

NEWSLETTER

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 December 2020 to February 2021. Next issue will be circulated early June 2021.

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



IRAQ

- A review that identifies **legal restrictions that impact women's economic participation** in both federal Iraq and KRI shows that, for example, in Iraq women are still restricted from working night hours, and in KRI there are no legal provisions that address sexual harassment at the workplace. The KRI draft Labor Law has been reviewed and recommendations will be discussed with MOLSA and the Council of Ministers.
- A local NGO initiated focus group discussions and **workshops on women's employment and ownership of agricultural land** with government stakeholders, NGOs, and private sector companies, aimed at discussing the main findings of the legal review and recommendations for legislative reforms, in KRI.
- A legal study **examining procurement regulations** in Iraq from a gender perspective is being finalized in collaboration with MoP in Federal Iraq. It aims to ensure compatibility of the draft procurement regulation with the overall legal framework and to propose further legislative reforms to the overall procurement system.
- Research instruments to **measure the enforcement of laws** related to labor legislation among employers and employees were finalized for distribution in KRI.
- Research work initiated on **childcare landscape analysis** and the development of three **best practice case studies on workforce gender diversity** in the private sector.



JORDAN

- A webinar under the women's employment **peer learning platform** for private sector companies was held, focusing on the business benefits of **hiring women in non-conventional roles**, and featuring the launch of the business case study on Estarta Solutions. 113 participants from 50 Jordanian companies attended.
- In coordination with LTRC, GAM and ASEZA, support for implementing the **Code of Conduct for safe public transportation for women and girls** is advancing. The use of Amazon Web Services for hosting the mobile app to report violations has been identified.
- A **comprehensive childcare supply and demand assessment** that includes a focus on employer-supported childcare has been launched to inform policy making on childcare. Concerted **data-gathering** efforts with MoSD, SSC, ASEZA are underway.
- To promote women's employment through **satellite (remote) work units**, the national technical team led by MoL discussed findings from the assessment of the satellite garment sector with the research team. Findings point to the **importance of providing flexible work arrangements and matching demand with available skills** for greater job satisfaction.
- Focus group discussions were completed in five municipalities, in coordination with MoLA, as part of assessment of the **registration burden for home-based businesses**. Initial findings show that experiences depend on municipality staff understanding of instructions and that the online information is rarely referred to by business owners.



LEBANON

- The **law criminalizing sexual harassment** was passed by the Lebanese Parliament in December 2020. The MGF provided technical assistance and, together with NCLW, played a convening role in bringing together members from the Ministry of Justice and Parliament for the law adoption.
- A total of 81 business advisors and 112 women-led business have completed the **Crisis Management Training Program** and 73 of the businesses have been matched with advisors for one-on-one coaching sessions.
- A second webinar under the **Peer Learning Platform** was held in February 2021 in partnership with the Chambers of Commerce of Beirut and Mount Lebanon. The webinar focused on the business benefits of implementing **family friendly workplace policies**. 80 participants from 52 companies attended.
- The scope of a “**DigitalAg4Her Agri-Tech Innovative based Competition** to support vulnerable rural women was defined together with NCLW and MOA and is expected to be launched in the spring.
- The **national childcare assessment** is finalizing the mapping of childcare services in collaboration with concerned ministries, as well as the comprehensive review of legislation.

MGF Regional Work Program

DIALOGUE & PARTICIPATION

A summary of MGF progress to date was prepared and will be used to update the website. It also points to implementation delays due to civil unrest in Lebanon and Iraq, economic hardship and government changes across all three countries, and the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time the move to a virtual modus operandi allowed for a broader participation in some activities.

DATA & KNOWLEDGE

State of the Mashreq Women Report II - Building on the first State of the Mashreq Women report which explored barriers that women face at different points in their lives to enter and remain in the labor market, the focus of the second State of the Mashreq Women Report has been defined and the analytical work has started. The second report will provide policy relevant analysis on factors that can make care services effective in helping women balance care responsibilities with income earning opportunities, and on potential job creation effects of care services expansion. The report will include international experience on financing (public/private) for care services and assess the fiscal space for increased investments on care. To inform the analysis, new data is being collected through a dedicated survey (nationally representative in Jordan and Lebanon, covering selected urban areas in Iraq) on care issues and time use, including new evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on women's care demand. The report is expected to be published in October 2021.

INNOVATING 4 RESULTS

Enhancing forcibly displaced women's access to economic opportunities – Following the technical briefing with the MGF Steering Committee in December and engagement with UN Women and Canada, the concept for the pilot project in Jordan has been further defined. This pilot approach will focus on institutional capacity building and mentoring of select municipalities to address refugee women's economic empowerment through improved outreach to refugee women (supply), hands-on support to increase engagement between municipalities and private sector (demand), and opportunities for linking supply to demand. Simultaneously, a policy note highlighting the specific barriers and opportunities for economic empowerment of refugee women in Jordan has been finalized and is currently under review.

MGF Budget Report

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

MGF TOTAL BUDGET. Aggregate totals, to date.

Received to Date

Donor	Amount Received
Canada	7,458,697.00
Norway	2,101,972.47
Total received	9,560,669.47

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	3,560,669.47
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Iraq Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$ 1,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$ 548,402.15
Available balance	\$ 951,597.85

Jordan Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$ 1,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$ 972,011.23
Available balance	\$ 527,988.77

Lebanon Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$ 1,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$ 755,303.59
Available balance	\$ 744,696.41

Regional Work Plan

Total budget allocation to date	\$ 1,500,000.00
Total disbursements to date	\$ 863,224.97
Available balance	\$ 636,775.03

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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