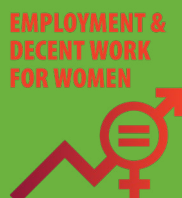


Regional Learning Document

UN Women and ILO Joint Programme “Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine” (2018 - 2023)



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We would like to thank the Joint Programme national partners including representatives of government, CSOs, private sector and trade unions.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABJ	Association of Banks in Jordan
ASE	Amman Stock Exchange
CBE	Central Bank of Egypt
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EGX	Egyptian Stock Exchange
EPIC	Equal Pay International Coalition
FEI	Federation of Egyptian Industries
FRA	Financial Regulatory Authority
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
ICD	Institutional capacity development
IFC	International Financial Corporation
JNCW	Jordanian National Commission for Women
JP	Joint Programme
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MGF	Mashreq Gender Facility
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MoNE	Ministry of National Economy
MoSS	Ministry of Social Solidarity
MoWa	Ministry of Women Affairs
MoY	Ministry of Youth
MPA	Ministry of Parliamentarian Affairs
MTE	Mid Term Evaluation
NCW	National Council for Women
PES	Public Employment Services
PGFTU	Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions
PMA	Palestinian Monetary Authority
PMF	Performance Monitoring Framework
ROAS	Regional Office for Arab States
SSC	Social Security Corporation
SSIF	Social Security Investment Fund
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
TVSDC	Technical and Vocational Skills Development Committee

UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCWA	UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia
WB	World Bank
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WEPs	Women's Empowerment Principles

I. Executive Summary

The identification and documentation of good practices play a crucial role in knowledge sharing, learning, and improving interventions and policies related to decent work and productive employment for women in the Arab States region. In recognition of this, the purpose of the Regional Learning Document is to capture the good practices, learnings and scalable approaches implemented by UN-Women and the ILO Joint Programme (JP) Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine during 2019 – 2023. This Regional Learning Document employs a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis, incorporating document analysis and semi-structured interviews with the JP personnel, national partners and programme participants/beneficiaries as primary methods. The definition of a good practice for the JP was proposed. A list of criteria was drafted and used for data collection and analysis.

The Joint Programme (JP) aimed at reducing barriers to women's entry and retention in decent work has made significant progress in the Arab States region. The JP's strategic design focuses on achieving medium to long-term sustainable impacts by fostering systemic and structural changes that create a favourable environment for women's productive and dignified work. These interventions operate at multiple levels, including legislative reform, shifts in business practices, and changing societal perceptions about women's roles in families and economies. These strategic interventions are expected to lead to job creation and an increased female labour force participation over time.

The JP's regional approach made it possible to capitalise on the region's potential for influential policy dialogue, targeted advocacy, and heightened visibility to drive gender equality goals. Several initiatives were undertaken at the regional level on topics critical to ensure

women's equality in the labour market. A number of these initiatives were then taken forward at the country level, who building on the evidence, enhanced knowledge and tools, became better positioned to support and collaborate with their national partners. This report highlights four critical themes shared across the three countries: the significance of investing in both paid and unpaid care, engaging the private sector in promoting gender equality, eliminating workplace violence and harassment, and promoting pay equity.

At the national level, Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine have made commendable strides toward gender equality through the policy reform of labour markets and other related economic policies. These efforts have been implemented in partnership with various stakeholders, including regional, national, and international entities that share the same values and principles regarding women's economic empowerment. The JP showcases the potential for transformative change when gender equality is prioritized in policy frameworks and when diverse stakeholders are engaged in empowering women economically.

The JP has implemented 36 country-level initiatives across three main outcomes, with 12 good practices identified. These practices encompass a wide range of themes and sectors, including the care economy, gender-responsive budgeting, violence at the workplace, women in leadership positions, and more. The good practices identified in consultation with national and regional partners are:

Adopting gender responsive policies:

1. Guaranteeing women's rights to work in all industries, professions and shifts through policy reform in Egypt

2. Availability of quality and affordable care fundamental to women's labour force participation – policy reform in Jordan
3. Institutionalizing gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting in Jordan
4. Gender responsive stimulus packages (in support to micro and small enterprises) in Palestine

Engaging Private Sector for gender equality:

5. Women in C-suites drive diversity in Egypt
6. Corporate policy reform in favour of gender equality and women's empowerment in Egypt
7. Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) national network in Jordan
8. Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in depth in Palestine
9. Private sector adopts code of conduct on violence at work in Palestine
10. Improving working conditions for women in the education sector in Palestine

Challenging social norms on women at work:

11. Challenging discriminatory norms over women and occupations in Egypt
12. Women in sports – a traditionally male-dominated sector in Jordan

Several common success factors have been identified among the 12 selected practices, indicating patterns and elements that contribute to their effectiveness and positive outcomes. These include: alignment with national strategies, evidence-based approaches, multi-stakeholder collaboration, institutionalizing gender mainstreaming, and increased

engagement with the private sector. However, the programme has also encountered consistent challenges. In addition to deeply entrenched discriminatory social norms, the impact of COVID-19, limited fiscal resources, devaluation of currency and inflation, the war in Ukraine and the escalation of the war in Palestine have all been challenges requiring proactive management, flexibility and adaptation to ensure successful outcomes.

To build on the programme's successes and address its challenges, the following strategic recommendations have been proposed for future programme development:

- ✓ Strategically assess and rigorously enforce reformed policies and programmes to measure their impact and enhance their efficiency.
- ✓ Adhere to existing fiscal constraints while skilfully reallocating resources to prioritize and drive gender equality initiatives.
- ✓ Ensure that all government, public employment and income generation programmes have integrated gender-responsive measures and performance indicators.
- ✓ Extend the proven model of specialized, multi-disciplinary committees and gender teams to various government ministries and institutions for a more comprehensive approach.
- ✓ Formally (re) establish national multi-stakeholder platforms that facilitate purposeful dialogue and collaboration to amplify the impact of gender equality efforts.
- ✓ Systematically involve social partners in policy reform within both the public and private sectors, harnessing their collective power for change.
- ✓ Strengthen and broaden partnerships with the private sector to propagate gender-equal business practices, creating a lasting impact.
- ✓ Elevate women's employability and facilitate their entry into the workforce and

entrepreneurship opportunities through strategic initiatives.

- ✓ Establish and institutionalize a framework for systematic collaboration between private sector enterprises, vocational education and training institutions, and public employment services, strategically aligning their efforts to catalyze women's economic empowerment and enhance opportunities.

- ✓ Institutionalize a culture of gender mainstreaming within government ministries and institutions to embed gender considerations into their core functions.

- ✓ Develop strategic approaches to engage families and communities, securing their active support for promoting gender equality and challenging discriminatory social norms.

- ✓ Prioritize the development of the care economy as a central and transformative component of future women's economic empowerment programmes.

- ✓ Champion the creation of safe and secure workplaces as a cornerstone of women's economic empowerment.

- ✓ Capitalize on the region's potential for influential policy dialogue, targeted advocacy, and heightened visibility to drive gender equality goals.

These recommendations aim to build on the program's achievements and address its challenges, ensuring continued progress toward gender equality and women's economic empowerment in the Arab States region.

II. Introduction

The World Bank MENA Economic Update (MEU) of October 2023 projects a considerable downturn in the region's gross domestic product (GDP), anticipating a significant decrease from 6 percent in 2022 to 1.9 percent in 2023. This decline is attributed to a combination of factors, including substantial reductions in oil production, persistent challenges posed by subdued oil prices, stringent global financial conditions, and elevated inflation rates. These dynamics collectively contribute to a notable economic slowdown, underscoring the multifaceted challenges facing the region's economic landscape. The GDP per capita growth across the region is forecasted to decrease from 4.3 percent in 2022 to 0.4 percent in 2023. By the end of 2023, only 8 of 15 MENA economies will have returned to real pre-pandemic GDP per capita levels. (WB, 2023).¹

Over the past three decades, the Arab region has witnessed the substantial expansion of its working-age population through a notable increase of 17 percent. However, the growth in the employment-to-population ratio has been comparatively modest, registering an increase of less than 1 percent². This discrepancy has led to the region experiencing the lowest level of employment creation in comparison to other global regions during the same period. Intriguingly, the majority of employment generation has been concentrated in the informal private sector and the public sector. This nuanced employment landscape underscores the complex challenges facing the region in translating demographic growth into meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities.

The extremely low participation of women, stagnant for decades, is a characteristic of the region's labour market compared to others. There has been a modest rise noted in the rate

of female labour force participation by 2.76% from 2000 to 2020 however this corresponds to an average increase of 3.4 percent in female unemployment during the same period³. According to the ILO, the rate of labour force participation among women in 2022 continued to be the lowest in the world, just below 19 percent, still lower than pre-pandemic levels. Several factors contribute to the persistent low employment and participation rates among women. These include: inadequate creation of quality employment opportunities, a deficit in quality and affordable childcare services, legislative discrimination, infrastructure challenges such as unsafe transportation, as well as the influence of persistent cultural norms and values.

Economic activity is projected to pick up in 2024 and 2025⁴. However, these estimates may have been calculated before, therefore not taking into consideration, the recent escalation of the war in Palestine and its expected impact in the region. It is estimated that, within the initial month, approximately 61 percent of jobs have been lost in Palestine, presenting a challenging employment outlook. This is particularly concerning given that the economy relies heavily on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, constituting 98 percent of businesses, which often lack the necessary resources to withstand operational disruptions caused by such shocks⁵. The outcome of the war is unclear at this time, and the extent to which it will impact the socio-economic and political landscape in the region remains uncertain.

2.1. Brief history of the Joint Programme

The Joint Programme (JP) has been actively engaged in the Arab States region since 2019, focusing its support primarily on the governments of Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine. Its work spans across three key areas:

¹ Sharp Deceleration Expected for Middle East and North Africa Economies in 2023 ([worldbank.org](https://www.worldbank.org))

² https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/pubs/pdf/productive-inclusive-path-job-creation-arab-region-english_0.pdf

³ ibid

⁴ Regional Economic Outlook for the Middle East and Central Asia, October 2023 ([imf.org](https://www.imf.org))

⁵ <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-11/2301926E-Policybrief-GazaWAR-ESCWA-UNDP-English-4pm.pdf>

- i. First, it concentrates on the gender-responsive reforms of labour-related legal and policy frameworks. This includes addressing gender disparities and ensuring women's economic empowerment is systematically integrated into such frameworks, particularly in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ii. Second, the JP collaborates with the private sector, along with employers' and workers' associations, to foster gender-responsive practices within the economic sphere. This entails addressing issues like sexual harassment and violence at work, access to childcare services, under-representation of women in leadership positions and social security coverage.
- iii. Last, the JP aims to challenge societal norms related to unpaid care work and enhance women's integration into the formal economy, including in non-traditional occupations. This multifaceted approach recognizes the significance of not only promoting women's access to decent employment but also creating an environment conducive to their active participation in the labour force.

By focusing on these key areas, the JP endeavours to advance gender equality, promote women's empowerment, and pave the way for women to be instrumental in driving economic change in the region.

At the time of the JP formation, the economic growth rate in Arab States was lower than the world average. In 2018, the GDP growth in the

Arab States was 2.0 percent compared to 3.1 percent world average (WB data, 2018). Despite the investment in education over decades, the labour force participation of women was the lowest in the world, estimated at 20.6 per cent (ILO, 2017).

In response, UN Women and ILO in the Arab States region together with national partners in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine designed the 4-year regional joint programme (JP), with focus on promoting productive employment and decent work in particular for women. Key national partners include the Ministries of Labour, Ministries of Women/National Councils for Women (NCWs), Ministries of Finance and Economic Development, workers and employers' representatives, the private sector, civil society organisations promoting women's empowerment, academia and think tanks. The JP is aligned to the national development strategies of the three countries and contributes to the objectives of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals, namely SDG5 and SDG8. The JP is also aligned to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) development strategy for the MENA region. SIDA was actively engaged in the development of the Joint Programme. A decision was ultimately taken to support the implementation of the JP proposal developed around the Theory of Change (Figure1), below. Initially, SIDA's financing provided for 59 percent of the original JP overall budget. The financial gap was closed, however, during the implementation period with two additional financial infusions from SIDA, allocated to strengthen further the JP's response to the new reality created by the COVID-19 pandemic in support of women most in need.

Figure 1: Theory of Change

GOAL	Promote productive employment and decent work for women in Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon through reducing the barriers to women's entry to and retention in decent work
Goal Theory of Change Statement	If (1) Gender-responsive labour laws and related policies are in place and are effective; if (2) A gender responsive private sector that attracts, retains and promotes women in decent work; and if (3) Gender stereotypes of unpaid care and women's work are addressed; then (4) decent work and income generating opportunities for women will be promoted; because (5) the barriers to women's entry to and retention in decent work will be addressed, including unpaid care.

Outcomes	1. Gender responsive labour laws and related policies in place and are effective	2. A gender responsive private sector that attracts, retains and promotes women is supported	3. Gender stereotypes about women's and men's responsibilities concerning unpaid care and household work are challenged
Outputs	<p>1.1 Labour law reforms and related policies are promoted to reflect gender equality and decent work concerns (ILO technically led)</p> <p>1.2. Capacity of civil society to engage in dialogue with governments on mainstreaming gender equality into labour laws and related policies and demand accountability is strengthened (UN Women technically led)</p> <p>1.3. Relevant national authorities have strengthened capacities to translate legislative and policy frameworks into practice through gender sensitive financial planning (UN Women technically led)</p>	<p>2.1 Corporate leadership in favour of promoting women employees is increased (UN Women technically led)</p> <p>2.2. Review and reform of corporate policies in favour of gender equality (equal access, equal pay, flexible working hours, duration of maternity, paternity and parental leave and coverage, provision of childcare solutions...) (ILO technically led)</p> <p>2.3. Employers' and workers' organisations capacity in promoting gender equality and women's right at work in the private sector is strengthened (ILO technically led)</p> <p>2.4. Corporate investment in training and professional development of women employees and gender equality is promoted (UN Women technically led)</p> <p>2.5. Private sector and government invest in child-care facilities and work/life balance provisions in the workplace (ILO technically led)</p> <p>2.6. Private sector adopts code of conducts on violence at work in line with forthcoming international labour standards (ILO technically led)</p>	<p>3.1. Engagement at community, government and corporate level to promote the value of women's work and equal and collective sharing of unpaid care and household work (UN Women technically led)</p> <p>3.2 Engagement at community, government and corporate level to encourage women to enter all different occupations, provided that jobs are decent and eliminate horizontal and vertical occupational segregation (UN Women technically led)</p>

		2.7. Women’s representation and voices are included in social dialogue processes at sectoral and enterprise levels (ILO technically led)	
Key Assumptions	<p>Political will and commitment to international labour standards and to gender budgeting are in place as well as supportive social norms to gender equality in the workplace.</p> <p>Worsening COVID-19 situation and operational limitations do not prevent implementation of activities.</p>	<p>Corporations and social partners are committed to implementation of the Women’s Empowerment Principles and international labour rights; Social norms that favour gender equality & work-life balance in the workplace and take into consideration unpaid care work; practicing social dialogue can facilitate women’s voice and fulfilment of their rights, including fair wages.</p> <p>Worsening COVID-19 situation and operational limitations do not prevent implementation of activities.</p>	<p>Greater dialogue at community, government and corporate levels can address negative social norms and attitudes; changes in attitudes will result in changes in behaviour.</p> <p>Worsening COVID-19 situation and operational limitations do not prevent implementation of activities.</p>
Risks & Barriers	<p>Enforcement of non-discriminatory laws is challenging.</p> <p>Raising adequate resources to finance labour and family friendly policies takes time.</p> <p>Lack of a pool of qualified women.</p> <p>Persistence of patriarchal values in laws, policies and attitudes.</p> <p>Risks of insufficient investment in economic sectors employing women (debt management and sustainability).</p>	<p>‘Unwritten rules and practices’ make it challenging for women to succeed at top management.</p> <p>Childcare and domestic work, especially due to the measures introduced to control the COVID-19 pandemic, limit the time that women have available to join or remain in the labour market and impedes moving up the corporate ladder.</p> <p>Gender equality considered of secondary importance by private due to the economic crisis caused by COVID-19.</p>	<p>Gender stereotypes may be entrenched in some societies and very hard to change.</p> <p>Violence against women during the pandemic increased significantly and has a direct impact on the economic empowerment of women requiring concerted efforts to address.</p>

In January 2019 the implementation of the JP was initiated, as the pandemic started to aggravate the health and economic situation, culminating in the first half of 2020. People and markets worldwide were affected, with developing countries and disadvantaged groups absorbing the greatest hardships. Labour supply and demand were both affected, with fewer people ready or able to work (as well as an inability to commute to work, increased care burdens etc.) and even fewer jobs available (due to decreased operations or closures of businesses). Governments around the world, including in the Arab States region, reacted to the shock of the pandemic by introducing stimulus packages. However, these support packages did not always reach those most affected by the pandemic.

The JP Regional team conducted an analysis using data from the UN Women and UNDPs Global Gender Response Tracker to monitor policy measures enacted by government during this period. One-third of the COVID-19 policy response measures in all 22 Arab States countries aimed in some way at addressing the impact of the pandemic on women and girls. Only one in four social protection and labour market measures were gender responsive. These and other findings confirmed the need for immediate attention to address the socio-economic ramifications of COVID-19, as outlined during a policy dialogue organised for policy makers and representatives of national women's machineries, civil society, academia and international organizations⁶.

