



Women and Work:

Improving Gender Integration in the Livelihoods Response to the Syrian crisis





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The JMD report provided a detailed discussion of the challenges and promising approaches to scaling-up access to jobs and other economic opportunities in Syria's neighboring countries as well as inside Syria. It acknowledged that "Syrian women, as a consequence of the crisis, are reportedly taking new roles and responsibility related to livelihoods" (JMD 2017: 23), however, did not identify specific issues surrounding women, calling for additional research. The working paper expands on the JMD report by identifying particular challenges related to integrating gender into the livelihoods response of the 3RP and a number of institutional constraints that contribute to reducing the effectiveness of gender-mainstreaming efforts.

The research and writing were done by Jennifer C Olmsted, professor of economics, and Caitlin Killian, professor of Sociology at Drew University.

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While the report was written before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the authors trust that the overall recommendations remain relevant to the new context.

The findings, interpretations, and conclusions are strictly those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of UNDP and institutions of the United Nations system that are mentioned herein, nor of the Government of Finland.



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Executive Summary

The objective of this study is to explore the degree to which women's needs and experiences are being actively addressed in the design and implementation of livelihoods programs in the context of the Syria crisis, building off the **Jobs Make the Difference** report produced by ILO, UNDP, and WFP. Understanding the context, in terms of what employment patterns existed among Syrian women before the crisis as well as the political, economic, and institutional contexts in each of four host communities, is key. Based on field work carried out in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, as well as remote interviews with partners in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), we discuss a number of gender-specific challenges that women face that were not included in the **Jobs Make the Difference** report and identify a number of promising gender-responsive approach. We detail some of the key impediments to women accessing economic opportunities including transportation problems, lack of childcare, gender norms, and labor conditions. We also highlight key challenges more specifically related to gender-sensitive livelihoods programming in the response to the Syrian crisis, such as gender experts being located off-site, short programming cycles which can have unintended consequences on livelihood initiatives, and internalized norms/stereotypes around both ethnicity and gender that place artificial, and often unhelpful, limits on programming. In the conclusion, we provide recommendations for a comprehensive approach to incorporating women into the livelihoods component of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) including loosening restrictions on Syrian women who already have education and work experience, expanding traditional fields for women such as agriculture, education, and healthcare, and



providing training and other types of support to women interested in pursuing non-traditional livelihood opportunities such as information technology (IT) and construction. Aside from programmatic recommendations, we also focus on a few structural challenges that require attention. These include knowledge gaps, both at the individual level and in terms of data and analysis, siloization, a focus on short term results, and funding streams that are not sufficiently coordinated. A number of these suggestions can be implemented relatively easily, while others will require both time and political will.



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This report was written before the 2020 outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to both a health and an economic crisis throughout the region. There is already many evidences that refugee and host communities have been dramatically impacted, and that the most vulnerable, many of whom are women, many of whom are women, are experiencing particular challenges as unemployment has skyrocketed and informal sector economic income opportunities have disappeared. The Lebanese economy has been particularly hard hit, suffering extreme levels of economic

hardship and political disruption. As such, while the overall recommendations in this report remain relevant, as governments take action, the need to address increased economic precarity, as well as prospects for employment and informal sector opportunities will vary across countries. The COVID-19 crisis has also highlighted the importance of digital skills and access, which were not a primary focus of this report, but should be a high priority both to ensure women's and girls' access to education and information, and to enhance employability.

Background

The Syrian crisis is now nearing a decade. Six million people have been internally displaced, and over five million Syrians have fled the country. Turkey has absorbed over three and a half million refugees, making up 3.5% of the Turkish population. While Jordan and Lebanon have fewer refugees in absolute numbers, Syrian refugees make up a larger percentage of the population in those countries, 9% in Jordan (between 600,000 to 1,260,000 Syrians) and 17% in Lebanon (between 950,000 to 1.5 million Syrians).¹ Many Syrians are living below the poverty line: Iraq 37%, Turkey 64%, Lebanon 76% and Jordan 80% according to the 2018-2019 3RP Regional Strategic Overview.

While the original response to the Syria crisis focused on humanitarian relief, 3RP partners have stepped up efforts to build resilience in part by expanding livelihoods and economic opportunities for refugees and host community members through a wide range of interventions, including skills development, vocational and language training, wage and self-employment opportunities, job matching and strengthening of national employment systems, and improving business environments and working conditions, which include value chain upgrading, access to credit and markets, and assistance to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). The London Conference for supporting Syria and the region, held in 2016, set a very ambitious goal to create 1.1 million jobs for Syrians and members of their host communities with host governments making bold commitments to open their labor markets and improve regulatory environments. However, for many reasons, delivering on the ambitious goal of the London Conference has remained challenging. Examples include contexts of considerable macroeconomic challenges as Jordan and Turkey experience double-digit unemployment (in the range of 13-14%) and of considerable political tensions in Lebanon.

In 2017, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the UN World Food Programme (WFP), released the Jobs Make the Difference report (JMD), which provided a detailed discussion of the challenges and promising approaches to scaling-up access to jobs and other economic opportunities in Syria's neighboring countries as well as inside Syria.

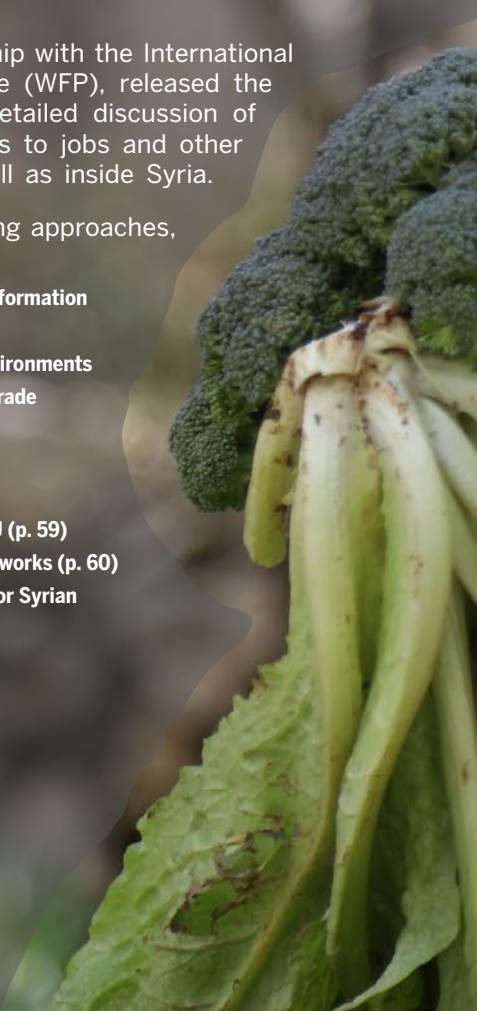
The report reviewed a set of key intervention areas as promising approaches, including:


- regulatory improvements to work permits for refugees
- alternative employment
- infrastructure and labor-intensive work
- improved access to information
- skill development
- enabling business environments
- economic zones and trade

(all the above are listed on pp. 46-47, Table 3.1)

In addition, possible approaches were listed as follows:

- concessional financing of infrastructure-related activities (p. 57)
- allowing Syrians to provide services for other Syrians (p. 58)
- including both refugees and national as explicit beneficiaries in all programming efforts (p. 58)
- expanded access to the EU (p. 59)
- strengthening refugee networks (p. 60)
- expanding opportunities for Syrian entrepreneurs (pp. 61-62)



A close-up photograph of a woman wearing a vibrant purple headscarf and a red garment. She is smiling warmly, looking down at a large head of green cabbage she is holding in her hands. In the background, other fresh vegetables, including a head of broccoli, are visible. The lighting is natural, suggesting an outdoor setting.

The JMD report acknowledged that “Syrian women, as a consequence of the crisis are reportedly taking new roles and responsibility related to livelihoods” (JMD 2017: 23). The report, however, did not identify specific issues surrounding women, calling for additional research that explicitly considers “the unique challenges in integrating women and youth into the labor force” (JMD 2017: 88).

Against this backdrop, this paper expands on the JMD report by identifying particular challenges related to integrating gender into the livelihoods response of the 3RP and a number of institutional constraints that contribute to reducing the effectiveness of gender-mainstreaming efforts.

Methods and Conceptual Approach

Data

Forty-eight semi-structured interviews were carried out with government partners, UN entities and international and local non-governmental organizations (I/NGOs); frequently two or more individuals were present during the interviews, so information was shared by sixty-nine interviewees in total; 12 interviews were conducted in Jordan (18 people), 11 interviews in Lebanon (15 people), 10 interviews in Turkey (17 people) and 15 interviews via Skype and/or email exchanges involving 19 additional individuals. We also attended two coordination meetings (Jordan and Turkey) and one 3RP launch event (Turkey); and observed a UN-sponsored holiday market (Jordan) where Syrian entrepreneurs were marketing their products.

A series of open-ended questions were asked during the interviews with a particular focus on the experiences that various entities have had in terms of incorporating gender issues and women's empowerment in livelihoods interventions of the 3RP. Follow-up questions were included when entities did not directly mention certain known challenges, such as transportation and childcare. Many of the conclusions highlighted in the report were reiterated by multiple respondents, although in some cases respondents had very different views of what the challenges and opportunities related to programming targeting women were. Where consensus and/or differences in understanding emerged is highlighted in the report.

The research also involved a desk review of more than 100 internal and publicly available documents focusing on the 3RP response to

the Syria crisis specifically as well as literature on women and employment, gender and livelihoods, and humanitarian responses in the context of armed conflict more broadly.

Conceptual Approach

Conceptualizing the link between gender and livelihoods requires both a focus both what livelihoods programming can and should encompass, as well as political, cultural and macroeconomic realities. Approaches can include exchanges of in-camp services, the restoration of lost assets, farming, micro-finance, community savings and loans associations, vocational training programs, food for work programs, or unconditional or conditional cash grants (IASC 2016b). While the main focus of this report is on skills development and strategies for supporting women to enter paid employment, we also argue for the importance of maintaining non-employment-based support to address ongoing gendered patterns of vulnerability (see Box 1).

As pointed out by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Handbook, the key to a gender-sensitive approach to livelihoods acknowledging that:

- a. "Women and men have different resources available to them in crisis situations, and will turn to different strategies for survival"
- b. "Crises usually increase the care burdens of women".

Adding an analytic gender dimension to the JMD report also requires focusing on issues such as gender differences in education and experience, occupational segregation, and

wage discrimination, as well as cultural norms. As such, a particular emphasis will be put on training programs. Even if these do not always lead to concrete employment opportunities in the short run, they should continue to be an important part of livelihoods programming in the Syria context. Also worth noting is that all livelihoods are not equally beneficial. In Turkey, for example, interviews with refugees raised issues related to exploitation and sexual harassment (Knappert, Kornau, and Figengül 2017). Livelihoods may also not generate enough revenue for sustainability. Negative coping strategies, including sex work and child labor, are risky and can cause serious harm. More generally, a major concern is to ensure that individuals do not feel forced to resort to negative coping strategies, including child labor, convenience marriages, and early marriage of children, in the face of economic hardship (Hutchinson et al. 2016).

Concerns have also been raised about the value of livelihoods programs in terms of delivering the promise of empowerment. Olmsted (2005) and others have questioned the degree to which gender empowerment results from certain types of employment, and this is a concern particularly in the context of displacement and vulnerability. As such, Abdo (2011-2012: 47), in examining programming targeting Palestinians in Lebanon, argues that “services provided by local and national NGOs (...) are governed by a market approach despite claiming and appropriating the goals of the empowerment approach.” While some work is certainly empowering, other work is exploitative, particularly because women are often “oriented towards traditional female occupations that generate little income and are not encouraged to infiltrate male-dominated occupations” (Abdo 2011-2012: 42). Abdo also mentions the challenges women entrepreneurs face in terms of generating sufficient income. Although he is focused on programs for engaging Palestinian women in Lebanon before the Syria crisis, these concerns remain relevant and are exacerbated by the more recent refugee crisis.

An examination of how to address the difference in resource availability for women and men and the particular challenge that care labor burdens impose on women must be central to any analysis concerning ways of improving the Syria crisis response. Given that women’s labor force participation (LFP) rates in Syria were quite low before the crisis, two important considerations are the degree to which women already have the skills needed

to enter paid employment and/or participate in entrepreneurial activities and the degree to which existing social norms greater facilitate women’s LFP.

Finally, the concept of “Do No Harm” is key to designing gender-sensitive livelihoods responses in light of how vulnerable the population is. An example of adhering to Do No Harm principles would involve ensuring that measures to encourage female entrepreneurship do not lead to predatory lending practices, as has been documented in Jordan (Sweis 2020). More generally, focusing on reducing the economic vulnerability of women and girls requires a nuanced approach that does not prioritize increasing women’s employment rates at all costs, but rather on identifying decent work opportunities as well broader programs focusing on training and skills development that are empowering rather than exploitative.

Equally important is understanding that gender is just one lens through which to view the issue of vulnerability, with an intersectional approach that addresses gender in conjunction with age, marital status, location, legal status, etc. ultimately providing more insights into how to address vulnerable populations. Also important is understanding how structural factors beyond the acts and decisions of individual men and women shape particular economic outcomes. Although most of this report focuses on strategies for improving women’s access to employment, we identify some challenges related to male vulnerability as well as taking the view that engaging men and broader communities is key to addressing gender inequality. This requires, on the one hand, recognizing the constraints of working within existing gender norms, and at the same time, pushing to expand opportunities in a context where gender norms are already in flux.

The report, therefore, takes the view that well-designed support to job creation and livelihoods in the response to the crisis can be a “strategic entry point for more gender-responsive/transformational programming to influence long-standing cultural and structural barriers towards women’s participation and role in economic space” (CARE 2016: 40). Added benefits to this approach include changing the conception of women as low value and/or needing to stay in or close to their homes, getting women to participate politically, giving them a voice, dismantling legal barriers, ending early marriage, preventing gender-based violence, and empowering women in

general. Ideally, livelihoods should contribute to women's status and empowerment (IASC 2016b: 212). In light of these considerations, training and other interventions focused on gender norm change can serve not only to improve women's employment readiness but can also address a number of the concerns listed above, which are key to gender-effective livelihoods approaches.

Recommendations

Gender-sensitive training can provide multiple paths towards increasing women's empowerment, which may or may not include women's immediate employment. For some women, income generation may follow directly from training, either in the form of finding employment or becoming self-employed. The latter generally requires other forms of support, such as ethically designed microcredit programs that do not involve predatory lending. Programming, therefore, needs to take into account this uncertainty, as well as uncertainty about whether refugees will stay permanently or return home. In some cases, immediate benefits of training may be less obvious in the short run but may facilitate women's reintegration into the Syrian labor market in the longer term, either as entrepreneurs or employees. For other women, income generation may never materialize, but other benefits, however, can still be achieved in terms of increasing women's confidence, voice, understanding of their rights, etc. Whatever the outcome, assuring that training contains some focus on empowerment is important.

More generally, we argue that a dual strategy focused on both aiding women who are more aligned with traditional norms while simultaneously strongly supporting women and communities that embrace positive deviance from these norms. As defined in a recent UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) blog post (Abdo 2019), this involves identifying "successful behaviors that individuals ('positive deviants') practice in their own community, often against the grain of" entrenched norms. In other words, programs that highlight women and men who are willing to challenge dominant gender norms must be a central part of any programming, but at the same time support must also be provided to those who are less willing to take social risks.

A number of formal mechanisms are already in place that monitor the degree to which gender mainstreaming is being integrated into programs. Two initiatives championed by the UN include the System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (Gender SWAP),² which emphasizes the importance of tracking finances in order to assess the level of financial commitment to gender mainstreaming. Key to this effort has been the development and rolling out of the Gender Equality Marker (GEM).

