

Summary of Progress

February 19, 2022

BACKGROUND. The [MGF](#) was launched in January 2019 as a vehicle to provide technical assistance to the Mashreq countries (Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon) to enhance women’s economic opportunities as a catalyst towards more inclusive, sustainable and peaceful societies. This WB-IFC initiative supports country level priorities and strategic regional activities that: (a) Strengthen the *enabling environment* for women’s economic participation; and (b) Improve *women’s access* to economic opportunities. The [Women’s Economic Empowerment Action Plans \(WEEAP\)](#) produced by the Government of Lebanon (GOL) set out the country priorities and theories of change towards the ultimate outcome targets of increased female labor force participation. To contribute to operationalizing the WEEAPs, the MGF implements activities that have been identified in work plans developed by the GOL with the WBG team based on existing resources and an assessment of complementarities and value-added. The key government counterpart for the MGF is the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW), where the National Coordinator sits. The MGF has established an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism with officially appointed focal points from Ministries of Social Affairs, Economy and Trade, Public Health, Education, Labor, and Ministry of Agriculture. In addition, the MGF has established relations with the private sector, CSOs, and academia, while coordinating and leveraging on the work of the international community in Lebanon.

The Lebanon MGF working is organized around the following five pillars (Annex): (i) Pillar 1 focuses on improving the enabling environment by providing legal and technical support to lift legal constraints and inequalities as well as reviewing key GOL strategic document; (ii) Pillar 2 focuses on providing technical analysis and advisory around the care agenda (mostly childcare); (iii) Pillar 3 works with private sector firms to make the case for workforce diversity; (iv) Pillar 4 focuses on providing advisory services to women-led or owned enterprises for export-oriented operations as well as providing access to market-relevant digital skills to women; and (v) Pillar 5 will implement and evaluate a communications campaign with a behavior focus aimed at changing social norms around women’s economic empowerment, building on an evidence-based communications strategy.

PROGRESS TO DATE. In phase 1 of the MGF (June 2019-June 2021), the following has been completed:

- (i) provided technical assistance and, together with NCLW, played a convening role in bringing together key stakeholders for the successful adoption by GOL of the anti-sexual harassment law;
- (ii) worked hiring practices & codes of conduct for public sector (e.g. Ogero pilot);
- (iii) provided extensive legal review and recommendations on the labor law, approved by the legal commission of MoL;
- (iv) launched a comprehensive childcare assessment to form the basis of a subsequent framework aimed at enhancing access, quality and affordability to childcare facilities;
- (v) published a joint UN-WB report entitled “[The Status of Women in Lebanon](#)” at a high-level joint EU-UN-WB event aimed and promoting and elevating the dialogue on gender equality with the GOL;
- (vi) conducted the Women’s Employment Peer Learning Platform, in partnership with Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Beirut and Mount Lebanon, through which four webinars were implemented and attended by over total of 156 participants representing 80 unique firms as well as three case studies with private sector firms were produced to make the case for workforce diversity;
- (vii) developed and implemented a customized gender-sensitive Crisis Management Training Program for Women Led Businesses to over 160 women-led firms, and more than 80 business advisors;
- (viii) launched the DigitalAg4Her innovation hackathon which granted three women-led teams with incubation and mentoring services to kick-start their innovative ICT-based solutions to support women working in agriculture
- (ix) developed a market study on export potential for Lebanese women entrepreneurs (expected to be published in March 2022); and,
- (x) designed an evidence-based multi-sectoral communication and outreach campaign, anchored in behavioral science.

While phase 1 focused on setting the stage, phase 2 builds on the achievements reached so far to deepen the engagement, with a strong focus on working with private sector stakeholders and civil society, and on complementing WBG engagement that aims at building back better after the multiple, ongoing crises.

In phase 2 (July 2021 – December 2022), the following are planned to be achieved:

- (i) draft and lobby for the approval of suggested amendments to a number of laws identified in phase 1;
- (ii) support the implementation of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law;
- (iii) conduct a training of trainers for female-led SMEs on registering their businesses and exporting products;
- (iv) finalize and build on the findings of the childcare assessment to, among other activities, support the design of an evidence-based national strategy and a framework strategy for an expanded trained childcare workforce and identify support for their implementation;
- (v) assess elderly care provision in Lebanon and elaborate a model for increased quality access;
- (vi) continue making the case for workforce diversity, through the “Leadership4Equality”, by providing concrete support to a cohort of 10 champion companies to enhance their Gender Diversity HR tools and provide their female employees with leadership trainings;
- (vii) strengthen the capacity of MEHE to provide career counseling at school and motivate more women in STEAM fields;
- (viii) implement the “Access2Markets Booster for Women SMEs” to support Lebanese women entrepreneurs in exporting their products, scaling up locally and accessing new local markets; and,
- (ix) implement a market-relevant digital skills training linked to industry certification targeting women; and,
- (x) develop, implement and evaluate 2 social norms campaign: one focused on promoting the right of women in the workplace and highlighting the positive impact of working women, with the production and dissemination of 6 videos to start; and another focused on attitude and uptake of childcare services.