The JP regional team also commissioned a follow-up analysis to assess government spending in macroeconomic response policies that promote gender equality. At the time of the study, less than 5 percent of COVID-19 response spending in the Arab region was gender sensitive. Further, the study estimated that women would bear 41 per cent of job losses while constituting no more than 21 percent of the workforce. In conclusion, the report also estimated that women would benefit in only 18 percent of the

20 million jobs created in the region as a result of public spending in response to the pandemic⁷. The study indicated that the targets for the national female labour force participation rates (FLFPRs) will not be met without more and fundamental investments made, through strategic reallocation and reprioritization of existing budgets for recovery spending, in the care economy, specifically early childhood education. Other recommendations include the introduction of gender sensitive procurement policies and the adoption of gender responsive budgeting. Key recommendations made in the study are being implemented with technical support and through comparative tools/methodologies provided by the JP in Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Morocco, coordinated at the regional level.

The findings from this and other nationally conducted studies on the impact of Covid-19 underscored the relevance of JP's Theory of Change. Women, left unprotected by labour market legislation, often in informal, low paying employment, were the first forced into unemployment or out of the labour market entirely (JP Outcome1 legislative review). Many businesses were struggling with the restrictions imposed by governments to contain the pandemic, pushed to downsize their operations, leading to cuts in jobs often held by women. In the Arab States⁸ there are good examples of businesses that introduced measures promoting gender equality amidst COVID-19. However, this was not the case for the majority of the business community. (JP Outcome2: businesses promote gender equality). The closure of kindergartens and schools amplified the burden of unpaid childcare. As a result of traditional views on the role of women and men, it was mostly women who took over the extra burden of unpaid care (JP Outcome3: challenging social norms around unpaid care). It was thus relatively easy for the JP to be flexible and adapt to the impacts of the pandemic. The JP and partners adapted quickly to the Covid-19 modus operandi to make sure the new needs of the women can be addressed.

6 <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/04/announcer-regional-launch-of-the-covid19-global-gender-response-tracker>

7 <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/10/assessing-macroeconomic-response-policies-to-covid-19-in-the-arab-region>

8 <https://www.ifc.org/content/dam/ifc/doc/mgrt/weeps-bridging-the-gap-report-english.pdf>

However, the pandemic's impact is undeniable: the new implementation modalities required new set of technological and digital skills, working in many cases against lower baselines than originally planned, with several strategic interventions put on hold and timelines for implementation, monitoring and assessment of the interventions affected.

The health crisis, transformed into an economic crisis, followed by the devaluation of currency and inflation, tighter fiscal spaces and debt aggravated by the war in Ukraine,⁹ are additional challenges the JP has faced during its implementation. These challenges culminated with the recent escalation of the war in Palestine. Gaza is experiencing intense bombing and military incursions by the Israeli military in response to the October 7 attack by Hamas on Israel. These actions have led to a distressing accumulation of humanitarian crises primarily in Gaza, with tensions escalating in the West Bank. About two-thirds of those who lost their lives due to the Israeli bombardment and military operations are women and children. According to the rapid assessments of the UNDP and the UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (UNESCWA), the gross domestic product (GDP) loss in 2023 in Palestine is estimated to range between 4 and 12 percent, and between 4 and 9 per cent of GDP in 2024, compared with pre-war estimates, depending on the duration of the war.¹⁰ The assessments forecast a sharp rise in poverty rate, from 20 to as high as 45 percent. The ongoing tragic situation in Palestine is having a socio-economic and political impact in the region and the implementation of the JP's final year shall undoubtedly be affected. The JP Regional team is in constant contact with the partners from SIDA discussing the optimal ways forward with the needs of women and girls in mind.

2.2 Objective and methodology

The identification and documentation of good

practices play a crucial role in knowledge sharing, learning, and improving interventions and policies related to decent work and productive employment for women in the Arab States region. In recognition, the purpose of the Regional Learning Document is to capture the good practices, learnings, and scalable approaches implemented by UN-Women and ILO Joint Programme (JP) Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine during 2019 – 2023. The Regional Learning Document is not an evaluation of any kind. However, it will build on and complement the [Mid-term Evaluation \(MTE\) Report](#) covering the JP implementation period 2019 – 2022. Specifically, it follows one of the MTE report's key recommendations "for the JP to consolidate its portfolio of interventions by prioritizing what has worked well in order to inform the future policy and programme interventions of the participating UN agencies, national stakeholders and other relevant actors."

The Regional Learning Document employs a **qualitative approach to data collection and analysis**, incorporating **document analysis and semi-structured interviews** with the JP personnel, national partners and programme participants/beneficiaries as primary methods.

For the **document analysis phase**, the MTE report served as the key resource. The MTE report followed the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Joint evaluation guidelines. The JP was screened against a set of evaluation criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The evaluation report also assessed the extent to which the programme is informed of gender, human rights, and disability inclusion approaches and is contributing towards gender transformative changes to advance and sustain Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. The MTE report refers to some of the JP approaches as good and promising practices with potential to make impactful change.

⁹ https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/news/docs/22-0331-policy-brief-impacts-ukraine-russia-en2_0.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.undp.org/publications/gaza-war-expected-socio-economic-impacts-state-palestine>

A list of **pre-identified good practices** was prepared in line with the highlighted approaches in the MTE report. Other relevant JP material (narrative annual progress reports, success stories, communication material, learning sessions etc) was used for the period December 2022 – December 2023, not covered by the MTE report. In addition, the progress of these pre-identified approaches was checked towards the intended results as per the JPs latest available Performance Management Framework (PMF).

In depth semi-structured interviews were organized with the UN Women and ILO JP focal points and teams at the regional and country level. The main purpose of the first round of the interviews was to prioritize from

the list of pre-identified good practices to be included in the regional learning document. The meeting material was prepared for each organisation/country team (sample attached as Annex A, including a list of guiding questions and elements to consider in the process of prioritization of the models.) The JP focal point were encouraged to think beyond the activity and output level boundaries when prioritizing the good practices to ensure the selected successful models are comprehensive approaches.

Data analysis followed data collection based on draft outlines prepared for each prioritized good practice. The outlines follow the same framework - a list of ten elements around which

i. The issue:	what did the project tackle with this intervention (i.e., access to information, unpaid care, employability, retention, occupational segregation, leadership, pay gap, informality, behavioural changes, gender stereotyping, data and research etc.)?
ii. The Approach:	how did the JP tackle the issue? Is this in line with the JP goal?
iii. The Effectiveness:	did JP achieve the results or is on track? what contributed to achieving these results? What were the challenges?
iv: The Efficiency:	was the approach JP utilized cost effective? Were the available resources used effectively, maximizing the use of available inputs (e.g., time, funding, human resources) to achieve the desired outcomes?
v: The Partnerships:	does the model ask for multi-stakeholder partnerships? Who was involved and what were their respective roles?

vi: Evidence-based:	was the approach utilized based on evidence (research, empirical evidence, knowledge available, lessons learned from previous experience etc)?
vii: Replicability:	can the model be replicated in similar contexts? If yes, kindly highlight any specific considerations.
viii. Scalability:	does the model have potential for scaling up? If yes, kindly highlight any specific considerations.
ix. Innovation:	does the model use creative or innovative elements that distinguish it from conventional or traditional approaches? Does the model make use of technology to address the challenge? does the model use creative or innovative elements that distinguish it from conventional or traditional approaches? Does the model make use of technology to address the challenge?
X. Sustainability:	is the model sustainable (does the approach consider factors such as durability, scalability, institutionalization, and the potential for continuous positive impact beyond the project implementation)?
Specific recommendations:	...to further improve the good practices for transformational sustainable impact

the content is organised, concluding in specific recommendations for each good practice: The draft outlines for the priority models were shared with JP focal points for review and discussion within their country teams. In addition to written feedback, the drafts were thoroughly discussed during the second round of meetings in order to capture the details: the strategies. that led to the success of the models, understanding the

challenges and pinning down the lessons learned. The final list of good practices included in the report has been crafted in close consultation and agreement with the national counterparts. The relevant national stakeholders, partners and programme participants/beneficiaries¹¹ provided feedback on the proposed prioritized good practices, namely in regards to the relevance, feasibility, and scalability of these practices.

¹¹ Please see Annex B for details of semi-structured interviews

Inputs and perspectives were gathered through bilateral interviews or communication facilitated through the JP country focal points. Finally, for the Regional Learning Document, good practices are defined as those JP approaches that are (a) recognized as a good and/or promising practice in the MTE report, (b) have achieved and/or are on track to achieving the intended results as per PMF, (c) are confirmed as the priority good practices by the JP focal points and national stakeholders, (d) address most if not all the elements listed in the model framework, in particular replicability, scalability and sustainability of the approach.

The report ends with conclusions and provides recommendations for future programme development including strategies for replication and up-scaling of the programme's good practices.

Limitations and challenges

COVID19- necessitated the suspension and subsequent resumption of project activities. This disruption makes it challenging to assess the efficiency of each model, particularly regarding timely completion and adherence to the original schedule. In addition, the efficiency of the use of human and financial resources, has also proven to be difficult to assess. The allocation of the budget on a yearly basis, rather than securing it entirely at the project's outset, complicates the assessment of budget adequacy and adherence. It becomes challenging to distinguish between budget variations due to initial project planning and those prompted by unforeseen circumstances like the pandemic, the subsequent economic fallout, and the wars of Ukraine and recently the escalation of the war in Palestine. As such, the good practices are considered to have been efficient considering the JP models are based on previous experience and knowledge and the results are achieved within the project timeline. Cases where the costs are shared with the national counterparts (in cash or in kind), other agency projects to ensure synergy, projects implemented by other national or international organisations to ensure coordination etc. are also considered examples of efficient use of human and financial resources and are

reported under the models.

The original outline for the models included criteria regarding whether the approach promoted environmental protection and adaptation. During the data collection phase, no information was gathered on the environmental impact. The selected models and the JP in general were not designed with the primary objective to promote environmental sustainability nor are they contributing to the environmental degradation. As such, the element was dropped from the good practice framework.

Assessments measuring the impact of the selected good practices are not available. In some cases, such assessments were planned but could not be materialized to date, mainly due to the effects of the pandemic in relation to the delays in implementation or changes introduced to fit emerging needs. In other cases, the data collection for monitoring was conducted but the information was not accessible at the time of writing this report. These changes should be captured at the JP final reporting stage.

While compiling this report, Israeli Armed Forces launched strikes by air, sea and land against Gaza in response to the October 7 attack by Hamas on Israel. The situation has resulted in a significant and continuously increasing loss of human lives and livelihoods. More than one million people—almost half the total population of Gaza—have been displaced, and civilian infrastructure across Gaza has been significantly damaged (UN Women, Oct 2023¹².) Women and children account for two thirds of lives lost (UNDP, ESCWA, Nov 2023¹³.)

The escalation of the war in Palestine had implications in the overall process of developing the report, particularly in relation to data collection. In spite of delays, the JP managed to organise interviews with key stakeholders and partners in Palestine for all four selected models. However, meetings with programme participants that benefited from the JPs employment and entrepreneurship promotion activities were not possible to organise at the time of writing the report. Any adjustments needed to this version of the Regional Learning Report can be reflected at the Project Final Report stage.

12 <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/un-women-rapid-assessment-and-humanitarian-response-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory-en.pdf>

III. Good practices towards decent work for women in Arab States: what worked, where and how?

The latest survey of the National Technical Steering Committees in the three countries highlighted the relevance and effectiveness of the JP. The survey found that 81 per cent of national partners are actively promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment, with 63 per cent crediting the JP for significantly contributing to these efforts. Respondents received valuable support, capacity-building, and learning products from the JP, rating their overall efforts positively. JP's strengths include technical capacity building, building knowledge capacities, effective networking among stakeholders, alignment with national priorities, also sustainability. Challenges identified include complex governmental and UN agency procedures, delays in work implementation, economic and political hurdles, societal norms and stereotypes, and a lack of coordination among UN agencies.¹⁴

UN coordination and operational activities. The strategic relationships with government institutions, civil society organizations, in particular the women's rights movement, as well as the private sector through the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs¹⁵) position UN Women as a critical partner to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The ILO has a unique tripartite structure and the mandate to promote Decent Work for All Women and Men through international labour standards and the promotion of social justice, including gender equality in the world of work. The two agencies bring on board extensive experience at the global level as well as in the Arab States region. Furthermore, the program gained advantages from the regional management and implementation approach, detailed further in section 3.1 below. Section 3.2 provides a comprehensive expansion on the 12 selected good practices in the three countries, concluding this section.

3.1. The Regional Approach

The Joint Programme (JP) applies a regional approach for its implementation, with focus on three countries: Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine. This regional approach offers several advantages at the programmatic and operational level:



Figure 2: How do you rate the Joint Programme's work in supporting gender equality and women's empowerment?



Source: JP reports

UN Women and the ILO bring a distinct comparative advantage to this programme: UN Women leveraging its global leadership for gender equality and women's empowerment, its triple mandate of normative support,

¹³ The JP is conducting an annual survey as part of the annual monitoring process, addressing representatives from the national steering committees in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine. The representatives assess the quality and impact of implementation, as well as the change created by the JP. It also seeks to identify challenges and strengths of the JP from the partners' point of view, in addition to suggestions for future improvements and scale up. The data collection was conducted online, in October – November 2022. The number of responses reached 16 responses (5 Egypt, 5 Jordan, 6 Palestine).

¹⁴ The Women's Empowerment Principles are the product of collaboration between UN Women and the UN Global Compact.

Programmatically, the regional approach acknowledges the diversity within the region while also highlighting common issues related to women's economic empowerment. The regional approach made it possible to capitalize on the region's potential for influential policy dialogue, targeted advocacy, and heightened visibility to drive gender equality goals. Several initiatives were undertaken at the regional level on topics critical to ensure women's equality in the labour market. A number of these initiatives were then taken forward at the country level, who building on the evidence, enhanced knowledge, and tools, were better positioned to support and collaborate with their national partners. This report highlights four critical, shared themes across the three countries: the significance of investing in both paid and unpaid care, engaging the private sector for gender equality, eliminating workplace violence and harassment, and promoting pay equity.

3.1.1. Promoting Care Economy

The role of the care economy in promoting gender equality and its correlation with women's labour force participation is common for the whole region and is underscored further as a critical sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. The JP commissioned a regional analysis of the situation in terms of the demographic and social context of (direct and indirect¹⁶) care provision in the Arab States, the status of key care policies and services related to paid leave, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and elder care. Five policy dialogues were organised on the occasion of launching the report "Progress of Women in the Arab States 2020: The Role of the Care Economy in Promoting Gender Equality." at the regional level and in the four focus countries (the three JP countries and Tunisia). These events fostered dialogue among Top of Form policy makers, academia, women's machineries and CSOs on the 5Rs of the care economy¹⁷. The report's findings were used regionally to challenge the social norms around unpaid care and increase awareness among national

institutions on the benefits of equal gender participation in the labour market.

Fig.1. Regional approach promoting Care Economy



The study and the policy discussions organised around the findings stimulated dialogue on the role of the care economy in national economies and the avenues for investing therein. This includes the rollout of the policy support tool "A guide to public investments in the care economy: Policy support tool for estimating care deficits, investment costs, and economic returns." The policy tool proposes a methodology that would: a) identify public investment needs in the care economy sectors b) estimate investment costs and expenditures for addressing these needs; c) assess various economic returns to such investments in the short-run and long-run. The tool is implemented in Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Morocco. The regional approach applied to the thematic analysis on a subject common to multiple countries in the region was translated into country-level initiatives that were better positioned to call for action based on the data and evidence from the report. For example:

Fig. 2. Expansion to individual countries and selected results

Egypt:	Jordan:	Palestine:
1. Quality (indirect) care services available at working women service centres (MoSS)	1. Research done on macro and micro-economic return on investment in childcare	1. Research done on the provision of childcare services and its impact on women's employment
2. Employer-supported childcare models developed for businesses	2. Legislative reform (paternity leave, subsidized care services – nurseries)	2. Unified contract for private education adopted after intensive social dialogue

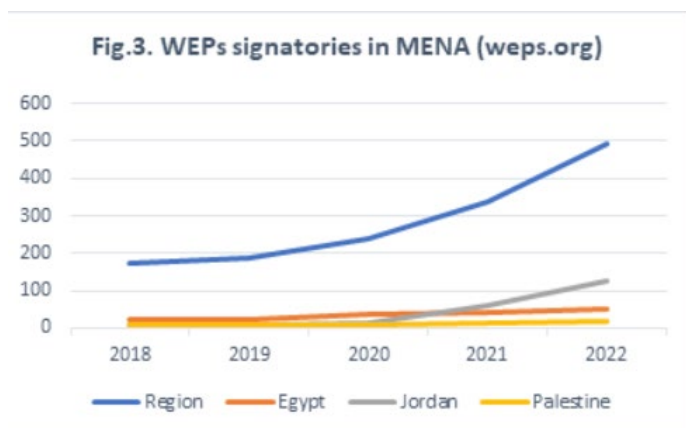
3.1.2. Private Sector engagement to promote gender equality

The JP's regional approach has been instrumental in engaging the private sector to promote gender equality and women's

16 Indirect care work is production activities that support direct care provisioning without necessarily person-to-person contact, such as cleaning, washing, cooking, shopping or managing the house. (Policy support tool, page3)

17 The 5 Rs are: Recognize, Reduce and Redistribute unpaid care work; Reward paid care work by promoting more and decent work for care workers; and guarantee care workers' Representation

empowerment in the Arab States. Cultural norms and gender stereotypes have historically made the private sector less attractive to women as a workplace. However, various factors, including safety, job security, the gender wage gap, discriminatory policies, and disparities in employment benefits, contribute to women's employment challenges in this sector.