A parallel effort by the IASC Committee has involved rolling out a humanitarian-oriented gender and age marker (GAM).³ GAM includes twelve criteria, including a focus on the importance of collecting sex and age disaggregated data, building in feedback mechanisms both at the planning and implementation stages, and tailoring activities that are gender and age-sensitive. Addressing some aspects of gender-based violence (GBV) is also part of the new IASC marker. Because it straddles both humanitarian and development approaches, one challenge related to the Syria response is that it is not clear whether encouraging entities to focus more on the GEM or the GAM approach to gender mainstreaming is more appropriate. This is an issue that requires further exploration.

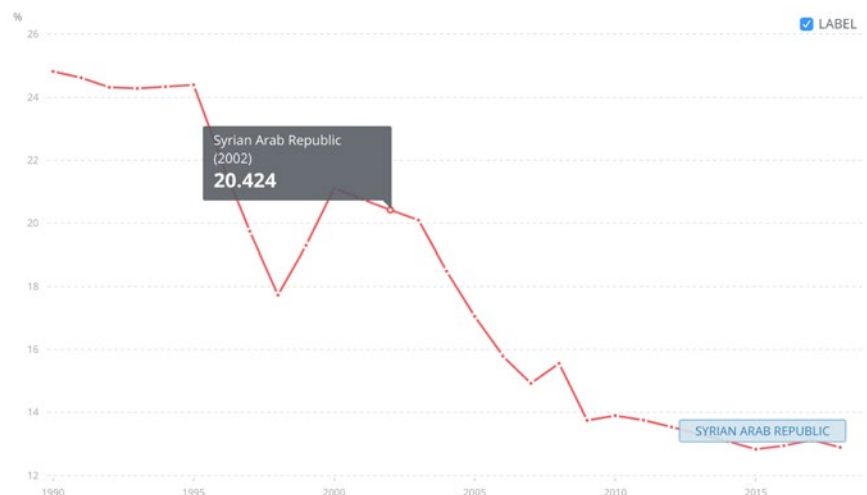
While the GEM is an internal tracking mechanism specific to the UN Gender SWAP initiative, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and other organizations have put similar tracking mechanisms in place. Several organizations outside the UN have adopted the IASC recommendations, and various funders, including some UN entities, now require gender tracking and/or reporting of all who receive funds. For example, since 2017 the UN's Peacebuilding Fund/Support Office (PBF/PBSO) no longer considers projects that do not mainstream gender and expects those requesting funds to follow the tracking system outlined in the GEM (PBF 2019).

Overview of Syrian Women's Employment Historically

Painting a picture of the existing situation in each country context is important for understanding both the limits and missed opportunities when it comes to promoting women's livelihoods. This chapter provides an overview of the employment patterns for the region. Refer to the annex for more country-specific information. As indicated in Figure 1, Syrian women's overall LFP rate has never been very high over the past thirty years. While in the 1990s, the rate was between 24% and 26%, and by the eve of the conflict, it had dropped to around 14%.

Table 1 merges findings from various studies reviewed by the authors to provide a more nuanced basis for comparison of LFP both before and after the crisis, as well as across the country contexts. Given that no national surveys provide data that is broken down by sex, nationality, and education, this piecemeal approach was necessary. The data sources have, for the most part, followed ILO guidelines

Figure 1: Syrian Women's Labor Force Participation (LFP) Rate



Source: World Bank 2019b

Table 1: Summary of Employment data

	Syria	Jordan	Iraq/KRI	Lebanon	Turkey
Local Female LFP (ILO)	13.75%	14.1%	17-20%	23.5%	34%
Local Female Unemployment (ILO)	22%	21.1%	22.2%	10.4%	13.6%
Local Male LFP	73.5%	92%		93%	85%
Educated Women's LFP	50%	30%	34%	47%	70%
Female Unemployment		22.9%	12.4%	9.9%	14.9%
Female Entrepreneurs	15%	15.7%	11%	17-43.5%	
Syrian Refugee Female LFP		7 - 54%	2%	30%	13-25%
Female Syrian Refugee Unemployment Rate		50 - 84%		58%	55%

Sources: Chaaban, ILO, Kumar et al., Lockhart, Tiltne, UNIDO, World Bank.⁴



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and definitions for their analysis, but sample sizes were often small, and the methods were not always clear. For example, for Jordan the West Asia-North Africa Institute (WANA) carried out a 2018 study (Lockhart et al. 2018) that included a survey of 280 women and thus, includes a caveat about the generalizability of their findings. The RAND study provides the most comprehensive and comparable statistics across the Jordanian, Lebanese, and Turkish contexts, but even that study “did not aim for a fully representative survey sample of Syrian refugees” (Kumar et al. 2018: 8), although 600 households were included for each country context.⁵

Existing ILO labor force participation data, which include both individuals who are working and those actively looking for work, suggest that among Syrian women the rate was very low before the crisis. Table 1 indicates that Syrian and Jordan women’s rates of participation have historically been similar and considerably lower than women’s LFP rates in Lebanon and Turkey. Unemployment rates among women are considerably higher in Jordan, Iraq, and Syria than in Lebanon and Turkey. Also noteworthy is how high the rate of employment was among educated women in Syria, a rate that surpassed all the other countries except Turkey. All these factors are among those important to consider when identifying challenges related



to integrating Syrian refugees into local labor markets.

In examining various studies related to women's LFP that have been produced since the crisis, most studies suggest that across all country contexts except the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), women's labor force participation rates among refugee women are considerably higher than they were before the crisis, doubling in most contexts. One study, however, contradicted this finding. A joint study by the Jordanian Minister of Planning and International Cooperation and Fafo (Tiltnes et al. 2019) estimated a female labor force participation rate among Syrians in Jordan of only 7%. This suggests considerable uncertainty related to estimates of women's employment patterns. Notably, the Fafo study also suggests that similar to Syria, educated women are more likely to work in Jordan and that at least some of these women have obtained professional positions despite the restrictions placed on certain sectors that limit Syrians' employment in Jordan.

It is also important to note that many of the women that expressed an interest in work are unemployed. The Fafo study (Tiltnes et al. 2019), for example, found that unemployment rates among women were generally in the range of 50% and other studies suggested even higher rates. These differences in unemployment as well as entrepreneurship rates across country contexts are important to keep in mind as these are likely indicative of the degree to which challenges vary by country. Jordan, for example, has by far the highest rate of female unemployment, which creates particular challenges. When it comes to entrepreneurship, Lebanon appears to have been more successful in supporting women entrepreneurs, although comparable data are not available for Turkey.

Country-level studies focusing on refugee communities suggest that rates of women working full or part-time or looking for work may have risen as high as 30% in some areas (Lockhart, Barker and Alhajahmad 2018) but vary widely by region. This suggests that while female Syrian refugees have been increasingly incorporated into paid employment in host communities, considerable challenges to increasing women's labor force participation remain. A recent RAND report (Kumar et al. 2018: 72) also provides some insight into household make-up as well as the gendered employment patterns of Syrians in the aftermath of being displaced to Jordan,

Lebanon, and Turkey. RAND surveyed Syrian households, asking both whether individuals were working and/or willing to work as defined by ILO guidelines.

While the willingness to work responses may in part be shaped by local economic conditions, it is noteworthy that so many women in the three contexts stated they are willing to work, given claims that culture is a huge factor contributing to women's low rates of engagement in paid employment in the context of the Syria crisis. In Turkey, RAND estimated a labor force participation rate for women of 25%, while for men the rate was 85% (Kumar et al. 2018: 34). For Jordan, these numbers were significantly higher, with 54% of females and 93% of males saying they were working or willing to work (Kumar et al. 2018: 72). Lebanon was between the two, with a female participation rate of 30% and a male rate of 92% (Kumar et al. 2018: 111).

While "reasons given for not working" for each country were reported in Kumar et al. (2018: 37, 75, 113) these were not broken down by sex. However, some noteworthy findings were complaints about low wages (particularly in Jordan and Turkey) and the perception that there were not enough jobs across all three country contexts. In Turkey, language barriers were also viewed as a top major obstacle, whereas difficulties getting work permits were in the top three reasons highlighted in Lebanon and Jordan. In Turkey, permits are available, but, according to interviewees, refugees fear losing benefits if they are registered as formally employed or regard guaranteed longer-term assistance as more beneficial than short-term (as it is sometimes offered for only 3 months) formal employment.

The data reported in the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC)/WFP report (2019) indicate that while some refugees (12%) mentioned permits as a barrier, a more intractable structural barrier was the inability to speak Turkish, which 46% identified as a problem (TRC/WFP 2019). Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz (2019) found that 70% of female Syrian refugees in their sample in Sanliurfa did not speak Turkish. This raises an important question as to whether providing language training should be prioritized higher in the short run, rather than encouraging women to engage in employment immediately. A UN Women report (2018: 48) presents results from interviews among Syrian refugees living out-of-camp in Turkey, which indicates that the main reasons for women not seeking a job are no childcare (38%), not wanting to work (24%), no permission of spouse/partner (19.6%), illness/

disability (12.4%), dependents (11.1%), and housework (8.8%).

Lebanon has issued fewer work permits to Syrian women than Jordan and Turkey (UN Women/Ipsos Group SA 2018c). Syrian women report not knowing how to get registered and transportation issues as barriers (UN Women/Ipsos Group SA 2018c). RAND reports that 21% of those who are seeking work, but not able to find it, indicate obtaining a work permit as a barrier in Lebanon, but those data are not sex-disaggregated (Kumar et al. 2018: 112). Refugees in Turkey also reported difficulties in navigating the bureaucracy, including lack of access to computers in order to apply online for a permit. Ozturk, Serin, and Altinoz (2019) suggest having employers apply for permits for their workers to help solve this barrier. However, a secondary element is that the costs associated with having to formally register employees are placing a significant barrier on employers in Turkey.

World Bank data (2019c and d) suggest that the unemployment rates for women in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey are 12.4%, 22.9%, 9.9%, and 14.9%, and male unemployment rates are 7.1%, 13.2%, 5.0%, and 10.5% respectively. The level of unemployment in Jordan is particularly high with nearly one in four women who are interested in working not being able to find a job. The RAND study suggests that among Syrian women, unemployment rates are considerably higher. The RAND data indicate Jordan is the most challenging environment with 84 percent of Syrian women who indicate they are willing to work not having found any, while only 16% are employed (Kumar et al. 2018: 133). In Turkey and Lebanon, the differences were less stark - 45% and 42% of women willing to work in Turkey and Lebanon respectively had found work, while the remaining 55% and 58% had not. The RAND report (Kumar et al. 2018: 133) suggests that while the desire among women to work in Jordan is particularly high, women are struggling to find jobs, which is also linked to the more general macroeconomic situation.

Across all three countries, the most vulnerable female labor force participants are generally concentrated in the informal sector, including Syrian refugee women. Similar studies are not available for the other countries, but analysis from Turkey suggests that Syrian refugees are also impacting the informal sector labor market. In regions hosting large numbers of refugees, Turkish men were more likely to be unemployed, whereas Turkish women and

older workers of both sexes were more likely to withdraw from the labor market (Suzuki, Paul, Maru, and Kusadokoro 2019). A related finding from a recent World Bank study (del Carpio and Wagner 2015) indicates that male Syrian refugees have replaced Turkish women in some types of employment. Also, according to interviews, in some cases, it is Syrian children who are the main source of income for households, as they are favored in the informal sector given that they receive particularly low pay. Another study focusing on Turkey found that while many Syrians had become successful entrepreneurs after fleeing to Turkey, these individuals were exclusively male and are employing predominantly Syrian men and Turkish women in their businesses (UNDP/Zobu 2019). Much of the labor that is demanded in Turkey are jobs that are not typically held by women, such as construction (Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRIT)/MoFLSS Turkey 2018).

Other studies have provided insights into the environment for women entrepreneurs in the region. A United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) study (2019),⁶ for example, surveyed female entrepreneurs in Lebanon and Jordan (as well as in Egypt, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia). The rate of women as at least part owners in a business was much higher in Lebanon than in several other Arab countries. The overall rate was 22.7% for the region (and 35.2% globally), but 43.5% for Lebanon. The 2013 World Bank Enterprise Survey data suggest a considerably lower rate of 17%. Chaaban (2009), using data extracted from the ILO, reports rates of female self-employment for Syria and Lebanon that are quite similar, at 15% and 16% respectively. This matches the 15.7% rate of female entrepreneurship with women as at least part-owners in Jordan, reported in the UNIDO study (2019). Rates of strictly woman-run businesses or businesses where ownership is only shared among women were even lower at 2.4%. Jordanian women entrepreneurs also struggle considerably with income generation, and as a result, almost half of all women entrepreneurs surveyed for the study (49.3%) have to supplement their income from other sources. Sweis (2020) also reports that in Jordan (and likely in other countries in the region) predatory lending practices have targeted women. That report indicates that women may enter agreements that they do not understand and may be charged interest rates as high as 50%.

The RAND study also included data collected from firms which provides insight into the





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types of firms that are consistently hiring both Syrian refugees and female workers. Unfortunately, this portion of the RAND study did not report the percent of women who were Syrian in each of these industries but did indicate that the sampling of firms was carried out in areas where there was a particularly high concentration of Syrian refugees.

In the Turkey firm sample, 15% of firms reported having Syrian workers at the time of the survey, while an additional 15% had tried to recruit Syrians in the past (not always successfully) (Kumar et al. 2018: 42). The percentage of women employed varied by region between 11% and 17% (Kumar et al. 2018: 204). Size and type of firm were factors that contributed to different rates of female employees. Large firms, on average, had a higher percentage of women employees (19% versus 9% for small firms). The textile, garment, and apparel industry reported an average rate of 36%, followed by food and

beverage manufacturing (21%) and hotels and restaurants (16%). Construction was much lower at 9%, but these data do suggest that some women are finding opportunities even in male-dominated industries.

Interestingly, in Lebanon, all the surveyed firms had employed Syrian refugees, which is likely due to the fact that Syrians were already considerably integrated into the Lebanese economy before the crisis. The industry that was the most likely to report hiring women was that of cleaning services, followed by food and beverage manufacturing, which reported rates of 26% and 22% respectively.

In Jordan, the percentage of firms that had hired Syrians was between the Turkish and Lebanese levels: 25% were employing Syrian workers at the time of the survey while an additional 20% had previously tried to recruit Syrians, sometimes unsuccessfully (Kumar et al. 2018: 80). Firms with the highest proportion

of women included apparel at 30%, followed by chemical and pharmaceutical manufacturing at 27% (Kumar et al. 2018: 209). Food and beverage manufacturers were at the other end, with 2%, while construction was at 3%. Hotels and restaurants, unlike in Turkey, also had a low rate of 9%. Amman firms reported on average hiring very few women, only 8%, whereas in Mafrq, the number was considerably higher at 36% (Kumar et al. 2018: 209). The report noted that the number of firms surveyed in Mafrq was very small (five in total) and they were all large manufacturers, so the latter number may not be very representative. Another interesting

finding from the RAND report was that in Jordan, firms that indicated they were more likely to hire women also indicated that they planned to grow (Kumar et al. 2018: 143).

Women are generally underpaid compared to men, and refugees earn less than members of the host country, thus employed female refugees earn the least (Abdo 2011-/2012; Bicerli and Gundogan 2009; Erol et al. 2017; Knappert, Kornau and Figengül 2017; Tören 2018).

Highlighting women's vulnerability

Across each of the four countries in this study, women consistently face additional and specific vulnerabilities that compound the vulnerability that they experience as a result of their displacement.

Iraq (KRI)

In KRI, the 2018 WFP Joint Vulnerability Assessment estimated that 7% of refugees were food insecure and a considerable percentage (39% to 65%) was also vulnerable to food insecurity with camp residents being at the greatest risk. The highest rates were found in Erbil camp, with 17% food insecure and 60% vulnerable to food insecurity. 8% of households were estimated to be female-headed, and although no concrete numbers were provided, the report also stated that female-headed households generally were less food secure. A 2018 demographic survey carried out by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office (KRSO) estimated that the proportion of female-headed households was higher at 11%. According to the WFP report, one-third of households had no income, although these data were not sex-disaggregated. Another sign of economic challenges being faced by households was that 5% to 11% of households reported having a working child (mostly boys, but some girls).

