI, represented by MOP, will form a taskforce with key stakeholders for the gender/public procurement nexus with the view to develop a policy on sustainable procurement and action plans to continue facilitating WLBs in public procurement.
- **Childcare Landscape** data collection tools have been developed. The employer supply side survey covering 100 private sector companies in Iraq is underway in collaboration with the World Bank's Enterprise Survey team.
- In September 2021, a national conference officially launched the **Gol plan on women's economic empowerment**, directly linked to the priorities identified for the MGF. The Minister of Planning along with the National Coordinator confirmed the importance of the agenda and highlighted the need to focus on vulnerable segments of the population in liberated areas to strengthen women's vocational training skills and access to income generating activities.



JORDAN

- The report on the **socio-economic impact of micro-lending on women** micro-entrepreneurs was presented to national partners. Findings revealed that micro-loans are mostly used for expenditures rather than for entrepreneurship. A task force including CBJ, MOPIC, MOF, MOSD, JNCW and Tanmeyah will be formed to develop recommendations and to identify actions to improve the sector's impact on women.
- An instructions manual on **licensing requirements of home-based businesses** was finalized and to be issued online by GoJ. Related training material was developed, and next steps to train municipal staff representatives are being coordinated with Ministry of Local Administration.
- The MGF **Childcare Assessment** draft report shows that despite the legal mandate, only 1% of employers surveyed (n=106) provide some form of childcare support and most are not sufficiently aware of the compulsory labor law policies. 80% of them are not planning to provide childcare support.

In both **Jordan** and **Lebanon**, the "**Leaders4Equality**" (L4E) peer learning cohorts were established with 10 leading, large private sector firms signed up in each country to deepen their capacity to hire, retain and promote more women in their workforce and to enhance the pipeline of aspiring female leaders.



LEBANON

- A joint WB-UN Women report on the **Status of Women in Lebanon** was published, presenting a comprehensive data-driven analysis of women's access to economic opportunities, human capital accumulation & agency. It identifies the need for action across policies & programs; collaboration; and the knowledge agenda.
- The report was launched as part of a **joint EU-UN-WB high-level event to elevate the dialogue on gender equality**. Participants underscored the importance of putting women at the forefront of humanitarian and development policies. The Deputy Prime Minister noted that the absence of women in the labor market is a significant untapped resource, and that the government is committed to an agenda that will empower women.
- Female labor force participation is higher in coastal areas in Lebanon, and preliminary findings from the **Childcare Assessment** show that this is where childcare providers are concentrated. Of surveyed firms (n=100), only 5% have current childcare solutions in place whereas 80% do not even plan to consider providing such solutions. There is currently no legislation requiring the private sector to provide childcare services to employees.

MGF Regional Work Program

DIALOGUE & PARTICIPATION

The **MGF Regional Work Plan** was endorsed by the Steering Committee, introducing new activities that reflect additional booster activities to support the childcare agenda, a mid-term learning assessment and additional knowledge management such as thematical sector specific knowledge briefs.

The MGF supported the Country Director fireside chat in the 2021 **Women of MENA in Tech Conference**. The discussion focused on constraints women face to enter the labor force in STEM related fields; the role of tech-related private sector firms to attract & hire women into their workforce; and public sector's role in facilitating women's employment in STEM.

DATA & KNOWLEDGE

State of the Mashreq Women Report II - Ongoing analysis of data on childcare use reveals low use of any type of childcare services among households with young children in Lebanon (28%), Iraq (23%), and Jordan (9%). Childcare users in all three countries primarily rely on family members for support. Related to institutional provision, private providers are used more often than state providers – especially in Jordan and Lebanon. Although working women are more likely than non-working women to use childcare, a large fraction of employed women do not currently use childcare. This is consistent with the “double shift” faced by working women: time-use data reveals that unpaid care burden is substantial for them. Despite this, willingness to use daycare remains low even among working women, with lack of trust as a prominent reason for not wanting to use childcare services.

INNOVATING 4 RESULTS

Enhancing forcibly displaced women's access to economic opportunities – The design of a pilot capacity-building and technical assistance program on municipal service orientation towards refugee women's economic empowerment, and private sector gender- and refugee-responsive engagement has been finalized. Virtual consultations took place with the Women's Economic Empowerment and Development units of two Jordanian municipalities, Mafraq and Madaba, where there is a concentration of refugees and economic opportunities in agribusiness and industry sectors. Both municipalities have expressed interest to partake in the pilot, expected to start by February 2022. The pilot program builds on a holistic, multi-level, multi-stakeholder, and evidence-based approach that can be replicated in other Jordanian municipalities, as well as in Iraq and Lebanon from late-2022.

MGF Budget Report

Reporting Period: June 1, 2019 – December 1, 2021

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	\$ 1,007,882.77
Available balance	\$ 1,342,117.23

Jordan Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$ 2,650,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$ 1,561,573.72
Available balance	\$ 1,088,426.28

Lebanon Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$ 2,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$ 1,259,710.25
Available balance	\$ 1,240,289.75

Regional Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$ 2,600,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$ 1,430,159.11
Available balance	\$ 1,169,840.89

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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