To mobilize the private sector for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), the JP employs the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), a global-level initiative that provides clear guidance, practical resources and a collaborative platform for businesses across sectors¹⁸. In the Arab States the number of business leaders joining WEPs has tripled, from 174 in 2018 to 493 in 2022 (JP PMF 2022)¹⁹, surpassing the JP target of a 50 percent increase in four years of JP implementation.

The JP developed a Regional WEPs Strategy for Private Sector Engagement in Women's Economic Empowerment, aimed at standardizing support, enhancing service quality, and expanding the reach of companies promoting equality in the workplace, marketplace, and community. To operationalize this strategy, the JP created the Regional WEPs Roadmap for the Arab States in consultation with country coordinators. The JP Regional team also designed an induction training package including tools (WEPs 101, Gender Gap Analysis Tool, Gender Action Plan) and conducted Training of Trainers for

the country focal points. Additionally, the JP developed a gender-responsive marketing advisory package, a sexual harassment and violence in the world of work toolkit, an employers' toolkit and more, with input from companies in the region. These tools are currently in use in several companies, and WEPs signatories have access to a range of global knowledge products and case studies related to the seven WEPs principles. It is recommended to create a regional database that pulls in country-specific data, tracks support to private companies, records monitoring activities, and enhances services for the private sector.

The JP worked with employers' and workers' organisations to promote gender equality and better working conditions for women. Numerous capacity building training sessions were organised for the trade unions and for the corporates on designing and implementing gender responsive policies and practices at work.

Fig.4. Regional approach engaging private sector to promote GEWE

Regional Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Strategy for private sector engagement to standardize support, enhance service quality, and improve outreach Roadmap to facilitate the implementation of WEPs Strategy
Policy Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy dialogues, i.e. at the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development: (a) on the role of the private sector for WEE (2021) and the role of the media and advertising to promote GEWE (2022)
Resources and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WEPs 101, Gender Gap Analysis Tool, Gender Action Plan; GR marketing advisory packages, Toolkit on sexual harassment at work Access to global platform and network.
Learning and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of trainers for country colleagues organised Employers and workers organisations have the capacities to design and implement policies promoting better working conditions

The initiatives, products and tools developed at the regional level have contributed to the increase in businesses joining the WEPs network to advance the gender equality development agenda in the region overall and the three JP countries in particular. The majority of companies joining the WEPs opted to conduct a gender gap assessment. This was in many cases followed by support to develop a WEPs/ Gender Action Plan. Companies benefited from

¹⁸ <https://www.weps.org/about>

¹⁹ 571 companies, information accesses on 30.12.23 @ <https://www.weps.org/companies>

the training packages available and took various actions in line with the seven WEPs principles. Such actions include investing in professional development of their women employees, adopting policies that promote safety and security of employees, adopting policies that promote family-friendly workplaces, revising recruitment and retention policies to eliminate gender bias etc. In addition, companies became advocates and joined the JP in supporting women to gain the skills and knowledge to access the labour market as employees or entrepreneurs. Such examples are shown under point number 2 in the graph below on country specific selected results:

Fig.5. Expansion to individual countries and selected results

Egypt	Jordan	Palestine
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WEPs signatories 22 (2018) to 56 (2022). 2. Companies offer internship to TVET students 3. HR, Law and Gender Academy for private sector (FEI) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WEPs signatories 7 (2018) to 128 (2022). 2. WEPs National Network. Companies support women entrepreneurs - mentorship 3. Employers and workers organisations promote gender equality 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WEPs signatories 7 (2018) to 18 (2022). 2. Diverse Gender teams. Companies offer women friendly financial and non financial services 3. Employers' and worker's organisations promote gender equality

3.1.3. Against workplace gender-based violence and harassment

For the elimination of violence and harassment in the workplace, the JP Regional team focused on awareness raising and capacity building around the C190 convention. In collaboration with the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC/ILO)²⁰ they organised training for representatives from governments, trade unions, employers' associations and women organizations, from Egypt, Jordan and Palestine.²¹ The candidates received certificates and gained the capacity and knowledge to better advocate against violence and harassment at the workplace.²² Additionally, the JP organised a regional training about C190 and trained members of the Arab States and Civil Societies Organizations and Feminists Network to raise awareness about the convention and its Recommendation No. 206. It also developed the capacities of network member organizations

through campaigning and lobbying with their governments to ratify the C190²³. A number of tools were developed for use by private sector companies.

Fig.6. Regional approach against workplace violence and harassment



At the country level, the work against violence and harassment in the workplace took several streams. The regional level efforts translated into national level interventions, be it for policy change at the central government or change of policies and practices at the level of Regulators and private sector enterprises promoting better working conditions for women. A number of joint products developed at the regional level considered the evidence and knowledge gained from country-level implementation to ensure the resources are representative of and comprehensive for different sectors and country contexts.

Fig.7. Expansion to individual countries and selected results

Egypt	Jordan	Palestine
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National partners have knowledge on the C190 2. Ethical Code introduced to prevent sexual harassment, violence and harassment at workplace (FRA) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Strategy developed 2. The MoL adopted a violence and harassment prevention policy and code of conduct. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PGFTU has capacity to guide companies on C190 2. Agreements concluded with businesses and municipalities on the code of conduct

3.1.4. Equal Pay

At the regional level, the JP organised a **symposium to mark the launching the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) in the Arab**

²⁰ <https://www.itcilo.org/>

²¹ https://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_831817/lang--en/index.htm

²² <https://www.itcilo.org/>

²³ <https://lnkd.in/d2adftNs>

²⁴ <https://www.equalpayinternationalcoalition.org/>

States". EPIC is a unique coalition, led by the ILO, UN Women, and the OECD, with members from governments, employers' and workers' organizations, the private sector, civil society and UN entities.²⁴ The symposium was organized under the patronage of the Prime Minister of Jordan and called upon the countries in the region to follow Jordan's example and join the global initiative. 21 pledges were announced by the participants. Since then, Tunisia and Egypt joined the coalition as members alongside Jordan. This expansion of EPIC membership underscores the growing recognition of collective effort to combat gender-based pay disparities in the Arab States region.

Fig.8. Regional approach promoting Pay Equity



worked together with international entities and national civil society organisations such as Sadaqa in Jordan to promote women's economic empowerment.

The JP Regional team facilitated several policy dialogues highlighting the private sector's significance for gender equality in the region in collaboration with UNDP²⁵, UNICEF, UNGC, UNEP, ESCWA²⁶, etc. The JP regional team also engaged in joint research and analysis. One such example is the partnership of the IFC and UNGC to look at the regional private sector's response and recovery measures for gender equality amid COVID-19. The collaboration culminated in a joint report, '[Bridging the Gap: Emerging Private Sector Response and Recovery Measures for Gender Equality amid COVID-19](#)', documenting how businesses in the Arab States were responding to the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic, practices that remain relevant and valid in the post-pandemic period in making workplaces more flexible and family friendly as a new pre-requisite to attract talent.

COVID-19 ushered in a new reality within which the two agencies have diligently operated to implement the JP. The pandemic called for a shift of focus towards immediate crisis management within countries. The Joint Programme (JP), thanks to its regional implementation approach, served as a crucial platform for countries in the region to identify common entry points and share valuable knowledge and best practices.

Fig.9. Expansion to individual countries and selected results

EGYPT	JORDAN (member of EPIC)	PALESTINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joined EPIC Equal Pay Gap Study and promoted implementation of the pertinent legislation Trade unions trained to promote equal pay Private sector revise equal pay policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributed to the amendment of the equal pay article in the labour law Supported Secretary General's participation at the EPIC Steering Committee Meeting Contributed to the introduction of digital wages for fairer remuneration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pledged for equal pay at the EPIC symposium Supported establishing of National Committee on Pay Equity Equal pay is among the provisions proposed to amend as part of the labour law reform Trade unions trained to promote equal pay

3.1.5. Partnerships, Coordination and Knowledge Exchange

Promoting global gender equality is a shared endeavour that requires the collective efforts of multiple stakeholders. Understanding the significance of cultivating partnerships and applying a collaborative approach for expediting advancements in gender equality and the empowerment of women, the JP

For instance, Egypt's JP team benefited from Jordan's experience in childcare and the advancements made in the maternity insurance fund. This exchange of knowledge was reflected in policy recommendations and a concept paper developed on care and parental policies in Egypt. A study on childcare facilities in Egypt and proposed models for private sector childcare facilities also served as examples for a similar initiative undertaken in Palestine a year later.

25 https://afsd-2021.unescwa.org/sdgs/pdf/special-sessions/ss6_Flyer_En_AFS-2021_19-03-2021.pdf

26 https://afsd-2022.unescwa.org/sdgs/pdf/special-sessions/Flyers/English/AFSD-2022_SS12_Flyer_EN.pdf, <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2022/03/arab-forum-for-sustainable-development-discusses-the-role-of-the-media-to-promote-womens-economic-empowerment>

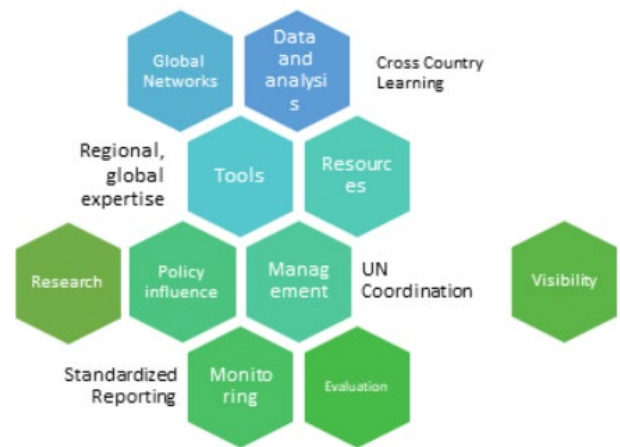
Jordan's experience with labour law reform and engagement with civil society provided valuable lessons for other countries. In Palestine, the JP worked towards establishing a coalition representing workers, employers, and women's civil society organizations, unifying their voices to influence labour law reform. Palestinian representatives sought to learn from Jordan about supporting private education kindergartens and schools to form coalitions and committees, leading to legislative and regulatory reforms, such as benefiting from government subsidy programmes.

Egypt's "Women on Board Observatory" served as an exemplary model, especially regarding their success in reforming national legislation to support women's representation on boards. This was highlighted during a virtual Learning event held in June 2023 on the Women on Boards initiative, where Jordan counterparts showed keen interest in Egypt's experiences.

Regarding private sector engagement, country teams learned from one another and from experiences both within the region and globally. Jordan's extensive outreach and expansion of the WEPs National Network served as an example. Palestine shared its experience with in-depth case studies for replication, while Egypt shared its experience using the WEPs platform to partner with national institutions in the Gender Accelerator initiative and promote gender-lens investing through the WEPs network.

Collaboration extended to all teams working on Convention 190 (C190), including cooperation with the International Training Centre to conduct training workshops on C190 for national constituents and conducting legal gap analyses. Additionally, all teams collaborated on the implementation of policy support tools related to the care economy and the assessment of fiscal policies from a gender perspective.

Fig.10. Advantages of the Regional Approach



Operationally, the JP benefited from a regional approach on several aspects. The management and coordination function for the overall programme in the three countries was performed by the JP Regional team for increased effectiveness and efficiency. This implies standardization of processes, improved coordination and streamlined logistics, leveraging procurement processes for common services among other. The regional approach also includes standardized monitoring and reporting mechanisms. This simplifies data collection, analysis, and reporting, making it easier to track project progress and outcomes. Donor liaising was also the responsibility of the JP Regional team. Streamlining the reporting requirements using a common framework for multiple countries simplified the reporting process for the JP and the donor. The JP team also benefited from the regional level knowledge management system in place.

3.2. Selected good practices at the county-level

3.2.1. Outcome 1. Gender responsive labour laws and related policies in place and are effective

1. Good Practice Model 1: Guaranteeing women’s rights to work in all industries, professions and shifts through policy reform in Egypt.

#1	Guaranteeing women’s rights to work in all industries, professions and shifts through policy reform in Egypt
The issue	The labour force participation for women in Egypt continues to be lower than pre-pandemic rates, standing at only 15.1 percent compared to 68.3 percent for men (CAPMAS, 2022). The unemployment rate of women is four times higher than that of men. The lack of enactment and enforcement of non-discriminative legislation is one of the major structural impediments for women to access and remain in the labour market. For example, until 2021, according to the labour law in force, women in Egypt were limited in terms of job opportunities – both in terms of professions as well as working hours. Reviewing labour laws and related policies from a gender perspective is an important entry point for promoting equal economic opportunities for women.
The Approach	<p>National policy makers and social partners from relevant institutions such as Ministry of Labour (MoL), National Council for Women (NCW), trade unions enhanced their capacities and knowledge on: how to promote labour laws and policies which reflect gender equality; how to support legislative amendments benefiting women in the workplace; key gender mainstreaming topics and skills to advance gender equality at workplace from the trade unions perspective; how to conduct gender sensitive labour inspection in compliance with the laws in force etc.</p> <p>Resources (research, knowledge products, tools) were developed to guide the policy makers in their day-to- day work when applying the knowledge gained through the capacity strengthening efforts of the JP. Such tools include the manual and checklist on gender sensitive labour inspection, the monitoring and evaluation tool to ensure legal compliance. In addition, the JP developed various training materials and compilations of best practices on the application of gender responsive programme-based budgets and M&E gender sensitive indicators.</p> <p>The JP established a technical-level platform on decent work for women, a first of its kind in Egypt, with the potential to become an instrumental and resourceful body for policy advocacy and reform for the benefit of gender equality. The meetings at a national level took place regularly twice a year between government, the private sector and civil society. The technical platform had an open communication channel with decision makers at the policy level. This proved to be important in policy reform initiatives to ensure decision makers are aware and take full consideration of the situation in the field related to their clients:</p>

	<p>the businesses and the women and men workers. For example, a private sector company expressed an interest to employ more women in their factories. However, the legislation in force had restrictions in terms of occupations and working shifts for women. The request from the private sector and their concerns for the legislation were communicated to the Minister. The JP facilitated a number of bilateral meetings between MoL and NCW focusing on women’s economic empowerment and women’s rights at work. During these meetings the NCW highlighted the importance of revising legislation that promotes women working in all professions and shifts. The revision of the relevant decrees would be in line with the requirements of the national strategy for women’s empowerment 2030.</p> <p>The MoL Gender Unit with the technical skills gained and resources accessed through the JP support, conducted the legal review and proposed amendments to issue the two decrees, respectively, decree no. 43 and 44 of 2021 that entail lifting restrictions on women’s ability to work at night and restrictions on working in specific industries/profession while assuring provision of protection and safety measures to women.</p> <p>Advocacy efforts that have contributed to awareness raising, shaping public opinion, mobilizing support and influencing policy legislation have taken place during the JP implementation period. Such advocacy activities, relevant to gender and professions are on the gender gaps in employment and representation of women on boards, the private sector role in promoting a decent workplace through the application of the WEPs, advocating for women’s access to jobs in traditionally male-dominated sectors including TVET and women in STEM, etc.</p> <p>To ensure stronger lobbying for gender equal legislation, the JP supported women leaders to enhance their knowledge and capacities on labour related matters. The training package included a number of topics such as gender pay gap, childcare, equal access to jobs, violence and harassment against women, just transition (gender and climate change etc. Policy analysis and social dialogue training for women in trade unions, were delivered in collaboration with the AUC Public policy Hub. Five policy papers were developed pertaining to these topics.</p>
<p>Effectiveness and Efficiency</p>	<p>In terms of the PMF targets related to the legislative reform, the JP is either on track (i.e. 2 out of targeted 3 new provisions to the labour law that promote gender equality and non-discrimination in the workplace introduced/ recommended) or JP has achieved the target (Checklist on conducting gender-sensitive labour inspection is adopted by the national authority).</p> <p>Political will, the government’s commitment to women’s empowerment and prompt action taken in response to a well-argued request from the field, in addition to the interventions of the JP, were crucial in achieving critical legislative reform with the potential to positively contribute to an increased women’s increased participation in the labour force:</p>