Jordan

According to a recent evaluation by WFP (2018: 15), the situation in Jordan suggests that female-headed households are "considerably less food secure" than male-headed ones. Other studies (see, for instance, Hanmer et al. (2018)) suggest that while female applicants for assistance are not necessarily less vulnerable than males, women without a male partner are particularly vulnerable and have less access to paid employment, which increases their risk of vulnerability even in the context of humanitarian assistance.

Lebanon

A joint UNICEF/UNHCR/WFP report for Lebanon (2018: 146) also finds that the majority of female-headed households (55%) included no working member, while this was only the case for 27% of other households. The same report indicated that coping strategies, including involvement of school-aged children in income generation, were more common among female-headed households, suggesting that integrated approaches that take into account multiple risk factors and intergenerational transmission of poverty are needed. While boys and sometimes girls may be engaging in paid labor or production, one of our interviewees stated that particularly on the Syrian-Lebanese border, there was an uptick in girls reporting symptoms of sexually transmitted infections, a likely indication of negative coping strategies. In Lebanon, an additional concern that affects refugees of all ages and sexes is that informal settlements constructed by refugees are regularly torn down (UN Women/Ipsos Group SA 2018c).

Turkey

In Turkey, about half of Syrian refugees are categorized as multi-dimensionally poor. Refugee women are worse off on certain indicators. Close to two-thirds of female-headed households experience poverty compared to 47% of male-headed households. In addition, 18% of female-headed households are receiving their only source of support from the Turkish government and I/NGOs or have no support at all compared to 13% of male-headed households. Among non-applicant female-headed households, 83% are multi-dimensionally poor. Only 4% of registered adult female refugees are working, but 31% of boys under 18 are working to help support their families. Knappert, Kornau, and Figengül (2017) mention Syrian women in Turkey and sex work, although they do not provide concrete statistics on this phenomenon.

Key challenges to expanding women's access to jobs and economic opportunities

A key challenge facing Syrian women is a lack of job experience and relevant training. Relatedly, family care responsibilities and cultural norms more generally contribute to barriers, while structural issues such as the decline of agricultural work, have reduced employment opportunities. Two infrastructure-related impediments requiring attention include transportation and childcare. Each of these issues is discussed in more detail below.

a. Skills development

According to ILO statistics, Arab, and Syrian in particular, women's LFP rates have historically been quite low. As such, the first question in addressing women's livelihoods is the degree to which women already have the skills needed for various types of income generation. Given their lack of labor market experience, women are likely, in addition to requiring job-specific skills, to benefit from soft skills training, as well as opportunities to reflect on how their existing skills can be converted into income-generating prospects. For some women, training may lead to immediate employment or to the development of an entrepreneurial opportunity in the host country. But for others, skills training may be perceived as an investment in the future, which may lead to economic activity, for example, if refugee women return to their home country. Finally, even in cases where skills training does not lead to income generation, well-designed skills development programs can have other benefits, in particular community building, networking, and helping women become more assertive in their day-to-day living experience.

In cases where the aim is income generation, women must be encouraged to think more creatively about both training and entrepreneurial opportunities that may challenge traditional norms, given the negative effect that crowding women into a few professions may have on opportunities in those sectors. Expanding women's participation beyond stereotypical occupations and supporting them through various stages of employment should include not just training, but, as appropriate, supporting the job search and integration process for employees, or providing support for various stages of business development (market analysis, marketing, and other market access issues) for entrepreneurs.

Our field work suggests that innovative program designers in this arena focus on the following:

- a. supporting the development of soft skills as part of training opportunities;
- b. involving family and community members in programs, in order to assure that gender-related tensions are being addressed;

- c. encouraging women to do their own due diligence/market analysis for those interested in business;
- d. anticipating gender barriers to employment such as gendered employment networks, the need for affordable quality childcare, and safe, inexpensive transportation;
- e. offering training that opens up access to less gender-typical fields for women, including a focus on non-traditional agricultural production, construction, plumbing, accounting, and computer science among others;
- f. recognizing that even if skills training does not lead to immediate employment, addressing women's empowerment is key;
- g. understanding that skills training may be linked to longer term, but difficult to measure outcomes, if women's opportunities will be enhanced in the context of return to their home country.

One gender-related challenge that emerged in discussions of training was the fact that men are more likely to not begin or to drop out of programs, while women are more likely to do training sessions but not pursue employment afterwards. In Turkey, twice as many women as men had taken a language course and four times as many women as men had taken a vocational training course, although the attendance numbers for both were small overall (only 8% of refugees had taken a language course and only 1% had taken a vocational training course) (TRC/WFP 2019). The assumption is that men do not sign up or drop out because they prioritize paid work opportunities over training, while women face challenges converting training to employment, either due to employer attitudes or cultural norms. Both these findings are cause for concern. On the one hand, creating an environment where men are not pressured to cut back on valuable training opportunities may require expanding material support to families to allow men to continue classes (TRC/WFP 2019). This is particularly important when examining gender and age through an intersectional lens, given the long-term consequences of young men in particular being pressured to curtail training and education in favor of work.

As for the conclusion that women are less likely to convert training into income generation opportunities, many I/NGO and UN staff we interviewed proposed that the

value of training is not limited to providing women with employment-related skills and that these programs also provide social and networking opportunities for individuals who might otherwise be restricted to their living spaces. Traveling to a center, meeting others who have different views on women and work, and learning about laws in the host country are first steps toward other goals which may eventually lead to employment. Interviewees also discussed many other benefits that were not related directly to employment such as confidence building, social capital development, and better awareness of civil codes, which may allow women to challenge traditional norms and roles more effectively, particularly in contexts where existing legal structures are more progressive than they were in Syria. In both training and entrepreneurship support, interviewees also reported numerous challenges related to navigating gender norms.

While many interviewees spontaneously alluded to cultural challenges in getting Syrian women to work outside their homes, others noted that some Syrian women are eager for new challenges and training opportunities. The existing literature suggests such norms are likely to vary with age, education, and region. Targeting young women is particularly important, given that gender norms may be more malleable among this group, but this does not preclude programming for older women who may feel less restricted by norms and/or because they often are gatekeepers. Involvement of family members in programs supporting women's access to livelihoods is key given that family support is also often crucial for women's success in challenging entrenched norms. For instance, a Syrian woman in Turkey showed up for a class to train electricians that the program designers assumed would be all male. She was a high school graduate whose fiancé was very supportive of her acquiring additional education to work. One of the lessons that can be drawn from this anecdote is that vocational classes that are traditionally perceived as male-dominant should be marketed to all refugees even if trainers do not expect much interest from women. Certainly, this is already the case when it comes to some program providers, but others faced challenges in terms of addressing their own biases and/or overcoming the limitations from lack of exposure that many Syrian women had had in terms of thinking about career paths.

b. Bottom-up approaches with a twist

Many of the individuals interviewed as part of this research project emphasized the importance of involving local communities in program design and implementation in order to ensure success. One of the challenges in doing this, however, is that often community members may have limited exposure to livelihoods examples that challenge existing gender norms. Our interviews suggested that the importance of role models in contexts in which they were working was not given as much focus as the importance of community involvement in challenging gender norms. In other words, working to reduce barriers for women was more the focus than providing positive role models, yet both are needed.

Although the idea of bottom-up program development is a long overdue and welcome addition to the way programs are designed, especially in a context where one of the goals is to encourage challenging traditional gender norms, a more innovative way of thinking about bottom-up programming is required.

One point that came up repeatedly in interviews was that women often ask for training in areas that are quite traditional. Food processing courses (e.g. pickling foods and preparing sweets) were identified as common training projects, as were embroidery, sewing, and the beauty industry. On the one hand, focusing on the kinds of skills Syrians themselves identify as relevant is important in order to avoid top-down approaches. Furthermore, some of these occupations allow women to work from home where they can more easily combine household responsibilities with paid work. But as one interviewee stated: “No more pickles and cheese.” Her conclusion is important for a number of reasons – it illustrates the fact that the limited number of sectors often emphasized reinforces traditional gender norms and concentrating women in a small number of markets can lead to oversaturation, which can lead to lower earnings and/or wages. Others felt similarly about teaching women to be hairdressers. However, there was not a consensus on this criticism; some NGOs felt that training in these more traditionally female fields was still a worthwhile strategy and that there continued to be unmet demand. Others insisted these markets were saturated. Thus, as we note below, market assessments are important since one location may be saturated, but another may have more capacity for earning opportunities.

c. Market Assessments

Many interviewees mentioned the need to carry out market assessments, especially given that there is limited understanding of the degree to which traditional fields that women enter are saturated. This is important not only because oversaturated markets can lead to women undercutting each other or undermining each other's profitability, but also because in some contexts there is already tension between the local and the refugee population and thus, ensuring that support for Syrian women's employment does not displace local women is important. Some of the mixed reports on whether or not hairdressing is viable for helping refugees make money, for example, may have to do with the communities in which women are working, what the current distribution of businesses is, how densely populated the area is, how many Syrians reside there, etc. Thus, in one location, providing hairdressing training and kits may be a waste of resources, whereas in another it may truly help women generate income. In Turkey, for example, this type of market assessment has been conducted by the government, and the data show that it makes sense to continue

Promising Approaches: Supporting Women Entrepreneurs

Al Majmoua, a Lebanese organization that provides microcredit as well as other services has had success in getting women to think more expansively about training and self-employment opportunities by encouraging women to do their own due diligence/market analysis. Inviting family members to visit programs, as well as to celebrate program participants' milestones and successes, also contributes to overcoming resistance among family members. Al Majouma provides one example of effective integration of a gender approach to livelihoods - the organization combines an awareness of cultural sensitivity with a proactive approach that involves encouraging women and communities to step outside their comfort zone by having them explore the limits of the initial proposals they bring to the table and by incorporating family members into the process of encouraging women to explore entrepreneurial opportunities.

to train women to be hairdressers (Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRiT)/MoFLSS Turkey 2018).

Another sector where there was disagreement related to market conditions is Information Technology. In some locations, partners reported that computer training did not lead to expanded economic opportunities. Particularly in Lebanon, concerns were raised by numerous interviewees that there was no comprehensive market analysis available to help organizations identify underserved markets more generally. Some NGOs had carried out such analysis internally but were reluctant to share information, which they deemed proprietary, and others expressed doubts that the existing analyses had adequately assessed market opportunities effectively.

Whether the aim is to train Syrian women as employees or to facilitate their entrepreneurship, market assessments are important, since training women in fields that are saturated and in which there is likely to be a lot of competition is problematic.

d. Supporting Women Entrepreneurs

Across all the host countries, the percentage of women business owners remains fairly low, suggesting that women who aspire to start their own businesses may face barriers. As was discussed earlier, rates of female entrepreneurship vary considerably, with data from the UNIDO report (2019) indicating for example that Lebanon may be a more conducive environment than Jordan. A related concern is that existing women entrepreneurs have already identified a lack of sufficient income as a serious constraint. This raises questions about the reliability of this approach for effective livelihoods support. Training youth for entrepreneurship has been a goal of the 3RP, and while it needs to be designed to more effectively attract young women, it must also ensure that income generation is sufficient to make entrepreneurial activities a viable path. Supporting women entrepreneurs, whether from the host or refugee population, requires an integrated approach that addresses both technical/ specific and soft skills gaps, confidence gaps, as well as other challenges women may encounter related to accessing finance, developing business networks, and understanding the markets that they are planning to enter. Soft skills gaps to

address include at a minimum gaining a better understanding of legal contracts related to borrowing funds that women are entering.

One area where more systematic support could be provided to Syrian entrepreneurs is in the area of marketing. As part of the fieldwork carried out for this report, a visit was made to a UNHCR-sponsored holiday market in Jordan where male and female Syrian entrepreneurs were selling their goods. One particularly noteworthy observation concerned the differing levels of business preparedness exhibited by the vendors. Some individuals had bilingual business cards or small flyers to pass out, which included their business information. Others were far less organized, and when asked for their contact information were either at a complete loss on how to handle such requests or just prepared a scrap of paper with writing on it.

Relatedly, observations at the holiday market as well as concerns raised by some interviewees reveal that some refugees have received more guidance than others on how to produce goods that appeal to international/ high-income consumers. At the holiday market that we observed, there was no discernable gender bias in that regard, but it is worth noting that many more traditionally gendered occupations such as embroidery, sewing, and even food preparation may require women to become more familiar with the tastes of potential buyers.

An additional barrier facing women entrepreneurs relates to their own and the community's recognition of the market value of these skills. One respondent gave the example of a Syrian woman in Turkey who was trained and set up with hairdressing materials to work out of her home, but when the agency checked in on her several months later, she was styling neighbors' hair for free. She did not recognize her labor as deserving of pay and neither did her clients who saw it as a favor.

Finally, the legal environment generally creates challenges for Syrian entrepreneurs, though it is not clear how strongly gendered these barriers are. Both our interviewees and the secondary literature suggest a lack of clarity around what the law allows in each country context in terms of Syrian business investments. Other structural barriers may include government bureaucracy and fees which have been recognized in the past. For example, the Durable Solutions Program/

Research Centre on Asylum and Migration's (IGAM) March 2019 report recommends reducing business registration costs to facilitate Syrian investments in the Turkish economy.

e. Transportation

Transportation was identified as one barrier to participation in paid employment, but the degree to which those interviewed felt this was a gender-related challenge varied by country. In the RAND study, 51% of Syrian respondents in Lebanon agreed that there was "no reliable and safe transportation for women to be able to reach work" (Kumar et al. 2018: 79-80), while in Turkey and Jordan, the figures were 39% and 40% respectively cited a lack of transportation. In the context of Lebanon, UN Women/Ipsos (2018c) reported that one in ten women identified transportation as a serious issue. Among those we interviewed, transportation challenges were somewhat perceived as being related to cost. On the positive side, many of the projects covered transportation, although the long-term sustainability of this practice is unclear. Noteworthy also was that Lebanon was the only country where our interviewees perceived men as facing more severe transportation-related challenges than women. Checkpoints were repeatedly raised as an issue more for men than for women.

Expensive transportation was mentioned repeatedly in a UN Women/Ipsos (2018b) report identifying impediments not only to Syrian women working in Jordan, but also accessing healthcare and educational facilities. Although one respondent did not think transportation was an issue at all, many of our interviewees identified the cost of transportation in Jordan as a problem. One respondent also stated that transportation was outmoded and did not accommodate women. Another said that women expect to have their transportation covered as part of their employment. It is not clear whether the individual who did not feel it was an issue is an indication of transportation challenges varying by sub-region within Jordan, and more generally, there are concerns that transportation is an issue for many women in Jordan.

While transportation in and of itself seems to be less of an impediment in Turkey, as it is relatively inexpensive and safe, refugees

do not always feel comfortable leaving their neighborhoods, and in the case of women, sometimes even their homes, for fear of harassment or negative treatment by Turkish people. Some refugees may also be concerned about getting lost if they have to take two different buses and cannot read Turkish. Interviewees repeatedly stated that the fear of venturing out and taking public transportation is much greater than the realities of problems occurring. While some entities are providing transportation, overall, more training and practice on public transportation, as well as language classes, might attenuate transportation obstacles.

f. Childcare⁷

Both written reports and our interviews suggest that caretaking responsibilities are often a serious impediment to women wishing to attend training/training sessions. For those who would like to participate in sustained employment, reliable, high-quality, and reasonably-priced childcare is even more of a concern. As an example, 55% of Syrian women in Turkey who are not looking for work say that this is due to family-care responsibilities (TRC/WFP 2019). Syria is among countries that have historically required employers to provide childcare (although likely this would have been limited to formal sector positions) (IFC 2019). This is also true of Jordan, Iraq and Turkey (IFC 2019), although such policies tend to apply only to larger employers, and evidence from Jordan suggests that these laws are not necessarily effectively enforced.