Annex:

Lebanon MGF Workplan - Phase I June 2019- June 2021

Enabling Environment	Research and Care Economy	Private Sector Employment	Entrepreneurship	Behavioral Change
<p>To create favorable conditions for women's access to economic opportunities, the project is providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical legal support to lift legal constraints restricting women's access to the work force. The support focuses on strengthening already existing rights related to women's economic empowerment, and on identifying legal gaps for additional rights. - Address legal inequalities in recruitment policies for public sector employees. - Technical review of existing key national strategies and relevant reforms to identify specific actions and targets to close gender gaps 	<p>One of the main impediments of women economic participation is the lack of access to affordable, convenient and high-quality childcare.</p> <p>-To overcome this challenge the MGF has launched an extensive assessment of the demand and supply of childcare to form the basis of a subsequent framework for enhancing access, quality and affordability to childcare facilities in Lebanon to all parents.</p> <p>Additionally, a comprehensive analytical note on state of women in Lebanon is underway.</p>	<p>The private sector plays an integral role in promoting women's employment. Several activities under the MGF address this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Women's Employment Peer Learning Platform established in partnership with the CCIABML to raise the capacity of private sector employers to recruit, retain and promote women in their workforce, through needs tailored webinars. - Launched competition, tailored to support companies with their workforce gender diversity goals. 2 winners will receive IFC AS to implement said projects. - Three case studies identifying the "business case" for workforce gender diversity including topics on family friendly policies and women in leadership roles. 	<p>Supporting women's entrepreneurship is key to enable economic empowerment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Crisis Management Training Program for Women Led Businesses and Business Advisors provides tools for firm resilience. -A Market Study maps women entrepreneurs, identifies regional and international demand trends, and creates a workplan enabling Lebanese women-led business export. -The DigitalAG4Her innovation competition aims at crowdsourcing ideas and promoting innovation to foster resilience and improve productivity of rural, vulnerable women in agriculture. 	<p>A comprehensive multi-sectoral communication and outreach campaign is being designed anchored in behavioral science. It aims to promote the rights of women in the workplace and highlight the positive impact of working women. Specific sub-themes will be addressed, such as women as drivers of innovation and the potential impact of family-friendly work policies on retention. Specific target groups and target behaviors were identified. The campaign will build on these findings to influencing social norms and gender stereotypes including the impact of COVID 19.</p>

LEBANON Phase II Country Work Plan Pillars & Activities July 2021 – December 2022

Enabling environment	Research & care economy	Employment in the private sector	Entrepreneurship	Communications & behavioral change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical support to lift legal constraints to women's access to the work force. Focus on strengthening existing rights and on promoting additional rights in the Labor Law, National Social Security Fund, Cooperative Law, Moveable Asset Registry, Insolvency Laws. - Advocacy for insertion of Anti-Sexual Harassment Law in the Labor Law, and support development & implementation of codes of conduct. - Review government reform & recovery plans to identify & promote actions and targets facilitating women's economic opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Building on the childcare assessment findings from phase I, MGF will support, among other activities, a national dialogue & Community of Practice for childcare; the development of a childcare workforce training framework; and the identification of private sector investment opportunities. -Assessment of elderly care with recommendations for expanding quality care. - Deep dives into policy topics related to women's economic opportunities, based on the Status of Women in Lebanon report 	<p>Promote women's private sector employment through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Women's Employment Peer Learning Platform 2 "Leadership4Equality" (L4E) including capacity building and leadership training; Peer2Peer Learning; Leadership Academy; and supporting the L4E expo. -Women in STEAM will be supported by capacity building of Ministry of Higher Education for career counseling & awareness raising and by implementing market-relevant digital skills program for freelancing. 	<p>In the context of the new market context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lebanon Women SME Academy will support women led businesses through training on export readiness; capacity building for on applying for tenders; series of networking events; buyer matchmaking. - Support policies and reforms related to women's opportunities in the agriculture sector, including digitalization in agriculture based on the DigitalAG4Her hackathon. Follow-up on winning innovative solutions identified through the hackathon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Promote the rights of women in the workplace and highlight the positive impact of working women through the implementation of a comprehensive communication & outreach campaign anchored in behavioral science aiming at influencing social norms and gender stereotypes. Sub-themes to be selected and tailored to different target audiences. - Develop, implement and evaluate a social norms campaign focused on attitudes and uptake of childcare services in collaboration with the regional work plan.