	<p>Egypt's Minister of Labour issued decrees no. 43 and 44 of 2021 to lift restrictions on women's ability to work at night and restrictions on working in specific industries/profession while assuring the provision of protection and safety measures to women.</p> <p>The JP workplan, aligned with national strategic gender equality objectives, established a functional Gender Unit at central and local levels, resulting in an internal Ministry of Labour National Gender Action Plan. This plan, although non-legally binding, served as a commitment for both government institutions and the JP to fulfil promises of workplace equality for women – another element that contributed to the results of this good practice.</p> <p>Due to the pandemic, the JP faced challenges in maintaining the multi-stakeholder platform for women's empowerment and decent work. The policy reform process proved complex and time-consuming, with occasional coordination efficiency challenges. While a multi-stakeholder approach is crucial, ensuring ownership and sustainability through dialogue and consensus justifies the associated costs. Allocating adequate resources for effective implementation and monitoring of gender equality laws and policies remains a challenge.</p> <p>The JP is built on the interventions of other ILO and UN Women programmes suggesting efficient use of resources.</p>
Key partners	<p>Engaging the social partners meaningfully and providing a platform for discussion at the technical level with a channel of direct communication with the decision makers has been instrumental to this approach. Partners include the National Council for Women (NCW), Ministry of Labour (MOL), the private sector, civil society, employer's organisations and trade unions.</p>
Evidence-based	<p>The JP supported a number of assessments and studies contributing to legislative reform for the benefit of women's economic empowerment in Egypt. For example, the legal review of the labour law, the resources developed for national partners based on international evidence and good practices on how to promote gender responsive labour market related legislation, etc.</p>
partners	<p>The comprehensive approach to policy reform the JP undertook is replicable in the context of Egypt and beyond. The process followed the standard approach combining evidence, capacity strengthening, advocacy, social dialogue and technical support.</p> <p>As a lesson-learned worth highlighting is the added value that academia, federation of industries, private sector etc would bring to the technical steering committee for stronger lobbying and advocacy around policy reform²⁷.</p>

	The JP facilitated the establishment of a central Gender Unit, training its members and enabling scalability by extending the training to local governorates through TOT sessions.
Innovation	The approach adheres to the standard policy reform process, incorporating data, evidence, technical expertise, and active civil society engagement. Notably, it emphasizes systematic, hands-on collaboration with national institutions, specifically the MoL's Gender Unit, to ensure functionality at both central and local levels.
Sustainability	In Egypt, as in Jordan and Palestine, national partners led the policy reform ensuring ownership and sustainability. Capacity building is crucial in the JP framework, backed by substantial resources. Training is practical, complemented by hands-on technical support. The Gender Unit established, has the capacities and is fully integrated in the institutional structures of the Ministry of Labour to continue its activities towards implementation of the gender action plan.
Specific Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Consultations between MoL, NCW and women's rights organisations, at the onset of the JP implementation in 2019, resulted in an agreement to establish a platform for an open dialogue between government officials and civil society organizations (CSOs). The platform would function under the auspices of the NCW with the participation of MoL, where reviews on the labour law would be discussed and policy briefs developed. The dialogue was disrupted by COVID-19. It is recommended to resume consultations with the intention of establishing and institutionalizing this critical platform. » Allocation of sufficient financial resources to implement legislations and policies that promote gender equality remains a challenge. Exploring alternatives that involve reprioritizing government spending with a focus on gender equality within the existing fiscal constraints is a valuable consideration for advancing more inclusive economic growth. » The National Gender Action Plan is a critical resource to coordinate planning, implementation and monitoring of gender initiatives. It is recommended that the Action Plan is costed to ensure financial means are identified and budgeted as available for the implementation of foreseen actions. » Assess the impact of these legislative changes on women's labour force participation and their access to decent work. Adjust and improve as necessary.

2. Good Practice Model 2: Availability of quality affordable care fundamental to women’s labour force participation – policy reform in Jordan

#2	Availability of quality affordable care fundamental to women’s labour force participation – policy reform in Jordan
The issue	<p>The gender gap in labour force participation in Jordan remains significant, with women's participation being nearly three times lower than that of men. As of 2022, this rate continues to lag behind pre-pandemic levels, standing at 14.2 percent (ILO, 2022). Women in Jordan, and particularly married women, bear nearly all responsibility for unpaid care work and their unpaid care responsibilities are not affected by their employment status²⁸. This is a disincentive for women to participate in the labour market. The presence of accessible and high-quality early childcare plays a pivotal role and is directly linked to women's engagement in the workforce. This connection was notably underscored during the Covid-19 pandemic, during which many women faced job losses or were compelled to exit the labour market due to increased caregiving responsibilities at home. Initially, the closure of nurseries and kindergartens due to movement restrictions during lockdowns exacerbated the situation. Subsequently, the availability of care services remained limited, as numerous care centres struggled to sustain their operations after prolonged periods of closure.</p>
The Approach	<p>The aim of ensuring the provision of paid maternity leave for working mothers covered by the Social Security Corporation (SSC) Maternity Insurance²⁹ was to reduce gender discrimination in the hiring and retention of women in Jordan’s formal private sector. In 2019, the SSC Law Article 42 was amended to align with the International Labour Standards (ILS) with the support of the JP and CSOs. The new law allows the SSC to use up to 25% of the Maternity Insurance funds for social protection programmes, i.e. to further support retention of working mothers in the workforce by providing childcare subsidies.</p> <p>The JP jointly with CSOs and the Government, particularly Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Labour, engaged in dialogue and advocacy to keep the nurseries and kindergartens operational while following the health protocol adopted by the National Council for Family Affairs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The advocacy efforts initiated by the JP and national organisations³⁰ representing the interest of grassroot entities and women led nurseries, were successful and the childcare sector (nurseries) remained open or reopened to offer the care services to working mothers. However, the case of kindergartens was different.</p> <p>The Ri’aya committee was established with members from the Social Security Corporation³¹ (SSC), Ministry of Social Development and National Committee for Family Affairs, NGO Sadaqa and the ILO in the framework of the JP programme to provide technical support. The committee worked actively to develop the regulation and accompanying instructions for implementation of legislative changes on the SSC Law.</p>

28 https://arabstates.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Arab%20States/Attachments/Publications/2020/12/English_PolicyBrief_Jordan.pdf

29 The Maternity Insurance (MI) was established in 2014 with the technical support of ILO and is administered by the SSC under the new Social Security Law, expanding the pension system and introducing maternity insurance with cash benefits.

30 NGO SADAQA Foundation was launched in 2011 as a community organizing campaign that seeks to create a supportive work environment for women, mothers and the working family. <http://www.sadaqajo.org/>

31 Social Security is a general cooperative insurance scheme aimed at protecting individuals socially and economically. The law defines its advantages and sources of funding. The government establishes institutions under this scheme to provide these benefits in the event of a social hazard, such as; old age, disability, death, occupational injury, unemployment, etc. These benefits are financed from contributions paid by the insured persons and employers. Ultimately, this scheme aims at achieving social welfare.

The SSC expanded the MI and in December 2020 the government endorsed the Regulation No. (93) of 2020 on Maternity Social Protection under the SSC and **launched the “Ri’aya Programme”** (in Arabic “Care”) in support of the implementation of the endorsed regulation.

The Ri’aya programme supports working women in the form of subsidies to care for children at home or enroll children at childcare facilities for a period of 6 months per child up to 5 years of age. A list of eligibility criteria³² is followed to ensure women most in need benefit from the programme. The Ri’aya programme supported working mothers by giving them the opportunity to continue their income generating activities while children are being cared for.

The registered childcare nurseries are also able to benefit from the Ri’aya programme in the form of subsidies. The eligible nurseries receive direct cash benefits to cover 50 percent of their operational costs, including salaries. The application may be renewed, annually, to ensure eligibility. The assistance to nurseries ensured businesses continued running despite the challenges brought by Covid-19.

The costs would be covered by 25 percent of maternity insurance reserved for both parents and childcare service providers. Support from the Ri’aya programme promoted formalization of employment, as one of the conditions to benefit from the fund is for companies to have all of their employees registered as formal workers. The JP provided technical support for establishment of the Ri’aya Programme and together with national partners the JP is involved in monitoring the implementation of the new regulation by actively participating in the regular bi-monthly committee meetings. The implementation of the Ri’aya program led to a notable increase in caregivers, rising from 240 to 1797. However, it is important to clarify that this is not viewed as the creation of entirely new jobs; instead, it signifies an enhancement of existing positions to decent jobs. This transformation is attributed to the formalization of care employees, primarily women, as a prerequisite for nurseries to qualify for the program³³. The JP supported the coalition and the committee to engage in dialogue with the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) and the SSC to tackle COVID-19 challenges including the rescheduling of their loans and benefiting from SSC programmes. One such example is the support for private kindergartens to benefit from the SSCs Programme ‘Estidama’³⁴ providing 50% wage coverage for employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of the KGs were not eligible due to the condition of having all workers enrolled in SS during the period when the business was not operational. This prerequisite was waived with the JPs technical support and through dialogue with the management of the SSC. As a result, the private kindergartens benefited from wage subsidies and compensation for operational costs for a period between 6 – 18 months to sustain their business and continue providing care services. The Committee, initially representing 3 and now 250 private kindergartens, is treated as a formal body and has the opportunity to advocate and lobby for the rights of women in the sector.

32 List of eligibility criteria published on SSC website: 1–The woman is under maternity insurance, and she is working; 2- The child is alive; 3- The salary under insurance (in the time of starting maternity) does not exceed 1000 Dinar; 4– The mother benefits from the programme for 6 months only, before the child reaches age 5, and 5 - the mother starts receiving remuneration, the month she returns to work after maternity leave (translated by JP team).

33 Notes from meeting Ms. Kholoud Ghnaimat, SSC Jordan.

34 Estidama ++ https://www.ilo.org/beirut/projects/WCMS_888951/lang-en/index.htm

	<p>The kindergartens, operating under the Ministry of Education, did not benefit from the same fund operated by the SSC/Ministry of Social Solidarity. The JP conducted a survey to understand the issues kindergartens face, including their financial situations. The pandemic posed great challenges for businesses and the wage subsidy support was insufficient for the survival of private kindergartens and schools. The financial vulnerability and solvency of private kindergartens and schools was assessed in collaboration with the Association of Banks in Jordan (ABJ) and the Centre for Women’s Studies at the Hashemite University. The survey revealed that in addition to financial issues due to the pandemic, these companies lacked business management skills. In 2021 the JP signed an agreement with the ABJ to advance the financial status of female business owners severely impacted by COVID-19. As part of this agreement, a Business clinic (a grant facilitation scheme with JP funds) was established to provide direct support for female beneficiaries to improve their access to finance and business management skills, and most importantly, help them avoid risks of over-indebtedness and insolvency.</p>
<p>Effectiveness and Efficiency</p>	<p>The JP reviewed five labour policies from the gender perspective, surpassing the original target (PMF target: 2). Regulation No. (93) of 2020 on Maternity Social Protection under the Social Security Law was one of the labour policies. Implementing the regulation entails about 21,500 families/mothers and 28,500 children benefitting from the maternity insurance and around 1600 owners and employees of their nurseries registered with Ministry of Social Development³⁵.</p> <p>Approximately 19,863 working mothers have reaped the benefits of accessible childcare services, either directly through subsidies or indirectly via the continued operations of 273 nurseries and kindergartens. Additionally, such pivotal policy adjustments have secured the jobs of roughly 1,611³⁶ female employees in these care facilities, equalling to above 5 percent of the total employed women in Jordan in 2022.³⁷ In addition, the Business clinic financially supported 24 female kindergarten owners who employ 110 childcare givers and serve 720 children that are in default on rent and/or utility expenses and are at risk of closure, increasing the number of jobs secured to almost 6 percent of total women in employment.</p> <p>The project's successful advocacy efforts, in collaboration with civil society organizations (CSOs) and government bodies, played a crucial role in keeping childcare facilities operational during the COVID-19 pandemic. The establishment of the Ri'aya committee and engagement with various stakeholders facilitated the development of regulations and instructions to implement the legislative changes effectively. The achievement of the results was facilitated by the JP's strategic dialogue with the Minister of Social Solidarity and Sadaqa's nationwide efforts, in their role as a CSO and owners' representative. The Ri'aya committee's diverse composition (members from 5 entities) was pivotal: Sadaqa's grassroots presence, the ILO bringing their global experience, the SSC for their mandate, the National Council for Family Affairs and Ministry of Social Development were all impactful. here were a number of challenges in the process:</p>

35 JP Annual Report 2020

36 Own calculations using Gender data portal, WB 2022 <https://genderdata.worldbank.org>.

37 KII Meeting with Ms. Dima Qaisi, Head of Kindergarten Committee

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hesitance from employers and workers to benefit from the Ri'aya programme. One of the key eligibility criteria is for all workers to be enrolled in Social Security. Intensified advocacy efforts are in the works to raise awareness among employers and workers who prefer to remain in informal sector and jobs. • Enhancing the quality of private kindergartens remains a challenge, especially as it continues to be sidelined from the teacher training provided by the Ministry for Public Sector care and education providers. The National Kindergartens Committee advanced the conversation with Minister on more than one occasion and a team was being formed to look into the possibility of integrating the private kindergarten sector to be part of the initiatives undertaken by the Ministry. However, these agreements have not materialized to date, mainly due to frequent changes in leadership³⁸. <p>Allocating 25 percent of the Maternity Insurance fund to social protection programmes, particularly for childcare subsidies, is a strategic investment that promotes gender equality and sustainable growth. It acknowledges the importance of retaining working mothers in the labour force and serves various purposes³⁹, such as enhanced labour force participation, economic growth, reduced gender disparities and other long-term effects related to job satisfaction, increased retention rates, social welfare etc. The Business clinic (financed by the JP) provided training, technical and financial support to selected women owned kindergartens. This support, keeping kindergartens operational to provide care services for working mothers, was evaluated positively during a focus groups discussion⁴⁰. The clinic will continue to be supported by the participating UN organisations while seeking an option to ensure its sustainability beyond the JP.</p>
Key partners	<p>A number of entities are involved in the implementation. Diversity is critical to the success of the best practice. Partners actively engaged are: MoL, MoSD, SSC, JNCW, the private sector (kindergartens, bank associations), workers organisations, employers' organisations, civil society (Sadaqa), the ILO ROAS social protection team, the JP team.</p>
Evidence-based	<p>Published in March 2021, the ILO-SSC conducted qualitative research to evaluate the impact of maternity insurance on women, their families, and employers in the private sector. This assessment aimed to initiate a broader discussion about maternity insurance's influence on female labour force participation and retention. It advocated for a maternity protection system in Jordan, highlighting its significance in preserving the health and well-being of mothers and children. The assessment also explored how maternity insurance shapes employer perspectives, procedural enhancements, and potential expansion. The goal was to better address the needs of women, men, and families in the workforce, benefiting both the Jordanian economy and society. Globally, the assessment revealed that most countries incorporate maternity protection into their national social security systems. In the Arab region, social security-based maternity benefits are less common. Among Arab nations, Jordan is recognized as a pioneering force in this domain.</p>

38 KII Meeting with Ms. Dima Qaisi, Head of Kindergarten Committee

39 Economic Growth: Supporting working mothers maintains their contribution to the economy, fostering productivity and stability; Labour Force Participation: Childcare subsidies empower women to continue their careers, preserving skilled workers and strengthening the workforce.; Reduced Gender Disparities: These investments address gender imbalances by aiding women's career advancement and financial independence.; Longterm Benefits: Balancing work and family leads to higher job satisfaction, retention rates, and career growth, benefiting individuals and the economy.; Social Welfare: Quality childcare improves family well-being and overall social welfare.