Aside from employer-supplied childcare facilities, formal centers for children that exist in Turkey are highly regulated and tend to be quite expensive (Ozturk, Serin, and Altinoz 2019). One of our interviewees noted that in Turkey, more than half of the preschools and the rehabilitation and care facilities for the elderly are private. On the other hand, pre-primary school enrollments in Turkey have been rising steadily, from 7% in 1990 to 31% in 2012 (UNESCO 2015: 388), and a current goal is increasing the numbers of refugee children receiving at least some preschool education. The Turkish Ministry of Education is aiming to get all 54-month-old children into at least one year of early childhood education. More progress has been made for children nearing

school age than for children three and under. Our interviews in Turkey suggest childcare for young children is definitely on the radar of UN entities and many partners; interviewees regularly brought up the issue and confirmed that many community centers provide a staffed children's room so that mothers can be relieved of childcare duties while they participate in programs. One example from Turkey is the Gaziantep Chamber of Industry which set up vocational training centers in partnership with UNDP, all of which currently provide care for children, while mothers attend training.

In terms of enrollment of children in pre-primary education, rates in Jordan are similarly low, with UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2015: 388) reporting that the percentage rose from 29 to 34 between 1990 and 2012. As such, it is not surprising that both Syrians in Jordan, as well as Jordanian women, report that childcare is a key obstacle to working. The joint UN Women/REACH study (2017: 14), for example, surveyed 609 Syrian and Jordanian women, and the primary reason listed for not working was childcare (28%), with housework as the second most frequent answer. In terms of awareness of the need for childcare, Jordan was more mixed with at least one entity stating that they provided no childcare as part of their programs, possibly an indication that they were not taking the role of care labor seriously which often plays in impeding women's participation in training and employment. Other programs, however, did offer childcare. One NGO had wanted to create a childcare center but was unable to do so because of government restrictions. UN Women does not face the same legal barriers that small NGOs do and through their Oasis program (see Box 6) have been partnering with the Jordanian government to pilot childcare programs (UN Women no date).

Lebanon was the context where childcare seemed the least on the radar of respondents. A number of those we interviewed were quite dismissive of childcare as an issue and argued that women could rely on informal networks. In one case, the act of our conducting this interview where the gender advisor and other staff were together led to engagement around the issue of childcare, but it did not seem that such discussions had taken place in the past. Importantly, Lebanon was also the country where the least research appears to have been done focusing on childcare availability, indicating a research area to be prioritized in the future. Although large numbers of

migrant women provide both child and house care to Lebanese households, a recent ILO study (2016a) suggests that this practice, not surprisingly, is concentrated among middle and upper-middle-class households (50% of employers surveyed for the ILO study had a university degree). Certainly, for low-income women, these options are less likely to be financially feasible. At the same time, a 2015 UNESCO report (2015: 388) indicates that pre-primary education enrollment is almost universal in Lebanon, considerably higher than in Turkey or Jordan, an indication that certain institutional structures are in place to facilitate the participation of women in caring for young children. Also of interest is Sugita's study (2010: 35) which indicates that while the social care sector in Lebanon is perceived as being dominated by "foreign housemaids," in fact, some less skilled Palestinian women, as well as Lebanese women, are still engaged in the sector, particularly in instances where the employer does not want to hire a live-in worker.

Given that childcare is key to women's engagement in paid employment in large numbers, as well as one area where considerable jobs could be generated for women, this is a sector worth further exploration both in terms of employment in host communities and as preparation for returning to Syria.

Del Carpio et al. (2018) suggest focusing on local or even home-bound projects for women to produce goods for sale in the southeast provinces of Turkey and eventually increasing the number of women doing them, as this form of work can help women combine childcare and income-generating endeavors. While initiatives focused on home-based production (training, kits containing materials, loans, and ongoing business support) are one way to help women combine family care responsibilities with livelihoods activities, these do little or nothing to challenge conservative gender norms. Bugra and Yakut-Cakar (2010) raise questions about the implications of various changes in Turkish legislation focused on female employment. In particular, they flag efforts to "integrate women doing piecework at home into the labor market as self-employed workers" as benefiting employers while doing little to challenge traditional norms (2010: 533). Given the low pay generated by many home-based employment options for women, they argue that the policies may not be emancipatory.

g. Cultural Norms and Safety Concerns

Beyond the aforementioned challenges, a related and more overarching issue, not unique to the region, is the role that gender norms play in shaping women's mobility as well as what women view as acceptable work, which is linked to class as well as reputational and safety concerns. A UNICEF/UNHCR study cited in a recent UN Women/Ipsos (2018b) report indicated, for example, that 51% of Syrian women in Jordan reported that they could not leave their homes unaccompanied. Ozturk, Serin, and Altinoz (2019) report that Syrian refugees list a lack of male family members' support and even being confined to the home as impediments to working in Turkey. Certain types of work also carry various types of stigma. In the context of Jordan and Lebanon, work in the childcare industry has become more stigmatized due to the increasing use of migrant labor. Worldwide, construction is viewed as an especially masculine work environment. In the context of particularly conservative communities, such as the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, jobs that bring women in contact with members of the opposite sex may generally be viewed negatively. Beyond these challenges, there is also the question of how Syrian women are perceived by their host communities. One example of such perceptions is a respondent (Iraq) in the UN Women/Ipsos study (2018a) who reported that women get bad reputations if they work in Iraq. Similarly, a respondent in Knappert, Kornau, and Figengül's study (2017) stated that Syrian women in Turkey were viewed as sex workers, possibly reducing their motivation to engage in paid employment. An Al Jazeera article (Sala 2020) quotes the Lebanese Minister of Justice as stating that those who are trafficked may not be viewed as victims, but instead "because of stigma and discrimination, that Syrian women are considered 'just' prostitutes." While these observations provide only anecdotal evidence of why Syrian women may be hesitant to work, they do shed light on some of the cultural perceptions that can hold women back from seeking employment as well as from seeking help when they become trapped in an exploitative employment situation.

RAND survey respondents (Kumar et al. 2018) reported high rates of perceptions that Syrian women would be harassed in the workplace. This rate was highest in Lebanon (63%) (p. 117) and lowest in Jordan (42%) (p. 79), with Turkey somewhat higher than Jordan, at 48%

(p. 41). Also worth noting is that perceptions of overall safety (not specific to women) were highest in Jordan. In both Lebanon and Turkey, a majority of Syrian refugees feared "experiencing physical harm in the workplace." The rights to safety and decent work are, of course, applicable to both men and women, but as the data suggests, the perception that work environments may be particularly risky for women persists among large numbers of refugees; both these perceptions, as well as on-the-ground realities, require further efforts to address. Interviewees mentioned examples where particular institutional arrangements were required to assure that communities felt comfortable with mixed-gender workplaces. In addition, sending women into labor conditions that increase their risk of sexual harassment should be avoided, in line with the "Do No Harm" principle.

h. Labor Market Regulations and Access to Work Permits

The issues of labor market regulations and work permits, both in terms of issuance and use, were flagged as challenges in the JMD (2017: 39).⁸ As pointed out by the Durable Solutions Program/IGAM's March 2019 report on integrating Syrians into the Turkish labor market, Syrians who are not formally employed are more easily exploited, and this risk may be even greater for women.

The degree to which this is an issue varies across countries. In KRI (but not elsewhere in Iraq), Syrian refugees can obtain residency permits that allow them to work (UN Women/Ipsos Group SA 2018a). In fact, in KRI, there are no legal limits on Syrian refugees' employment options, and one person we interviewed confirmed that even public sector employment is an option for refugees in that context.

In Lebanon and Jordan, permits are far more restrictive and job creation has primarily been restricted to low-skill jobs. In Jordan, permits give formal access to work in the agriculture, manufacturing, construction and hospitality industries. In Lebanon, there is a long history even before the crisis of Syrian men working informally in low-wage segments of the agriculture, construction, service and manufacturing sectors, and these patterns have continued (Kumar et al. 2018).

According to the 2017 Jordan Response Plan (JRP) 3RP Livelihoods Sector Review and Recommendations, only 3% of work permits have gone to women in Jordan. A 2019 UN Women report cites a slightly higher figure of 5%. The Jordanian Ministry of Labor updates work permit numbers every month with the latest figures reported as 4.8% of work permits going to Syrian women (MoL 2020). In Turkey, the numbers are somewhat higher. Between January 2016 and September 2018, one report states that 27,930 permits were issued, of which 2,473 (8.8%) went to women (AIDA/ECRE no date). In a study by UN Women that surveyed 503 Syrian women in Lebanon, only 1% had work permits (UN Women/Ipsos Group SA 2018c). On the one hand, it should be noted that work permits issued are a weak measure of women's engagement in paid employment given that many refugees are in the informal sector. On the other hand, an important concern is that women may face particularly high barriers in terms of obtaining permits given that the share of permits they are receiving does not mirror their overall participation rates. As noted in Table 1, some studies show labor force participation rates of as high as 50% and, certainly, at least between 25% and 30% for women; consequently, their take-up rate for permits should be considerably higher than the 1% to 8.8% being observed across country contexts. One factor that may be relevant and requires more evaluation is that, as argued by Tobin and Alahmed (2019), nepotism and corruption play a role in how work is distributed, raising the issue of whether men have better networks for accessing permits or opportunities. This likely explains some of the gap between male and female work permit take-ups. Whatever the reasons are for women not obtaining work permits, it has implications not only for their immediate vulnerability, but also in terms of their access to social security and protection more generally.

Some of the challenges partners face, such as refugees potentially preferring to work informally rather than giving up cash transfers to take registered jobs, apply to both men and women. ILO staff argued that more outreach is needed to inform Syrians that the protections and higher wages that come with formal employment are a net plus, assuming that the jobs are on-going and not temporary. The UN is working to make it easier and less of a financial burden for employers to formally register Syrian refugees; a pilot program in Turkey has not only reduced the cost of work permits for the employer but is covering six months of the

employer's social security costs. It is not clear, however, whether this change has any gender implications.

In Lebanon and Jordan in particular, restrictions mean that Syrians, especially women with higher skill levels and including those with health and education training and experience, are being marginalized and underutilized. This can be seen from the data supplied by WANA, which found that while 23% of women in their sample had been working in education while in Syria, only 2% were doing so after moving to Jordan (Lockhart, Barker and Alhajahmad 2018). The JMD report does point out that in the context of Jordan, employers have managed to "circumvent quotas and sectoral restrictions" (JMD 2017: 48) by engaging in practices such as registering a refugee as doing one position but then utilizing their skills in other ways. In other words, their job title does not match their day to day responsibilities. We heard similar stories while carrying out our fieldwork. One question this raises is whether the pay these individuals are receiving is commensurate with their skills. Also, the degree to which both women and men have been able to take advantage of these informal arrangements is unclear.

Given both historic employment patterns in Syria, as well as more general patterns in the region, jobs created in services (e.g. education and healthcare) are among the most promising venues for the absorption of women workers, and this is an area where decisions made by government officials can have unintended gender effects (JMD 2017: 46). In particular, since education and health are two areas that are culturally viewed as the most gender appropriate for women workers, restricting entry into those fields is a lost opportunity. In Jordan, UN Women (UN Women/Ipsos Group SA 2018b) recommends opening occupations presently closed to non-Jordanians, such as teaching, medicine, and accounting. Doing so could particularly benefit Syrian women, since, as mentioned above, existing research suggests that only 2% of the women surveyed in Jordan as part of the WANA report were working in education (Lockhart, Barker and Alhajahmad 2018), compared to a much higher proportion in Syria before the crisis. While, in many ways, the occupations where women were able to find employment look similar to other parts of the Arab world (and globally), the low participation in education is noteworthy and linked to restrictions placed on Syrians' employment, which are limited to agriculture,

construction, manufacturing, and domestic labor. The impact on host community women's employment, though, is not entirely clear and could be negatively impacted if restrictions on more skilled occupations are lifted.

Turkey is between KRI, on the one hand, and Lebanon and Jordan, on the other, in terms of the degree to which they allow health and education professionals from Syria to become integrated into the host economy; but even in that context, the political sensitivities have been considerable given the Turkish unemployment rate. While Turkey has done more to integrate skilled Syrians, it is worth noting that Syrian women's labor force participation rates are not markedly higher in Turkey despite laxer restrictions. Despite laxer restrictions and the fact that historically more highly educated Syrian women were more likely to have worked, an important research question that remains unanswered is why Syrian women's employment rates are not considerably higher in Turkey and KRI, given that the environment is more conducive. One

countervailing factor in the case of Turkey is, obviously, language. The language barrier may be even more challenging for more skilled workers to overcome, given the assumption that such workers are required to function at a certain level of skill in the local language (less the case for unskilled workers, who may be able to get by working in agriculture and/or manufacturing without strong language skills). The KRI case is less clear and not applicable to the language barrier as Syrian Kurds speak a comprehensible version of Kurdish.

Interestingly, concerning the issue of language, while only 5% of Syrian men in Turkey report speaking Turkish well, 8% of women do. Such women should be identified and courted for activities where being bilingual is an asset.

Given that the health and education sectors are viewed as a more culturally appropriate fit for women, more can be done to employ bilingual women to serve as vocational trainers, social workers, medical professionals, and teachers, while keeping in mind that more can also be done to challenge these stereotypes and open non-traditional fields for women with strong Turkish language skills.

Promising Approach: Health and Education Recertification

In partnership with the UN and various I/NGOs, the Turkish government has provided language training and recertification programs for 12,600 teachers and 976 doctors, 1,038 nurses, and 1,229 patient guides to work with the Syrian population in Turkey (Syria Task Force Meeting, Ankara, March 7, 2019). While the recertified medical professionals have been working in clinics, only a small percentage of the teachers ended up teaching in temporary education centers for Syrian children, because most were closed as the Syrian children were mainstreamed into Turkish schools. Many of these teachers, along with non-teaching support individuals, are now being moved into Turkish schools with large populations of Syrian students to provide classroom assistance and help interface with parents and administrators as volunteer educational personal. Developing similar programs for Lebanon and Jordan would require less effort, given that language training would be minimal. Adopting this approach would facilitate raising women's employment rates.

i. Cash for Work, Labor-Intensive Works

Given that many of the short-term labor-intensive work projects that were deemed politically acceptable focus on construction and, more generally, on infrastructure improvement (JMD 2017: 48), this has led to particular challenges in terms of ensuring that women are adequately integrated into these projects. This challenge is not unique to the region. Globally, women tend to face challenges when it comes to entering a number of industries. Construction, for example, is an industry where women are hugely underrepresented, throughout the world (ILO 2016: 24).

As such, our interviews indicate that many of the infrastructure-related projects have low targets for female employment (15% to 20%) and even these targets have been difficult to meet. But it is worth noting that there have been some successes when it comes to integrating Syrian women into the construction sector (see Box 4). Sometimes this was done by setting up sex-segregated workspaces, which ensured that there was a segment of a project where women felt comfortable working. Other times, it involved working with communities to design effective programs in

other ways, for example, creating work teams comprised of family members. However, some NGOs complained that this approach was not possible when donors stipulated that only one household member could participate in a given program.

More success was observed in projects that were agriculturally based, since it is a sector where women have already traditionally worked. WFP, for example, reported that women and their family members were comfortable with agricultural labor because it was a common occupation for women in Syria. Often these projects were reported as having 50/50 targets. Even so, careful program design was important. One NGO working in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon talked about this being a particularly challenging environment, but they achieved success in integrating women by creating projects that were exclusively for women, such as a community garden project. Even when they promoted mixed groups, they found that the women and men preferred to work separately and facilitating ways to achieve this gender separation was important.

