



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The UN Migration Agency

Terms of Reference

Research:

Women's Agency and Livelihoods/ Microbusiness Programming in Jordan

I. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

Since the outbreak of the Syrian conflict in 2011, Syrian refugees have sought protection in Jordan, increasing the pressure on government authorities, economic and social infrastructures, and local communities. Today, Syrian refugees account for more than 10 per cent of the total population in Jordan, with around 650,000 registered Syrian refugees, of which the vast majority live outside of camps in urban areas. Jordan is also host to 67,000 Iraqi, 15,000 Yemeni, 6,000 Sudanese refugees from countries other than Syria who face heightened challenges and risks related to isolation, exclusion and access to services.

In light of the protracted displacement and in an environment of limited livelihoods opportunities, both refugees and Jordanians are facing increased vulnerability as their savings, assets and resources are long exhausted. With one of the lowest female employment rate in the world, restricted occupations for refugees and the negative impact of Covid-19 pandemic, particularly in informal jobs, the vulnerability and access to income generating activities for women in Jordan has been further exacerbated.

Additionally, the pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing key risk factors for GBV. Globally there has been an alarming increase in multiple forms of violence against women and girls, especially physical, psychological, sexual and economic forms of domestic violence fueled by household economics, and food insecurity and confined living conditions due to lockdown and movement restriction measures to curb the spread of the virus. School closures, financial and food insecurity have heightened the risk of violence for girls including sexual exploitation, harassment, and child marriage.

Within this context, international organizations have been increasing their focus on Home-Based Business (HBBs) over the past few years as a means to facilitate access to more economic opportunities to women. While the exact percentage is difficult to assess given the high number of unregistered HBBs, estimations show that most of HBBs are owned by women. A Livelihoods assessment of microbusiness in Jordan conducted in 2020¹ indicated that among micro businesses,

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/jordan-livelihood-assessment-micro-businesses-assessment-home-based-businesses-and>

60% were reported to be outside home while 40% were operated from home. Among micro business owner beneficiaries who reported running their businesses from home, 80% were female.

A recently published labour market analysis² commissioned by ICMC concluded that there is no agreement between stakeholders regarding the market demands. Priorities are usually not based on the analysis of market data from reliable sources due to diverse factors, including the lack of data, lack of coordination between stakeholders, and the lack of efficient awareness raising activities in relation to the labour market in Jordan.

According to the market analysis, the most needed service for both refugees and Jordanians is general house maintenance, such as repairing furniture, water connections and electricity, and rehabilitation of walls and ceilings. Whereas the labour market is saturated with people skilled in hairdressing, sewing, and food processing and preservation. However, according to the same study, new opportunities can be created by enhancing the capabilities of the target beneficiaries and their knowledge to generate creative and innovative solutions to problems and thereby create new products, services, and businesses.

Gender roles often confine women to traditional 'women's work' sectors which have become saturated by labour supply and are all too often the focus of UN/NGO livelihoods programming. Improved labour market analysis in non-traditional sectors can produce smart and workable alternatives for women that are more gender transformative.³

Women's increased role in income-generation challenges gender norms and can also increase exposure to GBV risks. As pointed out by some studies⁴, it is critical to involve men in livelihood programming, playing certain roles depending on the context. This can contribute to the desired end goal of reducing GBV, although more evidence is needed. The linkages between Livelihoods and GBV risks have been explored in regional studies⁵. However, there is less evidence on the GBV risks associated to HBBs interventions.

In order to gain a better understanding of the issues outlined above and how women's agency is interlinked and taken into consideration when designing income generating initiatives in Jordan, IOM is hiring a consultancy firm/service provider responsible to implement a research, drafting analytical report summarizing key findings and recommendations.

²<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ICMC%20Labour%20Market%20Assessment%20Report%202021.pdf>

³ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_775573.pdf

⁴reliefweb.int/report/world/peril-or-protection-link-between-livelihoods-and-gender-based-violence-displacement

⁵ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_775573.pdf

II. PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research aims to gather an evidence base for a better understanding of specific dimensions of women's agency in relation to livelihoods programming in Jordan, particularly around interventions focused to support vocational training and microbusiness targeting refugee and vulnerable Jordanian women.

The research/case study responds to the following questions:

- What are the drivers and limitations of women's choices regarding preferred skills and business sectors when joining microbusiness interventions?
- What is the relationship between choices, market base information access and available training opportunities? It changes across different age groups? What are the opportunities and strategies for developing business in non-traditional sectors?
- What are the intersecting dimensions of women's preference for traditional or non-traditional sectors?
- How are mentorship strategies impacting the learning experience, autonomy and business success of women's economic empowerment interventions focused on microbusiness?
- What are the opportunities to increase women's leadership within the sector?
- What are the perceived risks of women running HBBs regarding control over resources and gender dynamics within their households? Do they perceive to be at heightened risk of suffering Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) or other specific type of GBV linked to their business activity? Have their involvement in microbusiness help them to leave an abuse relationship?
- What are male's perceptions about control over resources within households running HBBs by women? Has their willingness to support them changed over time? and if yes, why?

Additionally, the research/case study aims to:

- To analyze the type and nature of microbusiness interventions targeting refugee women and vulnerable Jordanians under the Jordan Response Plan 2020-2022 in collaboration with Livelihoods Working Group and HBBs Task Force.
- To analyze linkages between these interventions and available specialized GBV services.
- To identify gaps and recommendations to enhance microbusiness programming in relation with the findings of this research/case study and recent relevant research conducted at regional and national level.

IV. SPECIFIC TASKS

1. Literature review
2. Development of methodology and data collection tools

3. Data collection
4. Data analysis and report drafting
5. Final report incorporating IOM inputs.
6. Presentation of the main finding and recommendations to the Livelihoods Working Group and GBV Sub-Working Group.

V. DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT

The duration of the assignment will be no more than 10 weeks, indicatively from June 2021 until August 2021.