40 JP Regional Team Field visit report 12 – 16 March 2023.

<p>Replicability and Scalability</p>	<p>Revising the eligibility criteria for benefiting from Ri'aya, i.e. the family income versus the mother's income, has the potential to expand the pool of those who benefit from government subsidy programmes. This might contribute to a fairer distribution of the maternity protection fund among those women and families most in need for subsidized care support services.</p> <p>A scaled-up approach would entail an expanded partnership with relevant ministries in the committee responsible for legislative review, development of the programme, implementation and monitoring. i.e. Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Education. The model could also be expanded and adapted to target workers in the informal sector and/or employment.</p> <p>The Business clinic established under the JP and ABJ agreement supports the kindergartens to enhance their business management skills, including financial management, marketing, sales etc. The support from ABJ should yield sustainable results and potentially lead the businesses to scale up their operations.</p>
<p>Innovation</p>	<p>In the Arab region, social security-based maternity benefits are less common and Jordan is recognized as a pioneer in this domain. Other countries in the region are interested in the Jordanian experience. For example, the JP team in Egypt with the knowledge gained from the Jordanian experience on childcare and the progress achieved in the maternity insurance fund was better able to support the development of the policy recommendations on care and parental policies in Egypt.</p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>The regulation is endorsed and enforced by the government. The National Committee of Independent Kindergartens established with the JP support is now a permanent committee under the Chamber of Commerce. The SSC supported by the World Bank (WB) initiated a study to assess how the Ri'aya program affected the women in the labour market, children's wellbeing and associated impacts on families, as well as to assess the impact on the participating nurseries (in terms of quality, enrolment, profitability, etc.).</p>
<p>Specific Recommendation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The findings of the SSC/WB assessment for the Ri'aya programme should be considered in order to further improve the overall programme, in particular its reach and targeting of the labour market's most disadvantaged women (i.e., eligibility criteria, maximum duration of benefit, the amount etc). • Support the finalization of the analysis related to the needs, the costs and returns from investing in the care economy. Advocate for allocation of regular budget to ensure affordable and quality childcare services. • Enhancing the quality of care is crucial. Integrating the private kindergartens sector into the public education system should be considered. The negotiations with the Ministry should be documented and formalized, for example through signing of an MOU. This will help address any potential issues from the staff turnover on both sides.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several countries have successfully integrated private kindergartens into their formal public education systems. This integration often involves regulations, standards, and funding mechanisms that ensure quality and access for all children, regardless of whether they attend a public or private kindergarten. Among countries known as best examples are Sweden, Finland, Norway, Netherlands, New Zealand and Australia. • Explore the use of technology to streamline programme enrolment and subsidy disbursement processes, making it more efficient and accessible to beneficiaries. • Conduct ROI analysis for the Business Clinic intervention. Use the results to advocate for institutionalization of the support to private kindergartens. • The diversity of the Ri'aya committee is considered an asset, and its continued functioning in such a composition as an institutionalized body is crucial.
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3. Good Practice Model 3: Institutionalizing gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting in Jordan

#3	Institutionalizing gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting (GRB) in Jordan
The issue	<p>Gender responsive laws and policies are effective when there are sufficient resources in place for their implementation and there are mechanisms in place to monitor the execution of these policies, programmes and budgets. The government of Jordan recognizes the importance of improved public finance management and budget transparency for gender equality and women's empowerment. The efforts of Jordan on the subject of gender responsive budgeting are recognized globally as a promising practice⁴¹. In order to advance the work on gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting, the JP and the Ministry of Labour (MOL) collaborated on a comprehensive study with a gender perspective, specifically examining human resources and organizational culture. The purpose was to gather insights that would shape the development of a gender mainstreaming policy for the Ministry. The study finds significant gender gaps within the Ministry underscoring a worrisome pattern of reinforcing gender stereotypes, unequal commitment levels, and limited access to equal opportunities. The study underlines the importance of integrating gender mainstreaming into the programming and planning of the Ministry and ensuring dedicated resources, particularly financial ones are in place to enforce the labour regulatory reforms.</p>

41 <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Strengthening-public-finance-management-systems-for-gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment-en.pdf>

<p>The Approach</p>	<p>Building on the findings of the study, JP provided the Ministry of Labour and its relevant staff with strategic methods and techniques to formulate, execute, and monitor budgets and plans that proactively address women's requirements and priorities. As a pilot, a key emphasis of this initiative was to enhance the accessibility and adaptability of the National Employment Programme, ensuring it is tailored to meet the specific needs of women. The selection of this pilot was notably significant due to the persistently low rates of women's participation in the labour force in Jordan, particularly among the most disadvantaged segments of the Jordanian society who inherently form the core clientele of the Ministry of Labour.</p> <p>In 2019, the JP and MoL developed a four-year workplan as a foundation for their collaboration to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. Systematic technical assistance ensuring ownership and sustainability of actions was the driver of the collaboration. Indicators to assess the progress and the gender impact of the ministry activities were developed. Two out of the four pillars of the collaboration focused on:</p> <p>(a) Institutional capacity development (ICD) on gender mainstreaming in MOL: an action plan was drafted and operationalized in 2020. The plan is based on the assessment on gender mainstreaming within the institution: The "Reality of Gender Mainstreaming from an Institutional Perspective in the Ministry of Labour" was conducted by MOL with JPs support. In April 2021, MoL established the ICD task force, creating a sustainable internal mechanism for gender mainstreaming within MoL. The JP organized capacity building for MOL staff on basic gender concepts in general and understanding gender inequality issues from the national perspective, followed by a more technical training package.</p> <p>MoL staff from the Women's Labour and Gender Directorate trained by the JP drafted the FIRST internal Gender Mainstreaming Policy, in alignment with the National Strategy for Women (2020-2025) and the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy (GMP). The Policy document guides the ministry on setting their internal framework to understand and deliver on their commitments to national frameworks, roles, and expectations in addressing gender equality and women's economic empowerment on the national level.</p> <p>(b) Gender responsive budgeting in planning and financial procedures: a GRB specific institutional platform for strengthening capacities was developed. A technical capacity building package was delivered to relevant staff from relevant institutions such as the Ministry of Finance - General Budget Department (GBD), Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Parliamentarian Affairs. The trainings included topics on GRB concept, knowledge and tools on key GRB components⁴². A Gender Responsive Budgeting Working Group was established and the JP supported knowledge exchange by exposing the working group to GRB best practices from Morocco, Tunisia, Kenya and India.</p>
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41 Key concepts include identification of gender-specific needs of the Ministry's target groups for budgetary allocations, tracking of the expenditure for a gender inclusive impact, the value of collecting gender-disaggregated data, conducting impact assessment of programmes to inform future interventions with lessons learned

	<p>JP supported developing a roadmap with a clear process towards integrating GRB considering the national specificities. The roadmap focuses on categorizing budget programmes and analysing their gender-related aspects. This approach identifies budget programmes relevant to gender equality and aligns them with gender budgeting requirements. During the 2021-2022 period, six out of eight steps of the roadmap were implemented. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step 1: Identifying gender issues related to the ministry: situation analysis • Step 2: Identifying policies related to the ministry: policy analysis • Step 3: Baseline: Collecting information about programmes you want to analyze • Step 4: Conducting gender analysis of activities • Step 5: Conducting gender analysis of related budget allocations • Step 6: Developing objectives and recommendations to improve gender equality • Step 7: Making changes in programmes and budgets • Step 8: Monitoring and evaluation of progress <p>The GRB working group along with other colleagues involved at the MoL Employment Programme were supported to pilot the implementation of the GRB techniques in practice. As a result, two gender indicators were developed and integrated in the National Employment Programme. The two indicators are: (a) the number of applicants to the National Employment Programme (f/m), and (b) the number of employed by the National Employment Programme (f/m). They will be monitored by MOL on an annual basis to capture the change (in absence of previous years' baseline). This learning by doing opportunity is an approach appreciated by the stakeholders, helping the technical staff to apply and put into practice the knowledge and the tools gained through the capacity building.</p>
Effectiveness and Efficiency	<p>The initiative exceeded its targets (PMF target 20), equipping 58 government representatives (32 women) with resources and tools for gender-responsive budgeting. As a result, the MoL developed its first internal Gender Mainstreaming Policy and the roadmap for institutionalizing gender-responsive budgeting. A number of success drivers are noteworthy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close and systematic collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, involving weekly meetings and dedicated staff, played a critical role in building trust and securing support from national institutions. • The involvement of small, specialized committees focused on gender mainstreaming and gender responsive issues streamlined the process and gained efficiency. Strong support from senior management facilitated the work. • The sequential approach to capacity building, starting with broad gender concepts and local disparities before diving into more technical skills, while resource-intensive, proved fundamental in laying the groundwork for comprehending the rationale underpinning Gender Mainstreaming and GRB.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry's political will, backed by designated human resources, was crucial in introducing and integrating gender considerations into financial and technical planning. • Financial planning is a whole government matter. Involving focal points from other ministries than MoL in the capacity building interventions was essential. • Coordination and collaboration with partners, such as the French Development Agency (AFD) to integrating gender related indicators in the loan conditionality matrix, facilitated the work towards the JPs strategic objective. <p>The initial four-year work plan was based on global best practices but required adaptation to Jordan's unique cultural, social, political, economic, and legal context. This challenge was addressed by unification of national expertise with international insights. This blended approach not only addressed language barriers but also delved into the particulars of local dynamics encompassing legislation, social norms, and more. Leveraging local expertise, a tailored roadmap was crafted. This roadmap employs creative gender-responsive planning to address distinct male and female needs while achieving common goals. It outlines specific steps for the effective implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting, aligning with the country's objectives to meet SDG 5 targets.</p> <p>The initiative was designed based on previous research and experience, maximizing the use of funds for the intended results. Relevant ministries appointed national staff dedicated to the topic through the two committees established. The overall costs for the implementation are shared between the JP (mainly technical support, international and local expertise) and the national partners (mainly in-kind through human resources, use of premises for meetings and trainings etc).</p>
Key partners	Key partner is the Ministry of Labour. Collaboration with other institutions include: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Parliamentarian Affairs, Social Security Corporation. The work was coordinated with other international and national organisations.
Evidence-based	<p>The MOL is considered the leading institution when it comes to gender mainstreaming and GRB in Jordan. This is because the intervention was designed with the knowledge and lessons learned from previous experience supporting other Ministries in the country to introduce gender mainstreaming. The approach also takes into consideration international best practices.</p> <p>The Reality of Gender Mainstreaming assessment provided insight for developing the internal Gender Mainstreaming Policies of MOL, including their ICD action plans taking into account the organisational culture and human resource processes and practices from a gender perspective.</p>

43 <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/10/assessing-macroeconomic-response-policies-to-covid-19-in-the-arab-region>

44 https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-01/effectiveness_and_innovation_potential_in_the_area_of_almps_in_jordan.pdf

<p>Replicability and Scalability</p>	<p>The collaboration between the Ministry of Labor (MOL) and the Gender Mainstreaming/Gender Responsive Budgeting (GM/GRB) initiative stands out as the most successful approach towards achieving gender equality in Jordan. Building on this success, the Joint Programme (JP) sought to replicate this experience with the Social Security Corporation (SSC), a key institution involved in labor market dynamics and social protection programs.</p> <p>In 2021, the SSC and JP signed a collaboration agreement focusing on four key areas: Institutional Capacity Development, investment in childcare, gender data analysis of social protection programs, and gender-responsive budgeting. The JP supported the development of a roadmap for integrating gender-responsive financial planning into the national budgeting process overseen by the General Budget Department. Capacity- building on gender responsive budgeting was provided to SSC staff members, ensuring equal participation of men and women.</p> <p>Following a similar approach to the MOL, the SSC piloted the Care or "Ri'aya" program, which provides cash allowances to mothers covered by Maternity Insurance to support childcare expenses for the first six months. This approach has demonstrated scalability, leading to its replication with three additional ministries: the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Parliamentarian Affairs. Discussions are underway to scale up nationally by extending implementation to the remaining ministries in the Jordanian government.</p> <p>The JP coordinated efforts to institutionalize gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting across ministries to ensure synergy and complementarity. Collaboration with the Agence Francaise de Developement (AFD) focuses on gender tagging, allowing for the establishment of budget baselines to measure progress, identify bottlenecks, and improve gender equality and women's empowerment efforts.</p>
<p>Innovation</p>	<p>Complementing capacity-building with on the job coaching and on the job training to pilot implementation of GRB in practice was creative and well received. As a result, two gender responsive indicators were developed and integrated in the sectoral and national monitoring framework, approved by the government. The gender mainstreaming policy and its executive plan were included as two interventions for the MOL under the Economic Modernization Vision of Jordan.</p> <p>For the first time, to ensure sustainability of results and the potential for replication and scale, the JP supported the development of the first gender responsive budgeting online platform, the first Arabic open source, online, and interactive learning platform on GRB launched in 2022.</p>

Sustain-ability	<p>At the onset of the initiative, the work is planned and implemented hand in hand with the Ministry of Finance (General Budget Department) and MOL to ensure institutionalization of efforts. The MOL's approach to address the systemic gender differences in labour market participation through adequate budgetary allocations has undergone changes. For the first time, MOL considers gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting in the planning process. To ensure the approach of the MOL is comprehensive, the relevant MOL staff were given the resource and knowledge to understand the importance of not only sex disaggregated data, but also other factors that determine the equal opportunities in employment such as: availability and affordability of childcare or elderly care, type of vocational training provided for women versus the labour market needs, safe transportation etc. Finally, gender indicators were added to the national employment programme, linked to the performance of the ministry staff to ensure changes achieved sustain beyond JP's lifetime.</p>
Specific Recommendation	<p>The challenge of securing increased budget allocations for the implementation of gender sensitive legislation and programmes persists. The COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath have led to setbacks in various aspects of gender equality work, particularly regarding gender-responsive financial planning and management. In light of fiscal constraints, the following short-to-medium-term actions are proposed to advance gender equality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reallocate and Reorient Existing Government Budgets: prioritize the reallocation of current government budgets to ensure that public investments consider their impact on gender equality. This entails evaluating the return on investment and selecting economic policies and sectors that not only promote gender equality but also contribute to socio-economic growth. An illustrative example is the UN Women's assessment⁴³ of macroeconomic policies, emphasizing the potential of the early childhood care sector to yield high economic and social returns. The government of Jordan initiated an assessment of the childcare sector with the support of the JP and the report is pending finalization subject to access to data. • Investigate Gender Disparities in Programme Outcomes: examine the underlying reasons for gender gaps in the outcomes of government programmes designed to boost employment and income generation. This investigation should encompass performance indicators for public employment services, such as job seekers, training participation, and employment rates among women and men. For instance, in 2020, only 8 percent of those enrolling in training with National Employment and Training Company (NETC) were women, and there were significant gender disparities in employment outcomes for trainees, with 80 percent of men but only 35 percent of women securing employment⁴⁴. Identifying the causes of these disparities and implementing appropriate measures can facilitate more equitable access to training and employment opportunities for women, ultimately leading to increased productivity and shared prosperity. In other words, in the case of NETC, if women were to benefit equally from the training and employment services, there would be about 10,000 more women trained and about 8,000 more women employed in 2020. At a minimum, this would require a diverse menu of professional trainings open for women.

4. Good Practice Model 4: Gender responsive stimulus packages (in support to micro and small enterprises) – policy tool in Palestine

#4	Gender responsive stimulus packages (in support to micro and small enterprises) – policy tool in Palestine
The issue	<p>Governments around the world introduced stimulus packages in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Research suggests that this response in the Arab States region was largely gender blind. The share of policies that are gender sensitive was higher in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Syria. However, less than 5 percent of the public spending was spent for their implementation⁴⁵. The consequences for women have been substantial - women constitute only about 20 percent of the workforce and have borne the brunt of the economic impact, accounting for a staggering 41 percent of job losses⁴⁶. The JP in Palestine took a strategic approach to comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness of fiscal and monetary policies introduced by governments and to gauge their potential in mitigating the unequal effects on women. The JP team utilized the "Policy Support Tool on How to Assess and Engender Fiscal Stimulus Packages to Respond to the Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19." This global tool serves as a foundation for offering tangible recommendations to national partners, guiding them in implementing necessary measures within fiscal stimulus packages to ensure they are responsive to gender-specific concerns.</p>
issue	<p>Adoption of this global policy tool⁴⁷ at the local level from a gender equality perspective was the starting point for the JP in Palestine. A comprehensive assessment was commissioned to address the information gap concerning the stimulus packages and services provided by the Palestinian Authorities (PA) during the pandemic. This assessment delves into multiple aspects, encompassing the gender-specific effects on the economy, the Palestinian labour market, particularly the Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs). Integral to this assessment was an extensive consultation process involving critical national stakeholders. Among the key recommendations include the need to develop specific national guidelines, policy tools and plans for longer term gender-responsive stimulus packages monitored by an established national committee. Further, a need to develop a gender expenditure tracking model⁴⁸ and disseminate it for use by all institutions was underscored. Findings and policy recommendations of the assessment informed the JP's planned support to MoNE and MoF on developing and implementing gender responsive stimulus packages, with a special focus on women-led businesses, that cater to women's rights, priorities and needs as part of the economic recovery efforts at a national level.</p> <p>MoNE and MoF have designated representatives to establish Gender teams within their ministries. These teams, composed of members of the gender unit and representatives from other relevant ministry directorates and departments, underwent capacity strengthening initiatives, focusing on policy assessment, tool creation, and the formulation of gender-sensitive stimulus packages.</p>

45 <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/10/assessing-macroeconomic-response-policies-to-covid-19-in-the-arab-region>

46 ibid

47 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/03/how-to-assess-fiscal-stimulus-packages-from-a-gender-equality-perspective>

48 The Ministry of Finance has previously undertaken efforts to create an expenditure tracking tool to monitor the government's gender-responsive budgeting initiatives. This tool was tested in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Development, laying a strong foundation for the development and execution of a comprehensive gender-responsive expenditure tracking framework.

Special focus was given to the design and implementation of gender responsive stimulus packages that support women-led micro and small businesses. Empowered by their training, the gender teams adeptly recognized pertinent challenges and proceeded to create seven gender responsive policy tools on stimulus packages (financial and non-financial), in favour of women-led micro, small enterprises (MSEs). Subsequently, these teams actively participated in both the testing and execution phases of selected policy tools, effectively contributing to the practical realization of gender-inclusive strategies.

An example is the policy tool prioritizing women-led MSE's in public procurement processes. Notably, public procurement constitutes a significant portion of government expenditure, representing about 10 percent of GDP and 30 percent of the PA's budget⁴⁹. The envisaged introduction of specific conditions in central tender contracts, enabling larger companies to subcontract micro and small enterprises holds the potential to enhance women's economic participation. In 2023, MoNE actively collaborated with MoF and MoWA to validate and actualize the policy tool, underscoring a proactive commitment to gender-inclusive economic policies. The efforts were disrupted by the escalation of the war in Palestine.

Another example is the policy tool developed by MoNE on legislative procedures related to registration and formalization of MSE's led by women, youth and persons with disabilities. Applying a gender equality lens, the relevant law underwent thorough examination. One of the findings was that certain clauses pertaining to mandatory business registration fees for micro and small enterprises were not being enforced as intended. Addressing this, the Minister issued a directive to enforce these clauses, consequently resulting in a significant reduction in MSE registration fees – a reduction by a factor of four to align with legislative mandate. This reduction effectively serves as an incentive for women-led businesses to pursue formal registration. With an official legal standing, these businesses can gain improved access to an array of services extended by national partners, thereby fostering a conducive environment for growth and development.