Home-based work is also a strategy that various entities have used, particularly when dealing with more conservative communities and/or in contexts where women are burdened with considerable unpaid work responsibilities. In Lebanon, for example, women were trained to manufacture fishing nets (Battistin and Leape 2017). Such work can improve cash for work opportunities for women, but generally does little to challenge existing gender norms or address women's unpaid work burden.

Aside from the sector related challenges discussed above, targets varied by NGO, with some clearly prioritizing incorporating women more than others. Many interviewees mentioned that while 50/50 is the stated goal, and a laudable one, it is not realistic for many programs. Battistin and Leape (2017) mention a case in Lebanon where a target of 30% was set but had to be lowered considerably (only 7% was achieved) due to various challenges. More than one interviewee pointed to the labor force participation rate of women in the host community and then commented that they cannot expect to get Syrian refugee women working at a higher rate. Yet, a closer look at the data in Table 1 suggests that the participation rates of women in the host community vary considerably and that in some instances it has been possible to raise Syrian

women's rates above those of women in the host community.

Donors also played a role in determining targets with there being considerable variation in these goals. The Swedish International Development Association (SIDA) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) were mentioned as the two donors that require gender-disaggregated targets and data collection. More generally, whereas some of the cash for work programs specified that a portion of the workers needed to be women, others did not. This was generally donor driven.

Promising Approach: Incorporating Women into Infrastructure Projects

In Lebanon, with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and in cooperation with the Lebanese Ministry of Labor and Ministry of Social Affairs, the ILO set a goal of 10% women working in ten infrastructure sites under the Employment Intensive Investment Programme (ILO 2019). Overall, the 10% goal was achieved, with one site even reaching 24% female employees. In addition to construction work paying more than agricultural employment, women were induced into the program by allowing women to work in teams with relatives or known community members instead of with unknown males, providing safe, free transportation to the work sites, and having the workday end in the afternoon so that both women and men could attend to family responsibilities. Employers and contractors were given training on gender sensitivity and trained social safeguard officers were employed to help deal with sexual harassment. Separate rest facilities and toilets were provided for women and men. Finally, pay was set by task to ensure that women and men were paid fairly. Given the success, future infrastructure sites will have a goal of employing 15% women.

j. Various strategies for expanding women's involvement in the private sector

Engagement with large private companies: One potential employment generation strategy that is increasingly being discussed is engagement with larger, often global, corporate actors. The idea is that the private sector, and particularly larger employers, have a considerable capacity to absorb workers in a manner that is more sustainable than other options. Data from the RAND report (Kumar et al. 2018) suggest that targeting larger firms could particularly benefit women, since these institutions seem more willing or able to employ women. On the other hand, the degree to which collaborations with larger corporate actors are increasing immediate employment for Syrians is unclear. One interviewee discussed a program working with a large transnational grocery store chain in which Syrians and Jordanians were trained, but only Jordanians could be offered employment. More generally, as was noted earlier, a recent Eurodad report (Romero and Gideon 2019) cautions against overstating the ability of the private sector to become a major employer of female workers given that private companies rarely have incentives to advance gender goals and the drive for profit may make them particularly prone to exploit women workers.

Economic Zones: Another opportunity identified in the JMD report were the so-called "economic zones" and trade (JMD 2017: 54). Jordan has several economic zones, which have historically employed large numbers of manufacturing workers, many of them migrant workers. While the report points out that these zones have relied on female labor, it notes that these zones "have historically relied on inexpensive single female migrant workers who live in worker compounds and have very limited in-country expenses," (JMD 2017: 54) as opposed to Syrians, who are generally supporting families. Having said that, the RAND study (Kumar et al. 2018) does identify apparel as one of the largest industries employing Syrian refugees in Jordan. It is not clear, though, whether these jobs are in economic zones. In the context of Turkey, Tören (2018) suggests that this work involves long hours and low pay, raising questions about whether such employment should be considered decent work.

Underexplored Approaches

a. Cooperatives

One model worth pursuing further involves cooperatives. A Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) (2016: 6) report points out that cooperatives are “part of a sustainable development approach.” In particular, supporting women to form and participate in cooperatives is a private sector approach that can help female refugees overcome numerous livelihoods-related barriers since cooperatives are generally less hierarchical in their structure, often involve an integrated approach to supporting refugees, and may involve on-site childcare facilities, which can particularly benefit working mothers. The scale at which this can be carried out is not yet evident, given that the robustness of cooperatives in much of the region is unclear. The JNCW report indicates that only 1.5% of the population in Jordan is involved in cooperatives, although another country in the region, Kuwait, has a much higher rate of 25%, suggesting that regional models are available. Turkey is in between with 11% of the population involved in a cooperative, and it is important to point out that Turkey also has 10% of the world’s cooperatives overall (Okan and Okan 2013). Ataturk encouraged cooperatives, and they have continued to receive state support, although many of the protections from competition with the private sector were removed in 2000 (Okan and Okan 2013). Agricultural cooperatives predominate, but there are also housing, trades, and crafts cooperatives. Similar to Turkey, Polat (2010) indicates that Iraq and Syria also have a long history of cooperatives, suggesting a cultural base on which initiatives can be built. Okan and Okan (2013) warn that too many small cooperatives can be economically

unsustainable since they often suffer from problems of economies of scale, a lack of legal services to ensure compliance and avoid fines, and sometimes also a lack of adequate training. Combining cooperatives so that they can afford equipment, legal services, and training can help, and twining with a cooperative in another country may also be beneficial (Okan and Okan 2013), particularly given the spread of Syrian refugees across a number of countries in the region.

Cooperatives are often well-positioned to provide a gender-sensitive integrated approach to community development. As the JNCW (2016) report points out, this can include: facilitating women’s access to income, exposing women to new ideas, facilitating their business knowledge, encouraging leadership, etc. Well-designed and well-run cooperatives can link vocational training and employment opportunities, ensure quality control of products, and provide marketing and links to consumers. Following fair labor standards, they can prevent exploitation of workers as well as protect them from harassment. This is particularly important for women who are more likely to be engaged in home production. Turkey has had success with cooperatives for women. As of 2013, when initiatives were introduced to exempt women-only cooperatives from membership fees and corporate taxes and duties, there were 91 women’s cooperatives (75% of which were operating), including 29 agricultural ones created during an initiative in 2011. SADA’s Women’s Empowerment Center in Gaziantep trains Turkish, Iranian, Iraqi, Afghan, and Syrian women and specializes in food production, textiles, and shoemaking; it follows the success of another cooperative

benefiting refugees in Sanliurfa. By including Turkish women in programming initiatives alongside refugee women, SADA also promotes the goal of social cohesion.

b. Addressing gender challenges by women serving women

Education and healthcare provision: Earlier, the report discussed the importance of opening up employment opportunities for healthcare and education professionals, particularly because women in Syria with high rates of education had a labor force participation rate of over 50% and many of them were in the health and education sector. An additional reason for opening up this sector more is that women may feel more comfortable with same-sex providers and/or in contexts where single-sex schooling is preferred by certain segments of the community.

Childcare: Given the finding that childcare (and likely also other forms of dependent care, although this came up less frequently in interviews) is a significant deterrent not only to women working but even to accessing training, and given that dependent care provision is culturally accepted as women's work, expanding efforts to have Syrian refugees service other refugees in providing dependent care is an obvious strategy for expanding women's employment opportunities, and the provision of childcare is one concrete way this can occur.

Gender analysts have pointed out that having both men and societies shoulder more of the cost of raising the next generation is needed. While the former requires gender norm change, the latter involves either the state, the private sector, or some other form of subsidy, to ensure that childcare is affordable

Promising approach: SADA's Women's Empowerment Center/Cooperative in Gaziantep

SADA is an empowerment center serving both Syrian refugees and the Turkish population that addresses a number of the gender specific challenges identified in this report and elsewhere. The center has prioritized women and girl safe spaces, a stated priority for the 2019-2020 3RP in Turkey. For women who do not feel comfortable in a mixed-sex setting or who have male relatives who might pressure them not to go, a women-only center can be a way for women to be introduced to social networks, receive language classes, and obtain psychosocial support. Whether or not any of this leads to a job, these benefits themselves are helpful. They connect women who may be otherwise isolated, and they show women opportunities that they may not have been aware of prior to visiting the center. One of the successes that began even before the center opened was a "tea time" for women who were invited by a mental health worker who had targeted women suffering from trauma and serious depression. Once the women came together for tea, they began to open up about their experiences in Syria and Turkey, made friends with other women who had similar experiences, participated more in community life, and eventually they started a leadership group drawn from the original cohort that learned to advocate for themselves, began to engage in program planning, and started a group publication. A handful of women from the group now work as trainers or assist with protection endeavors, such as reaching out to families when they hear of an underage girl in the community getting engaged. In addition, the center recently introduced a cooperative that has trained Syrian, Turkish, Iraqi, Iranian, and Afghan women in food preparation, textiles, packaging, and shoe production. The cooperative was one of ten projects chosen to be supported and scaled up by the Paris Peace Forum for initiatives in the field of inclusive economy. Although not all the women involved in SADA engage in paid work, the strides toward empowerment and independence have been invaluable and have led to a host of other positive benefits, such as leadership roles within the community as the women travel outside their homes and are seen in the community. They provide a model to other women by taking on roles that are beyond family caretaking.

and of high quality. While existing laws in Jordan and Turkey require larger employers to provide creches, such laws can have unintended consequences by reducing the incentive of employers to hire women in the first place. Therefore, exploring other options for providing high-quality care and decent work simultaneously is needed.

One somewhat controversial, politically challenging suggestion would involve integrating Syrian women more into the care labor sector, particularly in Jordan and Lebanon. It is worth noting that Jordan's private sector, and particularly their development zones, which involve highly exploitative labor conditions that rely primarily on migrant workers, were mentioned in the JMD report, since Jordan, in particular, opened up migrant-heavy sectors to Syrian workers. Interestingly, no mention was made of the fact that another large employer of immigrant women in Jordan and Lebanon is the care and household labor sector. This includes nannies, home healthcare workers, cleaners, etc. There is evidence that despite the influx of immigrants from other parts of Asia and Africa, some Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian women continue to work in this sector. It is also worth noting that from the host country perspective, employing Syrian women in childcare and eldercare obviates the cultural and linguistic implications of many of the currently paid care providers not speaking Arabic.

Whether Syrian women are engaged in providing dependent care or not, efforts need to be made to simultaneously keep childcare affordable, while improving the work conditions for childcare providers. More generally, given that one of the impediments to both host and refugee women's employment is a lack of quality and affordable childcare, finding creative ways of expanding care services to create employment for host and Syrian women and alleviate some of the unpaid care burdens on women who are already working, is an important aim. This requires subsidizing the sector to assure both decent work as well as low-cost high-quality childcare.

Transportation: Another area that has not been explored much is the possibility of women-owned and operated transportation systems servicing other women. Given women's concerns related to safety, women-operated transportation options could be popular and address livelihoods and norms issues simultaneously.

Institutional challenges

While finding creative ways to advance gender-sensitive livelihoods programming in light of existing macroeconomic, political, and cultural conditions is important, the next section sheds light on challenges related to the capacity of implementing entities. These personnel-related challenges include cases where project implementers failed to draw on existing knowledge in designing projects in order to assure a gender-sensitive approach; internalized norms/stereotypes (both around the national origin and gender) that led to staff members rejecting certain concepts before they were tried; denial of various gendered constraints based on preconceived ideas; and gender experts being located off-site. A set of challenges related to the overarching institutional structure of the response is worth further consideration as well as the use of gender markers and data tracking systems. Finally, challenges related to coordination and information sharing, monitoring and evaluation as well as longer time frames, siloization, program design, and funding streams are discussed.

a. Personnel Related Challenges

Awareness, knowledge gaps

Multiple program implementers (both UN and NGO) recounted instances where programs were rolled out that did not adequately take into account gendered realities and which led to the need to adjust programming later. Particularly noteworthy was the number of times program implementers had not anticipated women's unpaid work burdens. While some of these types of adjustments are unavoidable, others seemed to have resulted from being uninformed and not making use of the many excellent documents that have already identified both general and Syria-specific gender challenges and how to address them. Whether this is a matter of being severely time-constrained and trying to roll out programs too quickly and/or the need for more gender-specific training was not clear, this seems like an issue that can be addressed by

- a. Requiring gender analyses to be carried out at the outset of projects,
- b. Better sharing of documents,
- c. More consistent gender training, and
- d. Adjusting project time frames to facilitate better gender programming.

Prevalence of stereotypes

Another problem that was evident among personnel, particularly in Jordan and Lebanon, was internalized stereotypes about Syrians, which seemed to compromise the ability of some to think outside the box. A number of interviewees raised concerns about the disdain that certain colleagues had towards Syrian refugees and the degree to which this limited these individuals' ability to design consultative programs and more broadly to engage communities in programs that empowered women.

Lack of full mainstreaming

A very different type of personnel-related challenge involved the fact that even though many entities hire gender experts to participate in the design and implementation of programs, the location of these gender experts may not be conducive to their everyday involvement in program roll-outs. A number of entities reported that their gender experts were located at the regional level, and that while these individuals visited country offices for training/training sessions, they were not involved in the day to day running of programs. This is a serious problem given that for gender mainstreaming to be effective, it needs to be iterative in its approach, with gender being taken into account both at the planning and

implementation stages. Although training other staff may sometimes be sufficient, having gender experts on site is at other times necessary in order to troubleshoot issues that come up during implementation. Particularly given the difficult political and cultural context, adjustments may be necessary as programs are rolled out, but this is more difficult to do effectively if gender staff are not on site. This challenge requires strengthening the gender expertise architecture associated with the Syria crisis response by integrating gender experts more fully on-site and by better training all staff members. The reason both aspects are needed is that gender training for general staff is vital, but not a substitute for the deep knowledge that gender experts bring to the field. Instead these two approaches are complementary. Furthermore, in light of the complexity of rolling out effective gender-sensitive programming, having personnel with gender training at both the country and regional level is important.

Staff turnover

Along with the issue of the need for more coordination, a related issue that was brought up by both UN and NGO partners was the high degree of turnover among program staff, which can create considerable discontinuity when it comes to program roll-out. Part of the reason for high turnover is the competition among entities to identify strong gender experts. A very different problem relates to burn-out, given the stress involved in this type of work. The first challenge requires expanding the number of gender experts who are trained, while the second requires assuring that work conditions take into account the high levels of stress.

b. Overarching Institutional Structure

Aside from personnel-related challenges, the interviews also revealed some challenges related to the overarching institutional structure of the response.

Research knowledge gaps

Whereas some knowledge gaps are more linked to the dissemination of existing best practices, some macro-level knowledge challenges are more related to a number of research gaps that exist, which ultimately hamper the ability to effectively do livelihoods programming in general, let alone through a gender lens. In finalizing this report, a number of research gaps including the dearth of

research focusing on the determinants of female labor force participation, particularly in Syria but also in the region more generally, and the lack of research on paid care facilities were among those we encountered. More easily addressed is the fact that according to one of our interviewees, household vulnerability assessments carried out in the context of the Syria crisis generally only ask the employment status of the respondent/head of household. As a consequence, it is much easier to estimate male labor force participation rates, but the overall rate, particularly for women who are not heads of household, is less likely to be captured. This has begun to change, with more extensive questions being added in Lebanon in 2016, but various livelihoods assessments still follow the methodology of focusing on household heads, the majority of whom are male. Another program related example discussed earlier is the lack of systematic market assessments in several countries. While this requires analysis of existing macroeconomic trends, even more basic information, such as percent of female entrepreneurs, was also difficult to locate.

