

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 September to November 2019. Next issue will be circulated early March 2020.

الله أكبر

IRAQ

Limited progress has been made in this period due to the unstable situation in the country.

- **Legal review on access to property** (including constraints and good practices) is advanced, and a firm will be hired to hold multi-stakeholder workshops on the legal constraints.
- A **workplan on the educational curriculum and vocational training** has been finalized in collaboration with MOLSA. Data collection instruments to better understand the shortfalls are being developed and a firm will be hired to collect the data.
- The discussion on **preferential agreement** has started with Ministry of Planning and the private sector. An assessment on the financial cost of the preferential agreements is underway to inform the process.
- Based on best international practice, the scope of a **landscape analysis of the childcare economy** (demand & supply) is being developed for Baghdad and Erbil as pilot cities.
- **Assessment of the creation of a mentorship platform for women** carried out. Identifying mentors through Banking on Women and IFC Corporate Governance.
- IFC is developing the content for the **gender capacity building training for incubators and accelerators**. The training will be implemented under the MGF.



JORDAN

The Jordan MGF team kickstarted the process of scoping for several activities, including the following:

- **Developing a whitepaper** to enable the government to adopt some type of **incentive/s for childcare services**, in collaboration with the Social Security Corporation, including technical assistance sharing experiences in other countries.
- To support the Ministry of Transport to **operationalize the code of conduct for public transportation**, proposals received from consulting firms to carry out services (Training and IT system) are currently being evaluated.
- Face to face and online meetings were held with the relevant stakeholders to define the scope of the **gender donor funding tracker system** (with MOPIC); the study on **socioeconomic impacts of microlending**; and inputs required for the **digital payments transformational plan** (the latter two with Central Bank).
- The **Amman Stock Exchange** was identified as potential partner for conducting a **peer learning platform women's employment** in the private sector, in collaboration with other interested business association.
- The **Jordan Institute of Directors** was identified to lead the **women in leadership** (as board members) training to improve private sector governance.

The Jordan MGF team is focusing on **coordination** throughout the identification and implementation of activities. In this period, meetings with UN Women and ILO were held to ensure streamlining of activities, exchange on workplans, and to be in continuous contact on relevant topics such as childcare and private sector support.



LEBANON

The work plan was endorsed in September 2019, and the current situation is affecting the implementation pace.

- A preliminary **legal mapping of laws that restrict women's economic participation** has been finalized, with initial suggestions for amendments. Final assessment will include suggested timeline, process considerations, implementation requirements, other entities involved in the discussions.
- Reviewing **hiring policies & practices for public sector employees**, to recommend reforms, and develop training manuals (with the Civil Service Council; not expected to be affected by the political environment, as not part of a ministry).
- Building on existing communications work of relevant stakeholders, the **scope of the communications strategy and campaign** has been developed.
- The scope of a **comprehensive childcare assessment** has been detailed and will be discussed with internal and external experts before hiring a firm to implement the study.
- For the case studies on **best private sector practice on family friendly policies and anti-sexual harassment**, the scope has been identified and a consultancy will be hired.
- Working with the Ogero syndicate (government telecom service provider) to provide **awareness on sexual harassment in the workplace**
- Supporting the Women League Council for the development and launch of a business plan for a **pilot entrepreneurship program pushing "made in Lebanon" products**.

MGF Regional Work Program

DIALOGUE & PARTICIPATION

MGF Secretariat – promotional materials developed (country 2-pagers, MGF summary) and disseminated to country teams, partners and at WBG Annual Meetings; MGF website content developed and translated, webpage configuration being finalized. Technical support to WBG project teams, e.g. identifying actions to increase young women’s access to the technology space in Jordan (Youth, Technology, and Jobs Project) and strengthening the gender criteria and operational manuals for the MDTFs in Jordan and Iraq. Review on “Identifying and Addressing Gender Gaps through WBG Operations in Lebanon” developed.

Mashreq Conference on Women’s Economic Empowerment II – Concept discussed with key stakeholders in Jordan, presented at the Inter-ministerial Committee for Women; and Prime Minister patronage has been sought.

DATA & KNOWLEDGE

State of the Mashreq Women report – A cross-sectoral team is analyzing existing literature and quantitative data on women’s constraints to economic opportunities. The design of a survey to track indicators that allow to identify progress towards increased female labor force participation is underway. Engagement with researchers and universities in the region has started.

Building on evidence and experience to inform country priorities – To prepare for a workshop on the care economy, a background note is being developed to provide a framework, identify different models and best practices based on conversations with internal WBG experts, and country level International Organizations and Civil Society. This work is informing MGF country teams’ identification of the scope of childcare assessments in each respective country.

INNOVATING 4 RESULTS

Enhancing forcibly displaced women’s access to economic opportunities – After the Concept brief was discussed at the October 2019 Steering Committee meeting, the team has taken onboard SC suggestions and is developing implementation plans for the work. This includes how the supply and demand side work will take place, team composition, M&E and reporting arrangements etc.

MGF Budget Report

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

MGF TOTAL BUDGET. Aggregate totals, to date.

Received to Date

Donor	Amount Received
Canada	7,458,697.00
Norway	1,213,873.00
Total received	8,672,570.00

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	2,672,570.00
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Iraq Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$	1,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$	107,229.65
Available balance	\$	1,392,770.35

Jordan Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$	1,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$	117,258.45
Available balance	\$	1,382,741.55

Lebanon Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$	1,500,000.00
<i>pending internal Bank process to become chargeable code; some expenses to be re-posted from Regional Work Plan once active.</i>		
Total disbursements to date		
Available balance	\$	1,500,000.00

Regional Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$	1,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$	374,019.85
Available balance	\$	1,125,980.15

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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