In response to the expressed needs of women entrepreneurs, the JP facilitated the creation of a collaborative Joint Services Policy Tool. This tool involves the coordinated efforts of multiple institutions to support start-ups and entrepreneurs comprehensively. Through this unified approach, services ranging from business registration to financial access and non-financial business development assistance are seamlessly provided. This innovative joint services policy tool, a type of a one-stop shop or mini business development referral system, engages the MoNE, MoF and the Palestinian Monetary Authority (PMA). This model has been carefully shaped in partnership with governor-level input, considering their direct involvement in policy implementation and service delivery.

49 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/04/04/us-8-million-to-reform-and-modernize-the-palestinian-public-financial-management-system#:~:text=%E2%80%9CPublic%20procurement%20accounts%20for%20a,30%25%20of%20the%20PA's%20budget.>

	<p>The testing phase started in 2023, with the aim to scale nationally. By fostering coordination and collaboration among institutions, this approach aims to ease the transition from informal to formal business entities and employment opportunities. Its core objective lies in creating an enabling environment for the growth of women-led businesses, marking a significant stride towards women's economic empowerment.</p>
<p>Effectiveness and Efficiency</p>	<p>Applying this good practice approach, the JP achieved the PMF target by having 2 government institutions, namely, MoF and MoNE, with developed gender sensitive plans, policies and budgets (JP PMF 2022).</p> <p>Elements highlighted to have contributed to the success of this good practice include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JPs convening role, recognized by national partners to have established a close and productive collaboration with the MoNE, MoF and PMA, integrating their diverse roles, functions and responsibilities to address the common issues and jointly promote women-led businesses and entrepreneurs. • Alignment with the national plans and priorities, which led to trust building and increased ownership. • JPs workplan adapted to respond to the changes of the pandemic and the findings from the national assessment. • Working through gender teams instead of gender focal points • Capacity strengthening paired with practical realization through hands-on testing of the knowledge gained. <p>The assessment and execution of the good practice unveiled several issues. National partners acknowledged that the complexity of procedures for businesses was largely unclear and unknown even to them. The varying interpretation of legislation and rules for business registration and development became apparent in different geographical areas, emerging during field visits organized as part of the JP activity implementation. By being closer to women-led businesses, institutions had the chance to gain a better understanding of the issues they face. In addition, there was more clarity on the requirements and support services of each institution, facilitating collaboration and breaking the siloed approach⁵⁰. Other challenges include: the PAs concentration on loan facilitation and guarantees due to significant budget constraints. Despite financial strain, the PA collaborated with private sector and international donors to provide modest cash aid to individuals and businesses, including women, affected by the pandemic. The interventions focused on preserving MSMEs and retaining employees in the hardest-hit sectors. Limited social protection measures were implemented, and data gaps make it challenging to assess compliance with employee safeguards by business owners, especially for women.</p> <p>The approach is implemented jointly with the national institutions. Human and financial (in-kind) resources from the ministries are invested to contribute to achieving the outcome results.</p>

50 KII meeting with MoNE, MoF, PMA in Palestine

51 An Assessment of the Palestinian Authority's Stimulus Packages and Services During the COVID-19 Era (2020 – 2021) From a Gender Equity Perspective, UN Women and AWRAD, 2022

Key partners	The good practice required the active engagement of the Ministry of National Economy, Ministry of Finance, Palestinian Monetary Authority, women-led businesses and the JP team.
Evidence-based	The assessment ⁵¹ conducted by the JP in support to MoNE and MoF included a broad consultation with national actors from the private and public institutions, including the Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Labour, MoNE and Ministry of Agriculture, PMA, Palestinian Investment Fund (PIF), Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection (PFESP), Chamber of Commerce and Ministry of Local Government. The report found that there was little demand from MSMEs for the PA incentive packages. This was especially the case for women due to the gender-blind eligibility criteria for funds, loans or payments. The report also found that there was a lack of coordinated efforts at the national level in relation to development, implementation and assessment of stimulus packages in support to MSMEs. Lastly, the stimulus packages introduced were intended for immediate response with limited impact for longer term effect. There was an evident need to consolidate efforts of stakeholders to develop specific guidelines and plans for gender-responsive stimulus packages, outlining how different types of financial support will be used and the conditions under which they will be applied.
Replicability and Scalability	The approach is replicable within the government across other institutions. Gender teams bring their diverse experience and professional background from the relevant departments that facilitate and accelerate the progress towards empowerment of women through gender-responsive policies and practices. With adequate capacity building and access to resources and tools, the gender teams can ensure gender is mainstreamed throughout the ministry departments, procedures, and processes. The experience within MoNE and MoF has shown the approach is successful with potential to replicate across ministries. The results achieved can be inspiring for other ministries to replicate this approach of diverse teamwork, designing policies based on first-hand evidence collected in the field. The approach has the potential to be scaled nationally. The joint services policy tool in support of women-led entrepreneurship and business development can be inspiring and has the potential to be scaled nationally as a referral system for economic integration of disadvantaged groups, such as women survivors of DV/GBV and people with disabilities.
Innovation	The innovative element in the approach is the promotion of working as gender teams instead of expecting the effort to be made by one gender focal point. The JP applies the same approach when working with institutions as well as private sector companies to promote gender equality. Another creative solution is also integrating efforts and service lines of different institutions in support to women led MSEs as part of a Joint Services Policy tool. As part of the gender responsive policies introduced, an “E-Souq” online portal for promoting Palestinian women’s products and enhancing women’s access to markets was established by the MoNE. The portal is intended to serve as an electronic database for women-led businesses to promote women’s products. The platform could also improve women’s access to marketing, networking and procurement opportunities and support for formalization of businesses.

Sustain-ability	<p>The good practice utilizes an inclusive multi-institutional approach, led and delivered by the national institutions. To ensure sustainability the JP team is in the process of institutionalizing and formalizing a committee/task force to host, manage and deliver the joint services policy tool. The oversight and coordination can be done through existing national level committees in support of MSMEs⁵². The interventions initiated with the JP support made its way in national strategies and policies. An example is the integration of measures to support micro, very small and medium enterprises led by women, youth, and persons with disabilities in the MoNE modern Strategic Plan 2024-2029.</p>
Specific Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender teams within institutions and cross institutional collaboration between gender teams is a good approach to address issues comprehensively. Elevating this approach and institutionalizing across the government has potential to yield tremendous results. It is recommended the gender teams have a clear functioning structure, an actionable and costed workplan, with a clear monitoring and evaluation mechanism integrated. This will ensure sustainability of the results achieved. • The list of policies reviewed/developed by the Gender team with the JP support is extensive. Considering the limited resources, focusing on a select number of issues is recommended. In this way the resources of the JP can be adequately distributed for the review of policies as well as their implementation and evaluation during the project lifecycle. In this case, the approach is about developing and adequate budgeting for gender responsive policies and programmes which requires a deep dive, technical capacity, time and finances to get to the bottom of it. Being focused and narrowing the number of policies could allow developing, testing and institutionalizing policies during the project lifecycle. • Support the relevant institutions to build a central national comprehensive database on (women) entrepreneurs. Consider using technology to enhance access to services for women entrepreneurs through automated services⁵³. • Consider knowledge exchange and learning from other experiences developing “one-stop-shops” that focus on supporting women entrepreneurs. Assess and adopt digitalization and technological solutions that were tested and used to enhance the outreach and service provision to women entrepreneurs. • Consider supporting the relevant institutions in developing a sound monitoring and evaluation framework for the policies and programmes introduced in support of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

52 Recommendation from the KII meeting with representatives from MoNE, MoF and PMA.

53 ibid

3.2.2. Outcome2. A gender responsive private sector that attracts, retains and promotes women is supported

5. Good Practice Model 5: Women in C-suites drive diversity in Egypt

#5	Women in C-suites drive diversity in Egypt
The issue	<p>Companies with more than 30 percent women executives are more likely to outperform the companies with less or no women executives⁵⁴. Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 25 percent more likely to have above-average profitability than companies in the bottom (McKinsey, 2020)⁵⁵. There is a substantial performance gap, amounting to 48 percent, between companies that are the most gender diverse (with over 30 percent women in executive teams) and those that are the least gender diverse, where women are either underrepresented or entirely absent from executive positions. This differential highlights the positive impact that gender diversity in executive leadership can have on a company's overall performance. Firms with female CEOs and CFOs have a demonstrated culture of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I), evinced by a larger representation of females on the company's board of directors. Globally, women hold only 19.7 percent of board seats.⁵⁶ In Egypt women on boards⁵⁷ accounted for less than 10 percent in 2018 when the JP was initiated (AUC Women On Boards (WOB) report, 2018⁵⁸). Companies claim the low percentage of women on boards is also due to the difficulties in finding qualified women for the jobs as board members⁵⁹.</p>
The Approach	<p>In response, the JP and partners embarked on a joint initiative to promote women in leadership positions. Women in mid-to-senior management positions gain access to accredited capacity-building opportunities and certifications.⁶⁰ These women benefit from a 50 percent scholarship for training, often financially supported by their employers as part of the company's Women's Empowerment Principles' (WEPs) commitment. Certified women, prepared for board roles, are registered in the Board Ready Women database. They receive matching services and job placement support. The profiles of women ready for board positions are presented to CEOs and board executives upon request (via the Board Placement Request Form). Proactive efforts are made to encourage companies to promote women in leadership roles, benefiting not only the women but also the businesses and communities. This involves combining awareness-raising activities with business training on gender diversity issues, such as advancing women into managerial positions and dismantling gender-specific barriers to board diversity.</p> <p>The Joint Programme (JP) annually supports data collection and analysis on women's representation on boards.</p>

54 Research from academics from the Universities of Glasgow and Leicester <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ijfe.2089>

55 <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters>

56 <https://www.ifc.org/en/what-we-do/sector-expertise/corporate-governance/women-boards-business-leadership>

57 Data from EGX, banking sector and public enterprise sector

58 <https://business.aucegypt.edu/research/centers/women-boards-observatory/wob-monitoring-report>

59 Learning session of 200623 – women in leadership position, organized by the JP (recording available)

60 Corporate Directors Certification, Advanced Management, Management Acceleration (for first-time managers), Executive Leadership, Finance for Non-Financers, Human Capital Certificate, Digital Marketing Certificate, and Organizational Behaviour and Diversity Management.

	<p>A robust framework was established with baselines and indicators, developed based on extensive research and expanded in 2019 to include information from more businesses through collaboration with the Egyptian Stock Exchange (EGX) and the Financial Regulatory Authority (FRA). Ensuring availability of sex-disaggregated through the Women on Board annual monitoring report is instrumental and a corner stone for the success of the initiative. The reports, backed by evidence, are used for awareness-raising efforts.</p> <p>Companies are exposed to best practices from the region and beyond to understand the impact of gender diversity for businesses. Additionally, the data informs Egypt's position relative to the region and the world. The JPs gender international expertise and knowledge added weight to the data analysis as well as to the awareness and advocacy efforts on the importance of increasing gender diversity at workplace⁶¹.</p> <p>These and other initiatives have contributed to policy changes, with the Financial Regulatory Authority (FRA) issuing new decrees in mid-2021 that solidify the role of women as dynamic leaders and decision-makers in the non-banking financial sector. The amendments mandate that EGX-listed and regulated companies have a minimum of 25 percent women representation on their boards or at least two women as board members. These changes build upon the 2019 decrees (no. 123 and 124) that required both listed and non-banking financial institutions to have at least one woman on their boards by the end of 2020. Government and support from Regulators remain crucial for the sustainability of these operations.</p>
Effectiveness and Efficiency	<p>The JP supported 108 women employees to complete the training on professional development, management and corporate directorship. It is expected that this number will reach 194 by end of the JP period exceeding the original target of 160 (JP PMF 2022).</p> <p>Women on Boards' indicator improved from 10 percent in 2019 to 19.7 percent in 2022⁶². With an incremental annual increase of 3 percent, participating categories of companies would achieve the 2030 strategy goal of 30 percent women on boards by 2026. In addition to the decrees issued by Financial Regulatory Authority (FRA) and the Women on Board Annual Report, a number of factors contributed to the results achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initiative capitalized on the momentum created by political support for women's economic empowerment, as evidenced by the President's declaration of 2017 as the Year of Women in Egypt and the subsequent approval of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030. • Women on Boards Observatory, functioning under the auspices of the American University in Cairo is the leading entity in the Women on Boards multi stakeholder collaboration. The observatory is recognized by the NCW as the national observatory, adding credibility to the organisation and the initiative. • Alignment with the national strategies and internationally set sustainable development goals (SDGs).

61 KII Meeting with AUC WOB representative

62 The 2022 annual monitoring report covers the gender data and information of almost 1000 companies and banks, with 236 EGX listed companies, 34 banks, 676 NBFs companies, and 82 public sector enterprise companies (holding and affiliate companies).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with the EGX and FRA proved invaluable for data collection, as well as for advocacy and awareness-raising among their member companies. • Local ownership and multi-stakeholder collaboration are another success factor. The issue is complex and requires engagement and contribution from diverse organisations and entities to ensure delivering the results. The number of WEPs signatories in Egypt increased from 22 companies in 2018 to 53⁶³ companies in 2022 with FRA becoming a WEPs signatory in 2022. Advocating among WEPs signatories to support women on boards resulted in many investing resources for the professional development of their women employees. <p>However, some challenges were encountered during this journey. The lack of awareness among private sector companies regarding the benefits of gender diversity and inclusion, was further exacerbated by an economic downturn, which threatened the progress made towards women's empowerment. The pandemic, which relegated gender equality to a secondary concern in the business agenda, made things more challenging. At the outset of the JP, sex-disaggregated data was limited, making awareness-raising and advocacy a difficult task. Furthermore, a few examples of men board members who could serve as advocates for change hesitated to engage in the initiative. Throughout the implementation, several companies did not comply with the 25 percent representation goal mandated by legislation, necessitating monitoring and enforcement by regulating authorities⁶⁴.</p> <p>The initiative was implemented by multiple stakeholders, led by academia. Formal and clear terms of collaboration/institutional agreement with the regulators, mainly related to data access proved important in managing expectations and ensuring efficiency.</p> <p>The cost of the results achieved was shared between partners: To ensure commitment and promote companies to take on the cost of building the capacity of their women employees, the JP designed a 50 per cent scholarship for its professional and management certified training. For advocacy from more WEPs signatories, the JP contributed partially with human and financial resources.</p>
Key partners	<p>The Women on Boards Observatory fosters gender diversity by raising awareness among male board members, qualifying women from diverse sectors for board positions, and advocating for policy changes. To enhance gender balance in Egypt's corporate boards and the Arab States region, the observatory partners with the Egyptian Exchange (EGX), the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE), the Financial Regulatory Authority (FRA), the National Council for Women (NCW), IFC and more. In 2020, it expanded collaboration with Boardroom Africa and 30 percent Club Arab States providing mentorship and training.</p>

63 94 companies joined WEPs as at 17 Oct 2023
64 KII Meeting with the AUC WOB representative

Evidence-based	The approach built on the 2017 women on boards initiative, inspired by international models. The Annual Women on Boards Monitoring Report was enriched in 2019 by expanding the pool of data and analysis. The report offers an overview of women's presence on boards in Egypt's listed companies, banking sector, and public enterprises. The report highlights the gap in each sector towards the 2030 strategy's target of 30 percent women on boards.
Replicability and Scalability	Steps are taken by the Observatory to replicate the experience of Egypt and scale the initiative to cover the whole region. The plan is to establish the Arab Women on Boards Observatories Consortium, committed to improve diversity and inclusion at workplace. The Observatory in Egypt is ready to take the responsibility to coordinate the work and initiate the discussion to propose developing a regional database and a regional report. A call for organisations is to be opened to identify partners in each country. The Egypt Observatory will support the process on how to develop the database and after that to join the consortium. A platform with information from the whole region would be developed to ensure women can access boards of companies not only in Egypt, for example, but other countries in the region ⁶⁵ .
Innovation	<p>Involvement of academia gives higher credibility to the data analysis and the accredited training. The collaboration with partners such as the EGX, CBE, FRA and other relevant stakeholders has been instrumental in data collection. The research through this approach is considered vital by all parties, to dig deeper in the national context but also to measure and report the progress achieved.</p> <p>An illustration of using technology for better results is the use of databases and online applications to enhance the outreach; increase the opportunities for placement of women on boards through the job facilitation tool for businesses and women, also linked with the FRA mobile application "Empowering Women". Since the pandemic, training was adapted to support women, making them available and accessible online. This gives women the flexibility to enroll for the training, while accommodating for their domestic unpaid obligations.</p>
Sustainability	<p>The approach is led by the National Observatory, a research institution recognized by the National Council for Women with the National Observatory being among its members. The core staff in the Observatory are part of the AUC personnel whose contracts don't depend on external funding.</p> <p>The collaboration between academia/observatory with various partners, including the regulators, business representatives, international organisations, is solid and nationally-led.</p> <p>The multi-partnership platform is growing. The Board of Directors of the Egyptian Financial Regulatory Authority (FRA) issued a new resolution raising the percentage of female representation in the boards of directors of companies whose securities are listed on the Egyptian Stock Exchange, also a WEPs signatory.</p>