Gender mainstreaming reduced to targets

Many of those we interviewed viewed gender solely through the metric of targets. These targets were at times internal goals, while at other times they were imposed externally by donors or UN guidelines. In some cases, even modest targets (20%) were not met, while in other projects, targets of 50% were reported to have been met. NGOs sometimes admitted to keeping targets vague, and where possible, only mentioning they would 'include women' rather than proposing a concrete percentage. The interview process revealed that targets varied by funder, NGO, type of livelihoods project, country, and even region. For example, NGOs working in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon indicated that it was a particularly challenging environment for integrating women into livelihoods projects, although they also provided examples of projects that had attracted female participants.

When targets were more ambitious, they were often deemed unrealistic and contributed to staff either not taking the target seriously and/or becoming discouraged by the challenges involved in reaching the target. A number of individuals complained that donors in particular choose aspirational targets without taking into consideration the realities on the ground. This led to frustration on the part of practitioners.

Both the targets and means of reaching them should involve discussions between donors and practitioners, and gender experts need to be at the table for all such discussions.

c. Use of gender markers and data tracking systems

The degree to which individuals interviewed were aware of and/or making use of gender markers varied both by institution and country. Although “response to the Syrian crisis” through the 3RP combines humanitarian and resilience/

development components, there is more awareness of the IASC marker than the GEM, but there is also confusion concerning the new IASC marker (which focuses on both gender and age) even among those who were aware that the marker had been revised.

In Turkey it appears that many entities use some kind of a gender marker and many mentioned 50/50 targets as the norm. Only one partner stated that his organization did not use a gender marker. Despite this oversight, in general, interviewees seemed comfortable

Promising Approach: UN Women’s Oasis Model in Jordan

In 2012 at the start of the crisis, UN Women Jordan developed a unique model to respond to the urgent needs of vulnerable Syrian refugee women and girls in camp settings in Jordan. This model, the Oasis center, has been directly implemented by UN Women since 2012 and has grown over time to address the evolving needs of the situation. There are now four Oasis centers run directly by UN Women in Za’atari and Azraq refugee camps and eight Oasis centers run in partnership between UN Women and Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) in host communities. Currently, each Oasis center provides three integrated lines of services to vulnerable women:

- a. economic empowerment: providing women with cash for work opportunities as an incentive to get them into the center and then securing livelihoods opportunities through additional technical and vocational training, entrepreneurship skills, and support with work permit applications;
- b. GBV: providing women working in the center with protection, prevention, referrals, and awareness-raising, and working with men and boys in the community on changing attitudes towards violence; and
- c. leadership and participation: spurring civic engagement and education opportunities for women and girls in the community.

The Oasis model also addresses the main barriers women face in trying to access opportunities by advocating for policies and social norm change that will help women work, particularly in relation to childcare and transportation policies and securing the support of families and communities. Since June 2019 UN Women and WFP have partnered to use blockchain technology to assist Syrian refugee women participating in UN Women’s Oasis center cash-for-work programmes at Za’atari and Azraq refugee camps in Jordan. Through this partnership, Syrian refugee women who participate in UN Women’s program access their funds directly with their accounts kept securely on the WFP-run Building Blocks blockchain. Previously, women received a monthly entitlement in cash on a set date. Through Building Blocks, UN Women provides female refugees with cash-back at WFP-contracted supermarkets (accessed through an iris-scan) or the ability to pay for their purchases directly. The partnership stems from WFP’s Building Blocks project, which already provides digital food vouchers to 106,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan through a blockchain-based system. UN Women and WFP are now collaborating to expand the partners to be accessible to vulnerable women in the non-camp Oases as well.

discussing their organizations' approaches to gender mainstreaming in terms of livelihoods and appeared to have given a lot of thought to the challenges and opportunities involved.

In Jordan, the situation was more mixed. Some entities reported having gender markers and/or tracking gender statistics. Others were unaware of the IASC marker or other mechanisms for tracking gender successes. Certainly, there was an eagerness on the part of many actors to address gender comprehensively, but knowledge was sometimes lacking.

In Lebanon, awareness of efforts to integrate gender markers into programming seemed somewhat lower than in the other countries, suggesting that a particular focus needs to be placed on increasing capacity in that context. More generally, while some actors on the ground have embraced the concept of gender markers, the approach often remains superficial and focuses narrowly on numerical targets rather than the kind of in-depth analytical tool provided in the IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action, which is comprised of a detailed set of tools for integrating gender into livelihoods programming.

The Role of the UN and Donors in Facilitating Coordination and Information Sharing

The UN and donors can play an important role in ensuring that coordination both across geographic locations and different sectors improves. Actors on the ground are overstretched, and pressure to act quickly can lead to a lack of coordination, which in turn leads to replication in some areas and gaps in others. Compartmentalized mandates and/or rivalries both within and across UN and NGO entities also contribute to challenges in this area. These issues reduce the effectiveness of programming in a number of ways, and the UN and donors are both well suited to provide better coordination and a mechanism for diffusing tensions and rivalries. None of these issues is unique to gender, but given the particular importance of the need for an integrative approach and the fact that effective gender programming requires time and information, these issues may be exacerbated by efforts to gender mainstream.

d. Coordination and information sharing challenges

As the JMD report notes: "Coordination of crisis-related development programming is difficult, and requires persistent effort at the local, national and regional levels" (JMD 2017: 63). Adding gender to the equation increases coordination challenges even further for many reasons. As several informants pointed out during interviews, designing gender-sensitive programming requires knowledge, time, and attention to detail. In addition, since good gender-sensitive programming involves gender as both a cross-cutting and a stand-alone goal, integration of gender goals across multiple areas is critical for success. This can be done either by better coordination across actors and projects and/or by supporting entities to do more cross-cutting work. Coordination needs to ensure both that different service providers complement rather than compete with each other and that better integration across the different components of the response occurs.

Various coordination efforts already exist at the country level, including joint programming such as the Oasis Model in Jordan (see Box 6) or general task force meetings as well as topic-specific ones. We observed three such meetings, two in Turkey and one in Jordan. In Turkey, the monthly Syria Task Force meeting was well attended by donors, UN and I/NGO staff and others. Generally during these meetings, different sub-groups present their work periodically. Sub-groups focusing on gender are also part of the general discussion every month, which provides an opportunity to further gender mainstreaming. However, at the 2019 3RP launch presentation in Turkey that we observed, there was very little discussion of women in general and no discussion on women and livelihoods specifically. An additional coordination concern noted during the Jordan meeting was that local NGOs may face language barrier since these meetings generally conducted in English.

While efforts to share information exist on the ground, we found huge disparities in the degree to which individuals across an array of entities were aware of best practices related to gender empowerment and gender mainstreaming. Even in the context of standard UN reporting requirements (e.g. the Gender SWAP), knowledge among staff on the ground varied.

One area where coordination was often not in evidence was when it came to sharing certain types of programmatic information. When entities feel that withholding information is a strategy for increasing their chances of retaining funding, for example, they may choose not to be open with other partners. One example was the lack of coordination around market assessments, given that individual entities sometimes reported carrying these out on their own. Such an approach is a waste of resources, and it would be better to instead coordinate these analyses and then share information. Unfortunately, service providers often viewed such information gathering as proprietary and expressed their reluctance to share such information.

Assuring adequate geographic coverage is another important coordination priority. Our interviews revealed that while some NGOs worked on identifying underserved sub-regions, it was not always clear how much deliberate planning went into assuring that

regional coverage was adequate. Some previous research from Turkey indicates that the degree to which refugees perceived that services are available also varies. Whether this is a matter of better outreach or better coverage requires further inquiry. While it is not a gender issue per se, a lack of services in certain areas could exacerbate challenges facing the most vulnerable, and women are often overrepresented in that group.

At the national level, a deeper understanding of policies is also key to better coordination. One concrete example that emerged from interviews was related to assessing the gender impact of national policies and identifying potential gaps in coverage. In Turkey, for example, additional cash assistance is linked to children's attendance in schools, with a somewhat larger stipend provided to girls than boys, given evidence that historically parents of girls require additional incentives. But in the context of Syrian refugees, this structure may be less effective. Information shared both during the March 7, 2019 Syria Task Force meeting attended in Ankara and our interviews indicated that boys are (up to 7%) less likely than girls to be attending school. Traditional gender norms that lead to expectations that males assist their families in terms of income generation is one reason why this is occurring. Although Turkish policy is unlikely to change in the short run, this provides an example where better coordination between education, cash assistance, and livelihoods programming, with a focus on gendered implications, is important.

One area where coordination has been more deliberate and which could serve as a model for other cross-cutting initiatives, is around GBV programming, where linkages are consistently made between gender, protection, and livelihoods.

e. Monitoring & Evaluation and the importance of longer time frames

A number of interviewees remarked on the challenges of doing effective gender programming in the context of very short funding cycles. Often NGOs are expected to develop effective programs in the space of one year. Not only does this lead to rushing, but it also creates considerable discontinuity when it comes to program roll-out. While this is generally a problem in the context of humanitarian crises, given that gender sensitivity may be particularly challenging to address in a short time horizon, these cycles

Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to GBV as an integration model

UNFPA's Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (GBVie) (2015) identifies both socio-economic empowerment and access to livelihoods as important components when it comes to violence mitigation and key to a multi-sectoral response in support of survivors. Also central to a multi-sectoral response are tackling discriminatory gender norms, assuring the provision of healthcare, mental health and psychosocial support, safety and security, and legal access. The importance of the Do No Harm principle is also discussed in the context of the need to "mitigate the possibility that livelihoods programs further exacerbate protection risks for women and adolescent girls or isolate or further stigmatize GBV survivors." Ensuring that entities that focus on GBVie coordinate with the livelihoods component of the response and vice versa is therefore crucial.

can worsen the organizations' abilities to roll out strong gender programming effectively.

A related and important point made in the JMD report was that attempts to assess "the types of activities that are effective and should be considered for scaling up" have not been "systematic" (JMD 2017: 69). This issue came up repeatedly in interviews we carried out as well. In some instances, as in the case of market assessments, INGOs reported having carried out monitoring and evaluation (M&E) exercises but viewed their findings as proprietary. When information sharing is restricted, it can lead to multiple, uncoordinated efforts being carried out, which in turn involves wasted resources. It is also worth noting that such efforts must be gender-sensitive in their approach, given that the challenges facing women often differ from those facing men. Relatedly, these findings suggest the need for more rigorous M&E as well as more coordination across and within sectors.

The JMD report (2017: 65) also points out that the collection of data is crucial to M&E efforts. As the IASC gender and age marker stipulates, such data must be sex-disaggregated in order to be able to assess gender impact. Given that capacity varies by entity and that duplication of effort is not the best use of resources, coordination of M&E and data gathering efforts is key to better gender programming. This issue is discussed further in the next section of the report on gender markers.

Another problem related to the issue of M&E mentioned in interviews was that targets focus primarily on the short-run (e.g. did individuals find employment?) rather than determining the sustainability of employment matches. Tracking whether employment duration is short or long is important and linked to livelihoods sustainability for both men and women, but particularly for women who may face greater challenges due to both social pressure as well as concrete time pressure issues related to their unpaid work duties. Also, entities should measure impacts beyond classical impacts like employment outcomes. Evaluation schemes should consider changes in household decision-making patterns, for instance, which could be measured through the CARE GiE Rapid Gender Analysis Survey Questionnaire Tool, and not simply focus on employment-related goals. Establishing better ways of tracking long-term outcomes is valuable not just in terms of overall programmatic success but also gender mainstreaming. Doing so is, of course, challenging, given that refugee populations, in particular, may be transient, but effective

programming requires this step and current attempts to measure impact are insufficient. From the interviews, it is also apparent that many program providers are themselves eager to expand their M&E efforts to incorporate more long-term outcomes.

One example of an initiative with no follow-up was a program to train paid caregivers for the disabled, sponsored by the Ministry of Health in Turkey. Programs that did track placements at times reported very low job placement success rates (ranging from 6% to 20%). Longer-term monitoring of whether individuals were able to stay in their positions was never carried out and may be particularly important for women who often face childcare and social norm pressures. In both Jordan and Lebanon, interviewees stated that training programs had very low job placement rates and no follow up in terms of ensuring that individuals were able to maintain employment in the longer term. Given that the objectives may not be solely to help graduates get jobs, particularly in the case of women, measuring the range of benefits from training/training sessions is key (e.g. assessing changes in gender empowerment). Many I/NGOs said they felt rushed and wished that they could do a better job with follow up.

f. Siloization, program design, and funding streams

Returning to the issue of coordination, the Syria crisis response remains considerably siloed, with livelihoods programs often implemented separately from other parts of the response. Funding streams often encourage this siloization and a number of the NGOs interviewed for this report complained about the fact that programs that involve the integration of various aspects of the 3RP are difficult because funding calls are not coordinated. In addition, there is generally more of a lack of coordination between UN entities/donors. A couple of examples where more coordination is important include linking education and livelihoods, as job creation may occur in the education sector and livelihoods preparedness often takes place in the context of educational programming. As is illustrated in a number of the boxes highlighting good practices in this report, some level of integration has been achieved but more could be done. For example, further facilitating Syrian teachers' retraining and subsequent access to employment is an integrated approach

with clear gender implications. An equally compelling necessary linkage is between health and livelihoods—healthcare provision is a sector where more jobs can be created. Additionally, livelihoods preparedness must ensure that the physical and mental health of potential workers is assessed and supported and that gender considerations take into account both women’s and men’s access to training as well as patients’ preferences in terms of the sex of their healthcare providers.

The RAND report (Kumar et al. 2018) also points out that Syrians have articulated a need for both focused job training and psychological support services. This provides another example of the importance of integrating different aspects of the 3RP to ensure its

In some areas, such as GBV prevention, these two components are already integrated. However, less has been done to more generally link mental health and livelihoods, although one interviewee mentioned that IOM had run a workshop in Lebanon to explore these linkages further in the context of the Syria crisis. More generally, a focus on integration that triangulates between the education, health and the livelihoods components of the 3RP can be of particular benefit to women, given their historic contributions to the education and healthcare sectors.

Certain types of integration do occur either intentionally or organically. The SADA center and cooperative (see Box 5) is an excellent example of integrated programming, as is the WFP Healthy Kitchen Program discussed in Box 8.

While the SADA center and the Healthy Kitchen program were designed with intention, programs are sometimes implemented with possibly unintentional cross-cutting impacts. As an example, a program involving the training of mental health workers was discussed by one INGO. This program was situated in the health sector of the 3RP and involved the training of health workers. Clearly this training had implications for future employment outcomes, as well as contributing more generally to preparing Syrians to address the needs of their population in the future, yet the implementers of that program had not explicitly given thought to the ways their training program could be viewed as cross-cutting. Mental health provision is an area that is likely to be both appealing to women, because it is viewed as socially more acceptable than other jobs, and where there is likely a need for women, given that potential clients may have a gender preference in terms of those providers whom they might seek out for services. More generally, the differences between men and women need to be considered across various potentially cross-cutting initiatives. For instance, women’s access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities are crucial to their success in terms of finding and sustaining employment. A more systematic approach to uncovering the various ways this is likely to play out in the field is therefore needed.

Promising approach: WFP’s Healthy Kitchen Program

WFP’s Healthy Kitchen Program, piloted in 2016 reached 50,000 school children by 2017 (WFP 2017) using an integrated approach that combines health, nutrition, and job creation. The program employs Syrian women to prepare food in schools in refugee camps in Jordan. Children receive fresh, healthy food as well as nutrition information. As such, WFP is, through this program, creating livelihoods for women, while also addressing the goals of education, nutrition, and gender empowerment. Another innovation was introducing a nursing hour into the program which further promotes good nutrition, while also acknowledging and supporting women’s care labor responsibilities.

success and also highlights the fact that either few programs are available and/or that those programs that are in place have not been sufficiently promoted. Given that some individuals, both men and women, may feel more comfortable visiting physical and mental health care providers who are of the same sex, ensuring both men and women are trained for these positions is also important and another mechanism for increasing employment opportunities for women.