65 KII meeting with AUC representative for the Observatory (meeting recording)

Specific Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Women on Boards report is acknowledged as a critical compilation and analysis of indispensable data. These insights are essential for comprehending the current situation, tailoring interventions effectively, and accurately tracking and reporting progress. The indicators allow for meaningful regional and global comparisons. Supporting national institutions for data collection and processing is critical and facilitates the work. • Consider complementing the report with data on the impact on enterprises from the increased share of women on boards (agree on a set of indicators with the regulatory authority to strengthen the business case for promoting women in leadership). • Capitalizing on the WEPs network to promote women on boards is creative and should be expanded. • Replication of the approach in the region is underway. Delving deeper into the unique dynamics of each country is of utmost importance. This involves understanding the board creation process, the criteria applied to select members (both women and men), and structural aspects. Such insights are crucial for designing context-specific training programmes that address the need for more effective corporate governance systems that promote gender diversity on boards. • Consider developing a user-friendly database for women on boards at the regional level to facilitate monitoring and reporting on results achieved. • Engage men advocates for change in the advocacy and awareness raising initiatives; collect data on improved productivity and organisational performance as a result of investing on women employees and promote widely among the private sector.
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6. Good Practice Model 6: Corporate policy reform in favour of gender equality and women’s empowerment in Egypt

#6	Corporate policy reform in favour of gender equality and women’s empowerment in Egypt
The issue	<p>Women workers and employees are subject to work-related discriminatory policies and practices (those looking for work and those working). Addressing gender discriminatory policies is not only an ethical imperative, but also a strategic move for long-term success. By fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment, companies can tap into the full potential of their workforce, drive innovation, and enhance overall productivity. A more inclusive private sector contributes to broader economic growth. Gender equality can expand the labour force, increase consumer purchasing power, and stimulate entrepreneurship. To address the issue, a collaboration was formed between the Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI) and the JP to support companies in revising their HR policies.</p>

issue	<p>The HR and Gender Academy functions under the umbrella of the FEI since 2017. It is a 15-day training programme designed by national and international experts in the areas of human resources, gender and labour law. It targets human resources working in FEI member companies. A pilot was conducted in 2017, replicated in 2019. This time, the trainers and trainees had access to training material on formulating gender responsive HR policies, developed with the JP's support. The training material ensured standardization of delivery and was followed by capacity building of FEI staff and other external experts interested to deliver the training for private sector on the Law, HR and Gender. A TOT was organized in 5 governorates in order to expand the pool of available training experts on the subject, to ensure continuation of training provision to businesses under the umbrella of the FEI.</p> <p>FEI expert trainers build the capacities of the business HR focal points. As part of the graduation project, the trainees present a policy reform developed/reviewed with a gender lens. The selected policy should be a real-life policy from the business they represent. The trainees are given resources such as manuals as well as technical advice by the trainers. Two FEI staff that participate at the training academy conduct monitoring visits to follow up with the graduates on the policy implementation, providing advice and support as needed.</p> <p>The companies participating in the training academy are FEI members of different company sizes and sectors from selected geographical locations to ensure commonality in business culture. The companies respond to the call for expression of interest. Most of the participants are from the HR units of the companies. They found the training technical but practical and relevant. Most, if not all of them, were exposed to training for the first time. This includes a component on women's rights and gender equality issues at work⁶⁶. In four years of JP implementation, two-thirds of the trainees graduated from the academy and reviewed at least one HR policy for gender responsiveness. The policies reviewed included policies on equal pay, gender unbiased fair recruitment opportunities, maternity leave and breastfeeding hour as per the Egyptian law, procedures to address violence and harassment, non-discrimination in leadership positions, promotion scheme, and equal access to capacity development opportunities⁶⁷.</p> <p>The assessment monitoring is done upon one year of completion of the training by FEI. The difficulties and success stories are collected. These insights can help FEI to further improve the programme design and delivery.</p>
Effectiveness and Efficiency	<p>In a four-year span with the JP's support, 40 companies had a gender-responsive policy at work, surpassing the target of 10 companies (JP PMF 2022).</p> <p>Several factors contributed to these positive results. Firstly, the intervention was grounded in a well-established initiative that had been assessed as relevant and aligned with the JP's objectives. Additionally, a strong emphasis was placed on continuous improvement based on lessons learned.</p>

66 JP Regional team Field monitoring report from 14 and 15 June 2023 visit in Ismailia governorate
67 JP Annual Progress Reports

	<p>For example, the training days were spread across weeks to allow participants time to reflect on the job. As follow-up, they had the opportunity to go back to the training and raise their questions and concerns with the training experts. Expertise from the JP played a crucial role in the development of training materials, aiming to standardize the quality and delivery of the training. The close collaboration with the FEI was instrumental in the success of this approach. Furthermore, expanding the pool of training experts enhanced the initiative's effectiveness.</p> <p>A notable challenge was resistance from private sector companies when asked to review their policies from a gender perspective. To address this challenge, the JP presented gender equality as a legal requirement in Egypt. For example, compliance with the labour law provision on maternity leave, aligned with national and international sustainable development goals. In addition, FEI shared information and insights on why gender equity matters for business performance and productivity. This approach proved effective in convincing companies to engage in the training academy. Another challenge lies in addressing staff turnover among trained experts at FEI, aiming to maintain in-house training capacity and optimize operational costs, particularly considering the substantial expenses associated with securing external training experts.</p> <p>JP and FEI shared the costs of organising the HR and Gender Academy training (trainers, transport and meals for participants, training room facilities etc). The Academy functions within the FEI framework, with its core personnel who were actively engaged throughout the trainings and monitoring for policy reform as needed. The participating companies also contributed with a modest fee as an insurance for their commitment to the training. The fee is used to cover some of the costs of the training⁶⁸.</p>
Key partners	The partners collaborating to implement the initiative are the Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI) and its corresponding units, the private sector companies' members of FEI, and the subject experts delivering the Law, HR and Gender Academy training.
Evidence-based	The HR, Gender and the Law Academy was established in 2017. A pilot training was delivered in 2017. The JP and FEI used the knowledge and the experience from the pilot, and in 2019 developed the training material for trainers and trainees which helped with the standardization of this service to businesses. The round of the training was organised in 2019 and the training has been taking place annually ever since.
Replicability and Scalability	The Academy is now functional under the FEI umbrella. Standardized training material is available. The model is implemented in several Egypt governorates and can be replicated and scaled nationally and beyond. Over 90,000 private sector enterprises are members of FEI, accounting for close to two million employees. Applying a staged approach to scaling up nationally can have a substantial impact on promoting women in business.

68 Interview with national partners from FEI on 11 December 2023 (meeting recording)

Innovation	Creating a Gender Academy within the FEI, which represents a vast number of businesses, demonstrated creativity and forward thinking. The JP's decision to build on an existing initiative rather than developing a new intervention contributing to the same objectives was strategic. The JP capitalized on the existence of the Academy, and invested to further improve the content and quality, making training offered more gender responsive.
Sustainability	The Academy is hosted by the FEI and is formally recognized. The knowledge, expertise and tools are transferred to the FEI as part of TOTs organised at a centralized and governmental level. The Academy staff and related FEI units in general possess long-term contracts which ensure continuation of interventions. Alternatives need to be found to guarantee financial sustainability for the delivery of the training, especially related to the cost of training experts. Recognizing that a significant portion of these businesses are micro and small enterprises, the Academy is strategically planning to design a more condensed training program of shorter duration. This approach aims to reduce the overall training costs, making the fees requested from companies more affordable and accessible, particularly for smaller businesses. For bigger companies, the training Academy will continue to be fully funded, subsidized by the FEI and costs shared with the companies ⁶⁹ .
Specific Recommendation	<p>Implement a system for monitoring the impact of reform policies, starting within the first year of implementation. Consider introducing standardized indicators for participating companies to monitor and report against agreed-upon baselines. Utilize the comprehensive Transparency and Accountability Framework of the WEPs as a reference.</p> <p>Perform a cost analysis and develop a sustainable human and financial model to ensure the Law, HR, and Gender Academy is functional and consistently operational.</p> <p>Increase the promotion of the academy among the WEPs signatories and encourage WEPs adoption among the members of the Academy and the FEI.</p> <p>Take a phased approach to scale up the initiative nationally. The FEI comprises 19 industrial sectors, representing nearly 104,000 industrial establishments, of which 90 percent are in the private sector, employing over 2 million workers.⁷⁰ Scaling up the model could translate into better workplaces for more than approximately 585,000 women employees,⁷¹ and many more thousands of women workers who would benefit from gender responsive recruitment and professional development policies.</p> <p>Document the lessons learned to facilitate expansion within Egypt, the region, and potentially beyond.</p>

69 KII meeting with FEI Training Academy representatives (meeting recording)

70 <https://www.fei.org.eg/index.php/en/about-fei>

71 Approximated, using the share of women employees in WEPs signatory private companies in Egypt (c. 29percent)

7. Good Practice Model 7: Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) National Network in Jordan

#7	Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) National Network in Jordan
The issue	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic worsened unemployment for women in Jordan, particularly for young women. In 2022, female unemployment peaked at 29.4%, with a mere 14.2% female labour force participation (ILO, 2022). About one in three employed women lost jobs during the pandemic, with those retained experiencing pay cuts. Limited job creation, especially in the private sector, restricts women's prospects due to slow growth and fiscal constraints in the public sector. New jobs predominantly arise in the private sector, where female representation is low. Sectors like education (63%) and health/social work (61%) have mainly female workforce but offer limited wages and parity, particularly in the private sphere⁷². Boosting the private sector's capacity through a favourable and gender responsive business environment is essential.</p>
The Approach	<p>The JP utilizes the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) a framework for businesses to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. The number of WEPS companies in Jordan increased from 9 in 2019 to 128 in 2022. The JP in Jordan applied two approaches to expand the pool of companies committing to gender equality through signing of the WEPs: 1. One to many: The JP partnered with Chambers of Industry and Businesses Associations and promoted WEPs to their members. The Chambers proposed potential private companies who could serve as WEPs signatory role models 2. One to one customized support sessions for selected reputable companies were organized. These companies then recommended other companies they thought are fit to promote gender equality agenda. In both cases, the JP presented the business case from joining WEPs, the global weight it brings and the linkage with the sustainable development agenda. Once a number of reputable corporates joined, the other companies followed by example and in less than 4 years, Jordan leads as the country with the highest number of WEPs signatories in the region.</p> <p>The JP established the WEPs Jordan Network, to increase national ownership and sustainability of the WEPs by creating a gender-sensitive ecosystem of companies that drives the gender equality agenda forward with JP support. The JP developed a clear concept detailing the purpose and the role of the Network and received positive responses from numerous companies. The network meets on a monthly basis and the chairing/hosting is rotational. The host company covers the costs of the meeting. Companies vote to select the priority topics to cover in the subsequent year, around which capacity-building is organized.</p> <p>The WEPs Jordan Network has reached its intended purpose. It serves as a platform to promote and advocate for women’s economic empowerment, discuss issues of common interest, provides opportunities for knowledge sharing and learning, provides space for networking and business collaborations between like-minded companies.</p>

72 <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/002/2022/222/article-A001-en.xml#A001fn2>

	<p>Companies that are part of the WEPs Jordan Network are encouraged to view the WEPs as a primary tool for advancing gender equality in accordance with the 2030 agenda and the SDGs. Additionally, they have the opportunity to enhance their sustainability efforts by attending intensive Impact Management and Measurement (IMM) training.</p> <p>Visibility and the recognition of efforts has proven important. The WEPs Jordan Network’s first anniversary celebration in December 2022, following a clear set of criteria, recognized committed WEPs signatories for initiatives that supported inclusive and gender-responsive practices⁷³.</p> <p>In line with the regional WEPs roadmap, the JP offers businesses access to online resources for signatories, general capacity-building sessions on topics determined annually, and tailored technical support to identify gender gaps using the WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool (GAT) and develop WEPs Action Plans. The capacity-building package includes various elements, such as the WEPs induction⁷⁴, leadership and skills development⁷⁵, corporate director certification promoting women on boards, strategies for attracting and promoting women in the private sector, mentoring, gender-responsive procurement, impact measurement, sustainability, and supporting women in non-traditional sectors.</p>
Effectiveness and Efficiency	<p>By December 2022, the number of companies that joined WEPs was 128 – exceeding the JP target of 80 companies in four years (JP PMF 2022). The JP organized annual surveys with WEPs signatories to assess the progress made in implementation of their WEPs/Gender workplans. Companies responding to the survey have recognized the merit of the JP through WEPs for: increased hiring of women employees, amendment of corporate internal policies and programmes and development of staff’s technical capacities, introduction of flexible work arrangements policies, health and safety awareness, safety measurements, and new workforce policies among others.</p> <p>A number of factors distinguish the approach applied in this good practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointing dedicated human resources with strong networking skills and previous experience working in and with the private sector - speaking the business language. • Having well-defined and clearly communicating the benefits from joining the WEPs • Building a strong base with reputable private sector invites others to follow the lead. • Ensuring support from government institutions. • Facilitating the dialogue between WEPs signatories and JNCW. • Engaging private sector through WEPs in all programmes targeting WEE (i.e., gender lens investing). • Closely coordinating with other UN agencies and other international organisations.

73 Companies were screened on their commitment, reporting, alignment of initiatives, programmes and activities developed by the companies with the 7 principles (as reported by UNW Jordan team)

74 <https://www.weps.org/resource/weps-induction-session-1-2>

75 <https://jordan.un.org/en/205719-un-women-launches-guidelines-leadership-and-skills-development-women-private-sector>

	<p>The approach successfully cultivated trust with companies, establishing WEPs/JP as the preferred partner for gender equality and women's economic empowerment. However, notable challenges emerged. Convincing the private sector and employers' associations to invest significantly in gender equality amid the post-pandemic landscape proved demanding and resource-intensive. While dedicated human and financial resources were allocated to WEPs implementation, delivering customized technical assistance and tailored capacity building faced constraints, necessitating additional resources to meet the growing demand from the expanding WEPs network. Engagement discrepancies among WEPs signatories changes in focal points within companies, and cultural norms hindering gender equality adoption further complicated the process. Additionally, challenges in data collection for progress measurement were evident, with reporting being voluntary and varying across companies.⁷⁶</p> <p>The costs of the initiatives were shared. The companies appointed dedicated human resources employees to drive the gender equality agenda, and they also bore the costs of the private sector chaired WEPs Network meetings chaired by the private sector. This good practice model builds on the global and regional experience ensuring the good practice proposed is optimal.</p>
Key partners	<p>The model takes a multi-stakeholder partnership approach. Partners include: The Social Security Investment Fund (SSIF), Amman Stock Exchange (ASE), Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), International Finance Corporation (IFC), Mashreq Gender Facility (MGF), Ministry of Labour (MoL), Amman Chamber of Commerce and Jordan Chamber of Industry, Amman Chamber of Industry, Business and Professional Women's Association (BPWA), Jordan Forum for Business and Professional Women (JFBPW), Jordan Investors Association (JIA), Association of Banks in Jordan (ABJ), INJAZ, Int@J The ICT Association of Jordan, International Labour Organization (ILO), UN Global Compact (UNGC), and WEPs signatory companies from Jordan.</p>
Evidence-based	<p>Abundant empirical evidence indicates the important role the private sector plays in inclusive economic growth and increasing women's economic participation. In the case of Jordan, the companies are invited to utilize the WEPs Gender Gap Analysis tool⁷⁷ to ensure their WEPs/Gender Action Plans are based on evidence. The tool is free and confidential. The tool helps the company identify strengths and weaknesses concerning a number of indicators of the commitment from leadership, the workplace, marketplace and the community. Annual surveys are organised by the JP to measure the progress on implementation of WEPs principles.</p>
Replicability and Scalability	<p>This approach is flexible and can be duplicated in various country contexts, both within the region and globally. Key factors to consider are: reaching out to influential companies to set an example for others, engaging companies through industry chambers and business associations, providing a clear value proposition to businesses, and effectively managing expectations. The leadership role for WEPs can vary depending on the specific country context, with either government institutions or business representatives taking the lead.</p>

⁷⁶ KII meeting with WEPs expert Jordan (meeting recording)

⁷⁷ <https://weps-gapanalysis.org/>

Innovation	<p>Particular in the case of Jordan is the creativity of the JP in finding entry points and capitalizing on the growing WEPs Network to become active promoters of women’s economic empowerment. For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. WEPs and Oasis: WEPs signatories provided certified entrepreneurship training to Jordanian and Syrian women and men. The training was provided pro bono as part of the WEPs commitment in Oasis centres located in different directorates. The training was followed by a selection and interview process by expert trainers from WEPs signatory companies for training on Vocational Landscaping Entrepreneurship, Pest Control, Sanitization and Chocolate making. b. WEPs mentors’ capacity building session: WEPs signatories provided training to business start-up mentors at My Start-up Incubator in INJAZ. The mentors were encouraged to advise start-ups to adopt gender-responsive policies since the onset. c. WEPs and National Strategy for Women: WEPs Network collaborated with JNCW to develop the Implementation Plan for the 2020-2025 National Strategy for Women, ensuring the private sector is actively involved and their perspective is reflected on the plans to integrate more women in the labour market. d. WEPs and job matching: WEPs signatories visited Aqaba Oasis Center and informed women about employment opportunities and application methods to facilitate the job placement. Women will have access to the job opportunities during the employment fairs planned to take place targeting WEPs signatories, mainly in the tourism and textile sectors in Aqaba among other sectors across Jordan.
Sustainability	<p>Jordan has the highest number of WEPs signatories in the region, and the second⁷⁸ established functioning National WEPs Network. The work of the JP engaging the private sector for gender equality is well recognized in the country. Recently, the government announced initiation of a National Gender Seal programme targeting both public and private sector entities, institutionalized at the JNCW. For the work with the private sector, the government requested to use the seven WEPs principles as the guiding framework to qualify for the Seal. Technical assistance is being provided to design this government led initiative, that translates into an exit strategy for the JP and sustainability of results achieved to date from WEPs implementation.</p>
Specific Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate closely with the government, business representatives, and civil society, including women workers' representatives, to develop a National WEPs Action Plan. Ensure it is costed and includes a clear system for data collection, monitoring and reporting framework. • Institutionalize the WEPs Local Network for sustainable support and engagement. • Allocate sufficient human and financial resources for robust collaboration with businesses. Activities include outreach, presenting the business case for gender equality, building trust, providing technical support, and monitoring WEPs Action Plans. Emphasize the need for standardization and long-term commitment.