Recommendations

Towards a comprehensive approach to Women's Economic Empowerment in the response to the Syria crisis:

Our interviews, as well as the review of the secondary literature, indicate that the livelihoods component of the 3RP faces both challenges and opportunities when it comes to designing gender-sensitive programming in general and in terms of integrating women into the employment component in particular. An examination of labor force patterns illuminates the particularly strong role that education played as a determinant of Syrian women's employment historically. Aside from historically low labor force participation among less educated women, the most common challenges include political climates and economic conditions that make livelihoods programming particularly challenging as well as cultural norms that have added to obstacles for women's participation. Given high levels of both labor market informality and unemployment, options that guarantee decent work for Syrian women refugees can be quite limited.

Also noteworthy is that while the four country contexts share some similarities, some challenges were unique to particular contexts. These include language barriers in Turkey, as well as differing policy contexts when it comes to which sectors are open to Syrian refugees. More generalizable challenges include occupational segregation as well as wage discrimination; though these can manifest differently across various country contexts. Promising sectors include work in agriculture, various sub-sectors within manufacturing (food, apparel, chemicals) as well as more traditional work in the service sector (e.g.

education, health, childcare, hospitality). At the same time, some programs are managing to challenge gender norms already by focusing on fields such as IT and construction.

When it comes to employee commitment to gender mainstreaming, good intentions do not appear to be lacking, but even individuals with gender training pointed out that given how urgent conditions in the field are, carefully taking into account gender is often challenging. In a number of instances, the interviews revealed fairly significant gaps in terms of awareness of what steps would need to be taken in order to ensure gender-sensitive programming. As a result, program design often does not take into account best practices. Another common concern is the fact that donors' emphasis as to the importance of gender differs and donor expectations do not always match on-the-ground realities.

Although these seem like rather different issues, training and enabling business programming often worked in tandem, and even when they did not, they sometimes faced similar challenges.

For example, both the skills development component of the 3RP and the enabling business component are highly politically sensitive. A related challenge common to both these approaches concerns questions implementers have about whether training and support for entrepreneurial opportunities should be focused more on opportunities in the host community or towards facilitating

returning. A gender-specific issue that came up was that particularly in the case of women who frequently had very little previous work or entrepreneurial background, training was an important first step towards income generation.

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The emphasis different actors placed on the issue of childcare also varied considerably across both countries and institutions. Our impression was that those in Turkey were the most sensitive about women's childcare needs, while those in Lebanon were the least. This may be a function of the individuals interviewed in each location but may also be influenced by country-level institutional structures that shape perceptions. The degree to which interviewees viewed childcare as an impediment requiring attention varied by entity as well as across country contexts indicating that entity-level institutional culture and gender training also matter.

Recommendations

Given the existence of very real gender norm challenges and individuals and communities that are more open to norm change, we have identified various program design, policy, and structural support recommendations as well as recommendations for donors.

Program design recommendations include:

1. Addressing social norms more effectively by expanding the scope of women's opportunities as well as engagement with families and communities. Women who have not been exposed to alternative careers are unlikely to independently articulate such choices. Steps that can be taken to facilitate women and communities thinking more expansively about women's employment options can include:

- a. Integrating gender-sensitivity training with a focus on reducing restrictive norms, stereotypes, and harassment at work, into vocational training, as well as other programs.
- b. Featuring successful entrepreneurs and other women who have achieved success in challenging gender norms as role models during training programs and in other contexts. An excellent example of this is the Arab Women in Computing (ARABWIC) organization (ARABWIC nd), which has developed a network of IT professionals and entrepreneurs and is already implementing coding training in Lebanon.
- c. Ensuring that counseling/career advising is sensitive to men's and women's different needs/comfort levels, for example by ensuring that both male and female counselors are available to clients.
- d. Engaging family and community members to make sure that they are 'on board' with the expanded set of opportunities being offered to women. Al Majmoua (Box 2) regularly assures that this is done with their programming by incorporating family members into the process of encouraging women to explore entrepreneurial opportunities. Other programs also target fathers, brothers, and sons for discussions and workshops on gendered expectations and challenges.

2. While norm change is key, it takes time. As such a two-pronged integrated strategy is needed that focuses on supporting women a). who are willing to push boundaries while b). accommodating those who are more comfortable working in more traditional sectors. More innovative opportunities for women willing to push gender boundaries can include plumbing and other construction-related skills, transportation, logistics project management, bookkeeping/accounting, and retail/hospitality (which are globally fairly typical professions women are engaged in, but less so in the Arab world). Restoration of cultural heritage, agronomy, and IT are other areas that could be expanded. A focus on both full-time work as well as flex-time/part-time and/or home-based work is vital for women who either by choice or necessity cannot reduce their unpaid work burden.

Traditional approaches should focus both on lower and higher skills opportunities in agriculture, food production, handicrafts, the beauty industry, child and other care sector jobs, education, and mental and physical health. Market analyses and skills mapping taking into account both refugee and host communities should inform vocational training programs, both in traditional and more innovative fields. Ensuring that adequate market analysis is done is particularly important in order to avoid women being trained and encouraged to enter fields that are already saturated.

3. Addressing the needs of female entrepreneurs, in particular, requires a careful strategy

that involves adequate financial support, skills training, confidence building, supporting women to do their own market assessment, as well as assuring that women are entering fields that are not already saturated and where sufficient income can be generated. This is particularly important in light of evidence that existing female entrepreneurs in the region struggle to generate sufficient income and may be victims of predatory lending practices.

4. Exploring equitable, synergistic ways that childcare can become more of an employment generation strategy and provide additional support to refugee women

so that they have more time to pursue paid work and/or skills improvement is another priority. This requires both addressing infrastructure and policy challenges. Women who work in this sector deserve a living wage, but families also require affordable, quality care for their children. Ensuring that institutionalized childcare is subsidized both lowers the price of childcare, which increases women's incentive to enter paid employment, and provides women working in this sector with decent wages. Such programs also need to be designed with community input, otherwise they are unlikely to be seen as legitimate option leading women to continue to rely on informal networks.

5. Better integration of gender-sensitive livelihoods programming into other parts of the 3RP, so that addressing gender in the context of livelihoods is not just seen as a standalone issue. Innovative integration with the following sectors in particular can facilitate higher female employment as well as gender needs more generally:

- a. Education – this has been done to some degree already, but more innovative steps can be taken to improve gender outcomes as related to linking education and livelihoods.
- b. Food and nutrition – following the lead of WFP (Box 8) and others, innovative ways of facilitating women's employment and Syrians' nutritional needs can be expanded.
- c. Protection – this is of key importance, given perceived and actual threats of violence facing women, which likely contributes to them being hesitant to enter paid employment.
- d. Psychosocial Support – Services to women, as well as encouraging women to become service providers, are both key to assuring that women's mental health and economic well-being are treated in tandem, as discussed in Boxes 5 and 7. Men are also in need of these services and, given gender norms, may be less likely to take advantage of them even when they are offered.

6. More exploration of the value of cooperative ventures

– while private sector corporate employment is often touted as providing large numbers of jobs, cooperatives can provide livelihoods support by addressing aspects of women's vulnerability in a more integrated manner, as discussed in Box 5. Introducing cooperatives, as with other approaches, requires training and institutional development. As one interviewee stated: "When it is among disadvantaged groups like rural women, (...) [those] with limited literacy, or access to knowledge, resources, etc. then the cooperative development may need to be accompanied with coop incubators". This is no different from what is needed when supporting other types of entrepreneurial innovation.

7. Further analysis of the degree to which public transportation contributes to reducing women's access to training and employment and how that varies across countries. This can also be an area for synergies, possibly by supporting women-led transportation initiatives

The policy environment remains a challenging one, but we identified three areas where **policy changes** can facilitate gender mainstreaming in the context of livelihoods. These include:

- 1. Prioritizing ways to facilitate the loosening of restrictions on skilled employment opportunities for Syrians** is key, so host countries can benefit from Syrians' existing training. This is particularly important when viewed through a gender lens since education is one of the top factors that predict willingness to work among Syrian women and is likely to be an important factor that can contribute to raising women's labor force participation rates. Speeding up the degree and qualification equivalency and acceptance (see Box 3) is an additional step that can facilitate skilled workers accessing commensurate employment opportunities. Given the employment history of women in Syria, a focus on education and healthcare would be particularly valuable. At the same time, putting a focus on expanding the occupational options for those willing to take more risks is also vital. Impact analysis should also be carried out to ensure that women from the host community are not negatively impacted by such changes.
- 2. Facilitating Syrians' acquisition of work permits** is similarly important given that this process is one factor that can improve work conditions and is more generally linked to access to social security. Given that to date women are particularly underrepresented in terms of receipt of work permits, ensuring equal access is crucial.
- 3. Addressing the childcare needs of Syrian women** also requires thinking more broadly about policy. Current policies in Lebanon and Jordan, in particular, have favored a model that relies heavily on immigrant labor and has been identified as particularly exploitative. Both in thinking about the needs of Syrian women workers and future employment opportunities for Syrians, working to change the current policy climate in that regard is also key.

4. Aside from programmatic suggestions and broader policy recommendations, we have a number of concrete suggestions related to **strengthening structural/infrastructure support:**

- 1.** Better support to develop and implement gender markers. Indicators by age and sex in particular are needed at the strategic planning phase so that change can be better measured (assistance, access, satisfaction, etc.)
- 2.** Advocacy to improve the network of gender advisors and trainings
- 3.** Training and documentation to help staff understand that gender mainstreaming is a) more than setting up quotas and b) best practices for designing gender-transformative programming
- 4.** Facilitating document collection and sharing in order to reduce duplication and improve dissemination of gender in livelihoods programming best practices, for instance, through working groups. The following publications are particularly useful:
 - a.** THE IASC **Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action**
<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/gender-and-humanitarian-action/content/gender-handbook-humanitarian-action>
 - a.** IASC Gender with Age Marker (GAM) Information Sheet 2018
<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/other/content/iasc-gender-age-marker-gam-2018>
 - b.** The UN Gender SWAP
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability/key-tools-and-resources>
 - c.** The UNDP Gender and Recovery Toolkit: Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Crisis and Recovery Settings
<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/undp-gender-and-recovery-toolkit.html>
 - d.** The CDA Do No Harm and Gender: A Guidance Note
<https://www.cdacollaborative.org/publication/no-harm-gender-guidance-note/>
 - e.** Women's Refugee Commission **A Double-edged Sword: Livelihoods in Emergencies: Guidance and Tools for Improved Programming**
<https://womensrefugeecommission.org/resources/download/1046>

- f. Care International, **Women, work & war: Syrian women and the struggle to survive five years of conflict**, <https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/publications/women-work-war-syrian-women-and-the-struggle-to-survive-five-years-of-conflict>
5. Exploring ways of reducing turnover rates given that lack of knowledge continuity is a serious challenge.
 - a. Hiring local staff can in part address this issue, although even among local staff turnover and/or reassignment can frequently occur
 - b. A lack of sufficient gender capacity is also a factor contributing to turnover and requires giving more thought to increasing capacity of gender expertise in the field
 - c. Burn-out is another problem given the high pressure related to both the urgency of the crisis and the short funding cycles
 6. Strengthening support of research and information sharing with a particular focus on:
 - a. Better value chain/macro-level analysis of employment opportunities with a gender angle included
 - b. Gender-sensitive studies that examine positive multiplier effects of Syrians on local economies
 - c. A more general focus on information sharing as a requirement of funding and/or incentivizing information sharing in other ways

Recommendations for **donors/improving funding approaches:**

1. Shifting from shorter to longer funding cycles – this is particularly crucial for gender-sensitive programming, given that effective gender programming cannot be rushed
2. More coordination of funding cycles to allow more cross-cutting/integrative work
3. Incorporation of childcare and transportation costs, and, where appropriate, support for home labor-saving technologies into budget considerations
4. More generally, supporting the development and dissemination of labor-saving technologies to free up women's time for educational and work endeavors
5. More rigorous demands in terms of gender mainstreaming/data collection
 - a. Requiring gender analysis as a prerequisite to receiving funds
 - b. Insistence on the use of gender markers and the collection of sex-disaggregated data at various levels: individual, household, and community

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Annex

Country-specific Analysis

The following annex provides an in-depth analysis of the labor situation for women, particularly Syrian women, in four of the 3RP countries (Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)) with a focus on employment trends and challenges including occupational segregation and wage disparities among others, where relevant data are available. We begin with Turkey which hosts the largest share of Syrian refugees in the region (64%) and continue with the analysis of Lebanon (16.5%), Jordan (11.8%), and Iraq (4.5%) (UNHCR 2019), respectively.

Turkey

Women's Labor Force Participation: Ozgoren, Ergocmen, and Tansel (2018) found that of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member states, Turkey's female labor force participation rate was the lowest at 34% in 2013. This is still considerably higher than the rate of 13.75% observed in Syria before the conflict. Among women who work, half were non-wage earners¹, and 32.4% of women are working as unpaid family workers in agriculture although the rate is declining over time (Ozgoren, Ergocmen, and Tansel 2018: 1247; TDHS). In 2007, agriculture was 47.3% female, but industrial work was only 14.8% female. The service economy was 37.9% female, but this varies by type of service. While women made up 13.7% of social services, they constituted only 5% of business services.

Highly educated women are much more likely to work in Turkey with labor force participation rates of 69.8% for university graduates, 31.4% for high school graduates, 21.8% for women with less than a high school diploma, and 16.2% for illiterate women (Bicerli and Gundogan 2009). In 2006, close to half of Turkish workers were working informally, with a higher rate for women at 66%, either in agriculture or the service sector where small firms predominate that are more likely to cut costs by hiring unregistered workers (Bicerli and Gundogan 2009).

Challenges Facing Working Turkish Women: Childcare facilities are sparse in Turkey, a problem for Turkish families and refugee families alike. Formal centers for children that exist are highly regulated and tend to be quite expensive. Only 30.9% of children aged three to five are in pre-primary education, compared to the OECD average of 82% in 2012 (OECD 2016). However, pre-primary school enrollments in Turkey have been rising steadily in the years between 1990 and 2012, rising from 7 to 31% (UNESCO 2015: 388). More than half of the 1,500 facilities that do exist are

in Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir, so parents in other areas may face considerably more childcare-related challenges (Bicerli and Gundogan 2009). In addition to childcare as a perennial problem for mothers who wish to work (Ozturk, Serin, and Altinoz 2019), there are only 238 facilities for the aged in Turkey resulting in daughters and daughters-in-law providing most of the care for elderly relatives (Bicerli and Gundogan 2009).

Additional challenges stem from wage gaps that women experience in Turkey. A study by Bicerli and Gundogan (2009) suggests that the wage gap for Turkish women in urban areas averaged around 22%. More recently, extrapolating from Erol et al. (2017) in Tören (2018), we estimate that the average wages for women in the textile sector were 20 to 25% lower than those earned by their male coworkers. Bugra and Yakut-Cakar (2010: 533) raise questions about various changes in Turkish legislation focused on female employment. In particular, they flag efforts to “integrate women doing piecework at home into the labour market as self-employed workers” as benefiting employers while doing little to challenge traditional norms. Given the low pay generated by many home-based employment options for women, they conclude “there is good reason to doubt the emancipatory potential of these policies.”

Syrian women's access to labor markets: Syrian women are much less likely to work in Turkey than Syrian men; overall, the rate of Syrian women's employment in Turkey is 13% with only 7% of women between the ages of 30 and 44 employed (Del Carpio, Seker, and Yener 2018; Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz 2019). Del Carpio, Seker, and Yener (2018) report that, in general, Syrian refugees are less educated than Turkish host community members. However, studies like Ceritoglu et al. (2017) find that northern Syrians may have similar education levels to Turkish people living in the southeastern provinces, indicating a need to look at such statistics regionally rather than rely on general trends. The educational profile of Syrian refugees and Turkish people from southeastern Turkey is similarly low; eighty percent did not finish high school, and among these, around half did not finish middle school (Ceritoglu et al. 2017). In Sanliurfa specifically, a city in southeastern Turkey where refugees make up a quarter of the population, education rates were somewhat higher. The availability of agricultural work in the Southeast helps women's employment there (with almost one-third engaged in agriculture). Another 11% of Syrian women in Sanliurfa work in the service sector (Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz 2019). However, 74% of female workers surveyed in Sanliurfa report working illegally (Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz 2019).

Like Tören (2018), Knappert, Kornau and Figengul (2017) found that Syrian women were being paid less than both Turkish men and women and less than male Syrian refugees. They also faced other challenges in the work environment related to their precarious status such as sexual harassment and difficulty obtaining payment after completing work. Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz (2019) also report that Syrian refugees list a lack of male family members' support and being confined to the home as impediments to work.

A recent UN Women report (2017) focusing on Turkey states that Syrian women struggle with learning Turkish, finding suitable housing, and accessing work. Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz (2019) found that 70% of female Syrian refugees in their sample in Sanliurfa did not speak Turkish. Although I/NGOS indicate that training programs are widely available, the ten refugees (five female and five male) interviewed in Hatay, Turkey by Knappert, Kornau and Figengul (2017) report a dearth of programs. While this disconnect requires further engagement, it is important to note that even when programs are available, for those already working, there is little time left after a full work day to fit in language or job skills training as indicated by Knappert, Kornau and Figengul (2017).

Lebanon

Women's labor force participation: The ILO's latest labor force estimate for 2019 (nd) for Lebanon indicated a rate of participation for women of 22.9%. A RAND study (Kumar et al. 2018) reports that labor market indicators are not regularly reported, although a set of labor force summary statistics from 2009 are publicly available online from the Lebanese Central Administration for Statistics. Those data indicate that women's overall rate of participation was 21.8% in 2009. As in much of the region, highly educated women have higher rates of participation – illiterate women have a rate of participation of 7.6%, while those with a secondary level of education had more than double that rate (19.3%) and university educated women had a rate of 47%. According to the same data, there is geographical variation in women's labor force participation. Beirut has the highest rate of participation (31%), while in the Bekaa Valley, the rate was much lower (16%). Women have higher unemployment rates than men until middle age. Most unemployment is concentrated among youth with the categories 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 having rates of 19.8% and 15.6% respectively, with women having higher rates than men. Unfortunately, the 2009 data predate the Syria crisis, but do provide a snapshot of what the labor market in Lebanon looked like before the war.

In terms of sectors, women were completely absent from construction (which is noteworthy because although their numbers were small in this industry elsewhere in the region, they were not zero). Women also had very low rates of representation in the transportation, post, and telecommunication sector. Interestingly many women are in the 'trade' sector, suggesting that while they work in these industries, their occupational positions are probably clerical or professional. But by far the biggest industry employing women is service. Women in Lebanon are much less likely to be

self-employed than men (rate of 13.7% versus 35.8%).

Challenges Facing Working Lebanese Women: A number of studies have looked at ways to encourage women entrepreneurs in Lebanon as well as to create more opportunities for women in agriculture (ILO 2018). A UNIDO study (2019) surveyed female entrepreneurs in Lebanon and Jordan (as well as in Egypt, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia) (see main report for some caveats concerning comparability of data within the report). The report indicates that Lebanon had a higher rate of women ownership, at least part owners, than other countries in the region at 43.5% compared to the regional average of 22.7%. However, the 2019 World Bank Enterprise survey data for Lebanon suggest a considerably lower rate of 10%². Given that the UNIDO study reports that exclusively female-run enterprises in Lebanon are considerably lower at 4.4%, it appears that exclusively female owned businesses are not that common. Another finding was that some women (17%) reported that they struggle with income generation from their businesses, which led them to supplement their income from other sources. Additional constraints mentioned by surveyed women included discrimination as entrepreneurs and lack of adequate financing.

Hammoud (2014) examines the Lebanese legal system and identifies ways in which existing laws reinforce or challenge gender inequality in the workforce. Sugita (2010: 36) raises particular concerns about "the lack of a holistic social policy approach in Lebanon concerning social care and the promotion of women's labor market participation."

Less has been written about childcare availability in Lebanon, though a 2015 UNESCO report (p. 388) does indicate that pre-primary education enrollment is almost universal in Lebanon, considerably higher than in Turkey or Jordan—an indication that certain institutional structures are in place to facilitate the participation of women with young children in the labor force. While in Lebanon, migrant women have been employed in some middle and upper-middle-class households to provide house and childcare, the option to employ a migrant worker may not be available to all households to alleviate care burdens given the financial costs. Conversely, Sugita's study notes the care sector as an opportunity for some Palestinian and Lebanese women in contexts where a live-in worker is not wanted, in spite of the social stigma attributed to domestic work.

Though Palestinian refugees have long had ambiguous status in Lebanon, many have been incorporated into camp service provision and informal labor markets. However, a 2005 study by FAFO suggested that Palestinian women in Lebanon had a labor force participation rate of between 16.4 and 18.1% (in camps and elsewhere, respectively), a lower rate than was found among Lebanese women. This study also reported data on Palestinian women in Syria who had a rate of participation between 20.8 and 24.1%, which was higher than the rate FAFO estimated for non-refugees of 21.7%. These specifics are worth noting given that a subset of the refugees fleeing Syria to Lebanon are Palestinians.

Syrian's women's access to labor markets: Noteworthy in the context of Syrian women's experiences in Lebanon is the history

of general migration to Lebanon and of labor integration between Syria and Lebanon. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Syrian women who migrated historically have been engaged in cleaning and childcare sectors.

A RAND survey (Kumar et al. 2018) provides insights into current employment patterns. Their data suggest that among Syrian households in Lebanon, males were three times more likely to be working or to express a willingness to work than females. At the same time, the survey found that for Lebanon as a whole, 30% of female refugees were in the labor market, with high rates in the Mount Lebanon and Beirut areas in particular, whereas in the north and south of Lebanon, particularly in the Bekaa Valley, the rates were lower.

Firm-level data collected by RAND (Kumar et al. 2018) indicates that there is a high-level of occupational segregation in Lebanon which has been shown to have negative implications on women's wages. A recent ILO study supports this conclusion that women face occupational segregation—finding that Syrian women are concentrated in agriculture and services whereas men are much more likely to be working in construction – noting the wage gap between men and women in this context.

Jordan

Women's labor force participation: The World Bank reports that the female labor force participation rate for Jordan was 14.1% in 2018. An earlier study by Spierings et al. (2010) indicates that in the early 2000s, women's labor force participation rates in Jordan were fairly comparable to Syria. However, while educated women's labor force participation rate was considerably higher than for women with less education in the early 2000s, the rate of participation among educated women was below 30% and considerably lower than the participation rate in Syria among for educated Syrian women at that time.

Challenges Facing Working Jordanian Women: Given low enrollment of children in pre-primary education in Jordan, Jordanian women, as well as Syrian women in Jordan, report that childcare is a key obstacle to working (UNESCO 2015: 388). A joint UN Women/REACH study (2017:14) surveyed 609 Syrian and Jordanian women, and the primary reason listed for not working by the respondents was childcare (28%) with housework as the second most frequent answer.

A study by the ILO that appeared in Al Raida (2011/2012) sheds light on the gender wage gap in the country, finding that wage differences vary considerably depending on the sector (public or private) and by level of skill. Women facing the highest wage gap are professional women in the private sector (41% gap) and those facing the lowest are unskilled workers in the public sector whose wages are slightly higher than male equivalents (by 2%). Among professionals in the public sector, the wage gap is 28%. This study also points out that the majority of working women are concentrated in education, health and social work, and manufacturing. ILO (2013) carried out a more recent study just focusing on the wage gap within private sector education in Jordan and found that while women make up three quarters of the employees in that sector, they suffer a gender pay gap of 41.6%.

The UNIDO study (2019) indicates that Jordan has particularly low rates of female entrepreneurship for the region. While the regional rate is 22.7%, in Jordan only 15.7% of enterprises are at least partly owned by a woman. Strictly woman-run business rates were even lower at 2.4%. The survey also indicates that Jordanian women entrepreneurs struggle considerably with income generation, and as a result, 49.3% women entrepreneurs surveyed for the study have to supplement their income from other sources. Jordanian women identified a lack of financing as well as expensive public services (a term that is not explained) as some of the most major issues. Lack of networks and information were also identified as barriers.

Syrian women's access to labor markets: According to a recent study by WANA, Syrian refugee women's labor force participation rate (defined as working full time, part time, or looking for work) is 30% (Lockhart, Barker and Alhajahmad 2018). 19 % of women surveyed indicated that they worked before leaving, primarily in agriculture (42%) and education (23%). The WANA findings suggest a somewhat higher rate than the official national average for Syria before the war.

A study by Errighi and Griesse (2016) find high rates of unemployment among Syrian refugee women in Jordan. The WANA study compared its findings to a jointly produced UN Women/REACH study (2017), which reported considerably lower employment rates (6%) among Syrian women living in Jordan in 2016. The Errighi and Griesse (2016) study, using ILO data, found that the rate of participation among Syrian women was only 5.9%. Krafft and Sieverding (2018) report a labor force participation rate for Syrian women in Jordan that is even lower (5%), but they use 2015 Census data³ to obtain that number.

The WANA study also provides insights into the particular sectors where Syrian women are working in Jordan. The study indicates that 32% of working Syrian women in Jordan participated in the food and beverage sector, 23% were in services, and 16% were in agriculture and livestock (p. 2). Manufacturing and the non-profit sector each made up 7% as well, with construction, wholesale, and retail representing 4% each (Lockhart, Barker and Alhajahmad 2018). In contrast, the RAND study (Kumar et al. 2018) indicated that textiles and chemicals were the two most common industries in which Syrian women in Jordan were working.

One obstacle limiting Syrian women's access to labor markets stems from the restrictions on the sectors where Syrian refugees can work. According to the WANA report, only 2% of the Syrian women surveyed as part of the WANA report were working in education, which is striking given high rates of women's participation in the education sector in Jordan (Lockhart, Barker and Alhajahmad 2018). While in a number of ways the occupations where women were able to find employment look similar to other parts of the Arab world (and globally), the low participation in education is noteworthy and is linked to restrictions placed on Syrians' employment, which are limited to agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and domestic labor.

The WANA study, also provides data on "factors deterring employment," which included 1. being a housewife, 2. having a

medical condition, and 3. feeling there are “no jobs for Syrian refugees” as the top three answers (Lockhart, Barker and Alhajahmad 2018: 4). Importantly, only 3 % of women said that tradition was a factor, although 10% did say their husband would not allow them to work (Lockhart, Barker and Alhajahmad 2018). Of course, given that ‘being a housewife’ was in the top three, it is difficult to disentangle the roles unpaid work versus internalized gender norms are playing in shaping women’s views of barriers.

Lenner and Turner (2019: 81) also discuss the unsuccessful efforts to recruit Syrian women to work in the export processing zones with reasons of the lack of child care, long commutes, and the fear of “mingling with unknown men,” as well as the low pay and difficult working conditions given for why these jobs were undesirable.

Iraq/KRI

Women’s labor force participation: In Iraq, women’s labor force participation is approximately 12.4% according to the latest ILO figures (2018). A comprehensive UNDP study from 2004 indicates similar rates of employment (13%), suggesting that very little change has occurred in recent years. This report also estimates that 11% of households are female-headed. In terms of labor force participation, women’s rates vary from 18% in rural areas to 12% in urban ones. The participation rate peaks between the ages of 33 and 44 with labor force participation at 20%. Young women, in particular, have high rates of unemployment. Education is a strong determinant of employment among women, as it is in other parts of the region. Women with more than a secondary level of education have employment rates that are above 50%. About a third of women are employed in agriculture with a slightly smaller percent (30%) employed in education. Public administration and defense is the third largest sector of employment for women at 16%, followed by manufacturing (7%) and health and social work (4%).

One of the most significant trends in Iraq is the different patterns and levels of women’s employment within the KRI compared to regional averages. A recent UNDP study (2014) found that women in the Kurdistan region had an employment rate 17%, higher than the regional average of 14.7%, with participation in Sulaymaniyah even higher still (19.8%). Duhok, on the other hand, had a rate that was lower at 11.6%. Noteworthy also were the higher (than the regional average) rates of female unemployment in Kurdistan (27.8% versus 20.7% regionally). Again, the rate in Sulaymaniyah was even higher at 37.5%. Similarly, a 2018 UNFPA, IOM, and KRSO survey indicates that about 19% of women are working in the KRI. This study reiterated a trend seen elsewhere—that women with at least a secondary degree are particularly likely to work (34%) as compared to those with less education (5%). According to the same survey, about half of those living in KRI who are employed are in the public sector. For women, this concentration in the public sector is even more pronounced with between 73% and 79% of women working in the public sector. Other women are working mostly as unpaid family workers or are self-employed (in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah specifically). Educated women, in particular, are almost exclusively working in the public sector (92%). Women with no formal education, on the other hand, are mostly unpaid family workers (41.5%), in the public sector (24.5%), or are self-employed (21.8%).

Challenges Facing Working Iraqi Women: Most women who are not working identify their domestic responsibilities as the primary reason for not doing so (UNDP: 2004). The UNFPA, IOM, and KRSO survey (2018) identifies ‘having lost hope in finding a job’ as a factor for not working. Overall, young men have the highest discouraged worker rates, but it is noteworthy that quite a few women were also in that category, particularly among those who had completed secondary school (UNFPA/IOM/KRSO 2018: 42).

Syrian women’s access to labor markets: Much of the existing research does not distinguish between Syrian refugees among its findings. However, one recent report titled *Far From Home*, published by the Durable Solutions Platform in 2019, suggests that whereas among KRI residents generally, 19% of women reported working, only 2% of refugee women reported working. Given that two-thirds of refugees in KRI have a residency permit that allows employment, this suggests that other factors may affect Syrian women’s labor force participation. One interviewee suggested that the rate of female headship among IDPs is considerably higher than the rate of female headship among Syrian refugees and that this was one factor contributing to low participation rates among Syrian refugee women.

Endnotes

- 1 Low-end estimates are from UNHCR (2019) and focus on registered refugees; high-end estimates are government statistics.
- 2 Various resources related to the UN's Gender SWAP are available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability/key-tools-and-resources>
- 3 See <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/other/content/iasc-gender-age-marker-gam-2018> for more on the IASC GAM.
- 4 The data provided in Kumar et al. (2018) used somewhat different terms for LFP rate and unemployment, referred to as 'working or willing to work' and 'not working but willing to work', since so their measurement does not thoroughly fully meet the standard ILO definitions. For a more detailed explanation of the measurement criteria, refer to the in the footnotes in Kumar et al. (2018) on pp. 34-35 (Turkey), p. 73 (Jordan), and p. 111 (Lebanon).
- 5 RAND's measures include individuals aged 18, as opposed to the ILO standard definition of 15 and above and do not strictly impose the "looking for work" criterion that is included in the standard definition of unemployment.
- 6 There are some comparability issues with the UNIDO survey, because the partners through which respondents were recruited differed (e.g. the partner in Lebanon appears to be supporting less elite/less educated women compared to the Jordanian organization), but nonetheless the data provide some important insights.
- 7 The focus is on childcare, since among working age women this represented the biggest challenge, but a more general focus on dependent care (e.g. the needs of older/disabled household members) is also important to note.
- 8 It is worth noting that while the JMD report focused on permits as the main legal barrier in terms of Syrian employment, assessing the impact of labor legislation on women is more complicated. It is beyond the scope of this report to discuss the range of legal barriers that have been identified as potentially gender biased, which according to the World Bank (2019) number at least thirty-five. One example is that restrictions on women working at night are in place in Iraq, Jordan, and Turkey, but not in Lebanon.