78 WEPs UAE Network launched the WEPs Committee <https://twitter.com/WEPsUAE/status/1174241660651413506>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize available data to analyze and propose a sustainable model for specialized technical support to WEPs signatories. • Standardize progress measurement and reporting with defined indicators and timeframes. Reference and adapt the WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework. • Create a country database, linked to a regional central database, to facilitate data collection, track support to private companies, record monitoring activities, and enhance services for the private sector. • Establish systematic collaborations between WEPs signatories, Public Employment Services, and academic institutions to facilitate women's training and job placement for skill development and employment opportunities.
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8. Good Practice Model 8: Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in depth - Palestine

#8	Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in depth - Palestine
The issue	<p>The female unemployment rate more than tripled, from 12.4 percent in 2000 to 43 percent in 2021. This transpired even as female labour force participation is among the world lowest averaging 15.5 percent over the past two decades. Two-thirds of the employed workforce are in the Palestinian private sector, while 21 percent are public sector employees, and 13 percent work in Israel and settlements. Only 9 percent of private sector firms are headed by women (IMF, 2023)⁷⁹. Two-thirds of women are employed in the service subsectors, the majority in education, public administration and health and social work. Public sector jobs are still perceived as more secure and favourable to women. Considering the importance of the private sector for national growth, making efforts to change business conduct to be more gender equal is pivotal to attract female talent. A gender-equal private sector leads to greater productivity, competitiveness, and economic returns for society as a whole.</p>
The Approach	<p>A sectoral approach was utilized to engage private sector for gender equality in Palestine. The sectors of interest were services, ICT, investment and finance (banking and non-banking) sector. Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) guide the process for companies to become gender responsive. In line with the Regional WEPs Strategy, the business representatives and individual influential companies were targeted initially to serve as role models to follow.</p> <p>The number of WEPs signatories in Palestine doubled since the start of the JP implementation. While in absolute terms the numbers are modest (7 in 2018 and 18 in 2022), the objective of the JP in Palestine was to deepen the collaboration rather than expand the WEPs network.</p>

79 <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/002/2023/147/article-A001-en.xml>

Adopting a different approach than other countries, the JP in Palestine promoted establishment of **Gender Teams** within companies. The gender teams were diverse in composition representing different departments, bringing more diverse viewpoints and mixed expertise to the team. This approach is more promising versus a gender-related focal point tasked with one major mission. Supported by the leadership of the company, the gender teams were assigned to translate the gender equality commitments of the company into concrete actions. It is important that company leadership is clear on gender strategy from the onset and understands what it entails to promote gender equality within the company as well as towards their clientele and the communities they serve.

The companies received technical support, capacity-building and were provided access to resources and tools that assist in advancing women's economic empowerment. Specifically, the companies received **technical support and training** to conduct the Participatory Gender Audit and/ or [WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool](#). The findings from these gender assessments serve as solid grounds on which the WEPs Action Plans are developed⁸⁰. Building on the WEPs global tools and practices, within national contexts, companies in Palestine access resources such as: guidance on establishing the WEPs gender team, how to develop a gender action plan, engaging women in policy making and leadership positions; guidance on work-life balance policies etc. More **specialized resources and services**⁸¹ are also made available for the signatories, for example around issues related to sexual harassment in the workplace, investing in women in leadership positions, equal professional development opportunities etc. The Ministry of National Economy (MoNE) continuously supported the initiatives that promote women's economic empowerment in the private sector. In some cases, the **public-private sector collaboration** is formalized with an MOU, like is the case with the MoNE and Bank of Palestine, to raise awareness among women business owners on financial literacy and formalization of business.

[Testimonials and case studies](#) to recognize the efforts and work of companies towards becoming gender equal are an important tool for promoting women's economic empowerment in the private sector. Some of the WEPs signatories in Palestine developed and publicly announced their commitment to gender equality, becoming role models for others to follow. They did this by launching their strategic gender action plans⁸² and publicly making pledges for gender equality during events such as the Ring the Bell for Gender Equality on International Women's Day. For example, the Bank of Palestine (BOP) pledged to: (1) Increase female board representation to reach 50 percent by year 2022 and (2) Increase female staff to reach 50 percent by year 2025. BOP is on track with the progress towards their targets: have reached gender equality on boards⁸³ and are working towards the second indicator.⁸⁴

80 Vitas Palestine Company used the findings of the assessment to develop their 5 year Gender Action Plan. Activities included internal interventions targeting gender balance within the company and external interventions aiming to increase the number of women clientele (KII meeting)

81 Apic Palestine Company emphasized the importance of providing companies with practical tools developed based on international practices. The example underlined was the tool provided by the JP to develop policies against workplace harassment, regarded as practical and user friendly (KII meeting)

	<p>The progress of implementing the plans is also monitored and data is collected through an Annual Survey conducted with WEPs signatories that focuses on two indicators: women in leadership and women’s equal access to professional development.</p> <p>In 2023, Palestine initiated launching a WEPs Network aiming to ensure the sustainability of achieved results and to further expand the pool of private sector companies that promote gender equality and women’s empowerment. Due to the war, these interventions have been suspended.</p>
<p>Effectiveness and Efficiency</p>	<p>The intervention has exceeded expectations: 18 companies joined the WEPs (PMF 2022 target: 11 companies) and 14 promote gender equality (PMF target: 8 gender equality champions). In the reference period, 5 companies invested in training and professional development of women employees (PMF 2022 target: 15).</p> <p>A number of factors are considered to have contributed to the success of the good practice: establishment of diverse Gender teams, public endorsement and support from the management, hands on support to companies in conducting the gender assessments, taking a sectoral approach to implementation of WEPs, networking among the WEPs signatories, securing support from the government institutions, accessing contextualized guidelines, and tools to fit the reality of Palestinian labour market, etc.</p> <p>Allocating dedicated human and financial resources for promoting and implementation of WEPs principles is crucial to ensure quality and continuous service provision to companies. Data collection for measuring and reporting on the changes achieved for women from implementation of the principles could be strengthened.</p> <p>This model follows internationally established principles to advance women’s empowerment and builds on the previous experience in Palestine, the region and beyond. The costs of the good practice are shared between partners. For example, the company staff time dedicated to their role as members of the gender teams to promote and implement WEPs, use of meeting and training facilities etc.</p>
<p>Key partners</p>	<p>Individual Businesses, Private Sector Representatives, government institutions such as MoNE, MoWA and PMA are crucial partners to implementation of the good practice.</p>

82 <https://palestine.unwomen.org/en/stories/press-release/2023/01/vitas-palestine-launches-its-plan-on-the-implementation-of-the-women-empowerment-principals-weps>

83 KII meeting with Bank of Palestine

84 The National Bank (TNB) pledged to: Increase percentage of senior female employees at the bank to 25% by year 2022.

Information on the progress was not accessible at the time of writing the report.

Evidence-based	<p>The JP produced a study mapping the ongoing efforts by actors who used gender equality tools for private sector development. The mapping was conducted in coordination with Ministry of Women’s Affairs and aimed to demonstrate the effectiveness of the gender assessment tools in mainstreaming gender in the work of organizations, institutions and corporates. Among interesting findings was that between the entities surveyed, the private sector companies were more likely to have developed and implemented gender action plans following the recommendations of the gender assessments compared to municipalities, central government institutions and CSOs taking part in the mapping. The JP organized annual surveys with WEPs signatories to assess the progress made in implementation of their WEPs/Gender workplans.</p>
Replicability and Scalability	<p>WEPs, as a tool, is implemented globally and adapted to country contexts. The successful elements making the approach a good practice are adaptable and replicable, following a situation analysis to understand the obstacles and opportunities in engaging with private sector for GEWE.</p> <p>Further, with adequate human and financial resources, the model has the potential for expansion. This involves broadening the scope of partners involved in promoting and implementing WEPs, starting with relevant government institutions in economic development, private sector growth and women's labour force participation. Engaging with a more diverse group of private sector representatives will contribute to spreading awareness and convincing additional companies to join the WEPs initiative. Introducing incentives, such as preferential treatment for WEPs signatories in business collaborations, can serve as a motivating factor for other companies to join and participate in potential partnerships⁸⁵.</p>
Innovation	<p>A number of companies employed innovative solutions to implement the gender action plans. Emphasizing the involvement of management from the beginning was deemed crucial. Additionally, while forming diverse gender teams, careful consideration was given to include men—both as advocates for gender equality and those who may initially be unconvinced about its significance or less supportive of initiatives promoting women's empowerment⁸⁶. Different from other countries in the region, and beyond, approach requires establishment of diverse gender teams versus single gender focal points to move the gender equality needle in companies.</p>
Sustainability	<p>The JP in Palestine initiated the establishment of the WEPs National Network to transfer knowledge and ownership to national entities. Having a clear exit strategy, as agreed by national counterparts, to ensure sustainability of the results is key.</p> <p>The MoNE initiated a research study to explore Business Models for Women's Empowerment, with a particular focus on the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs). The Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) is conducting the study, aiming to offer policy-level and practical recommendations to the MoNE on promoting the implementation of WEPs principles within the private sector⁸⁷.</p>

85 KII meeting recommendation from WEPs signatories in Palestine:

86 KII meeting: Vitas Palestine company

87 JP Palestine team

Specific Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider introducing the companies to the WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework,⁸⁸ a reference guide for tracing results on gender equality and women’s empowerment. Provide the tools and build capacities of the private sector to monitor and measure the change from promoting GEWE. It is recommended to standardize the indicators in the country and across the region to allow for country comparisons. • Responding to WEPs signatories’ recommendations⁸⁹, establish a WEPs network that will function as a platform for collaboration and exchange as well as for lobbying and influencing policy making. • Monitoring for impact – encourage the entities to annually publish the status on the public pledges made as part of the annual Ring the Bell for Gender Equality or other public events or company strategies. Reporting results internally and externally can help in mobilizing trust among women and men employees and potential workers that change can happen. At the same time, reporting externally on the progress and results can help encourage other peer companies to get on board towards GEWE. • Gender teams instead of gender focal point – applying the tested approach within government institutions in the private sector was a good idea. Engaging CEOs to support the gender teams is enabling and empowering. Promoting the development of costed Gender/ WEPs Action Plans with integrated results monitoring and reporting frameworks can facilitate their implementation. • Target export-oriented companies as a strategy to expand the WEPs network. • Focus on a number of service lines, overall or by sector – versus all WEPs principles approach
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9. Good Practice Model 9: Private sector adopts code of conduct on violence at work in Palestine

#9	Private sector adopts code of conduct on violence at work in Palestine
The issue	<p>The most common types of violence against women observed in Palestine include domestic violence, sexual harassment, early marriage and femicide. Violence in public and private spheres including streets, workplaces, homes and high-density areas such as refugee camps is also an issue in the country. The incidents of violence against women in households are higher during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the MoWA 2020 study⁹⁰ on the impact of COVID-19 on violence against women and girls in Palestine, indicated that 54 percent of the women were subjected to economic violence due to the halted operations of businesses during the period of closure and the suspension of financial and purchasing activities in several economic sectors. In the Palestine economy, considering private sector is an important employer for women, ensuring a safe workplace free of violence and harassment is essential for women and translates into increased productivity and sustainable business.</p>

88 <https://www.weps.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/WEPs%20Transparency%20and%20accountability%20framework%20reference%20guide.pdf>

89 KII meeting with WEPs signatories in Palestine

90 <https://palestine.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Palestine/Attachments/Publications/2020/12/Factsheets/E2.pdf>

<p>The Approach</p>	<p>The outdated and discriminatory laws in Palestine hinder survivors of violence from accessing gender-responsive services and obtaining justice. The PGFTU and partners, with support from the JP made efforts to find an alternative approach to dealing with cases of violence at workplace, while waiting for the legislative reform to happen. The PGFTU signed an MOU with MoWA that calls for institutionalizing gender issues in the labour market. The JP continued supporting PGFTU efforts in raising the awareness of women workers and gender advocates, on labour rights and most pertinent conventions for the promotion of gender equality.</p> <p>The JP conducted in-depth discussions and consultations, particularly with the employers' group of Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (FPCCIA). The discussions focused on obtaining a joint consensus on the significance of adoption of codes of conduct against violence and harassment in the workplace by the private sector. In discussion with PGFTU, one private enterprise, the Northern Electricity Distribution Company (NEDC) was selected to be the pilot. The selection was based largely on the strength of the worker's union in the company, increasing the likelihood of successfully reaching a positive result: the adoption and implementation of the code of conduct on violence at work.</p> <p>With support from the JP, the NEDC staff, workers and the management, were familiarized with information and material related to the Convention on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work of 2019 (C190). Expertise was solicited to assess the human resource policies in terms of compliance with the convention, a process closely followed by the PGFTU, also as a learning by doing opportunity. The assessment revealed gaps in human resources policies where violence and harassment definitions and relevant terms were lacking, and written procedures for help services and advice were absent. The NEDC did not provide workers with tools and guidance for making complaints, or handling cases of violations and abuse, including both formal and informal procedures. Based on the findings of the assessment, a set of recommendations has facilitated the company in drafting a form of code of conduct signed at the enterprise level in early 2022. During the implementation period, NEDC revised and/or introduced a number of policies, relating to: maternity leave, paternity leave, complaint mechanisms for cases of violence etc. These provisions yielded positive results in terms of improving workplace conditions, reducing staff turnover, reducing absenteeism, increasing productivity, etc.</p> <p>The PGFTU used the knowledge gained through training⁹¹ and practical experience from the pilot, resulting in 22 new entities (16 private companies and 6 municipalities) signing the adoption of the code of conduct. This will be translated into better working conditions and greater protection against violence and harassment at workplaces for 3062 male and 1516 female workers.⁹²</p>
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91 For example, in collaboration with the Gender Academy at the International Training Centre (ITC) of the ILO, representatives from ILO's Palestinian social partners enhanced their awareness and skills and got exposed to the best practices in addressing violence and harassment in the world of work in line with ILO convention number 190 and its recommendation 206 through participating in a blended capacity building training. To ensure C190 is reflected in the labour law reform from a gender perspective, the head of the MOL Legal Department was identified and benefited from additional training on identifying and addressing violence and harassment (conventions 190 and its recommendation 206) and gender issues.

92 JP Annual Report 2022;

	<p>The legal unit at PGFTU supported these 22 entities to review their internal HR policies in relation to workplace violence and harassment. Accordingly, amendments pertinent to general principles on the prevention and management of violence and harassment at work were suggested, with reference to the Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 206), 2019⁹³. The PGFTU continues to support the companies to implement the suggested measures and monitor the impact from adopting the code of conduct (i.e. establishing a complaint mechanism and a complaints' monitoring unit).</p>
<p>Effectiveness and Efficiency</p>	<p>The intervention surpassed the target. 22 firms (PMF target 3) developed codes of conduct against violence and harassment in the workplace.</p> <p>The capacity-building component was critical for the success of the approach. The PGFTU and its Gender Unit benefited from various training opportunities at the local, regional, and international levels. Putting the theoretical knowledge gained into practice during the implementation of the pilot phase provided the opportunity for learn by doing. With the knowledge and practical experience gained during the piloting, the PGFTU/Gender Unit could effectively engage in a social dialogue with employers, representing and advocating for workers' rights. At a sectoral level, the JP facilitated the social dialogue leading to the signing of four collective bargaining agreements.</p> <p>Challenges were encountered in the process. The company's narrow understanding of definitions of violence and harassment led to the belief that there was no need to have policies in place against all forms of violence and harassment in the workplace as a preventive approach. The PGFTU sensitized the company on different forms of violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, and ensured their understanding that by signing on to the code of conduct the company expresses they have zero tolerance for any kind of violence and harassment in the workplace. The PGFTU highlighted the benefits of creating a friendly working environment for both the company and the employees.</p> <p>The costs were shared between JP, PGFTU and private companies. Through a prudent strategy that involved initiating a pilot and subsequently scaling up based on lessons learned, the JP and its partners effectively managed their interventions, optimizing resources.</p>
<p>Key partners</p>	<p>The Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) is a key partner to the JP and the leader of this good practice.</p> <p>The Northern Electricity Distribution Company (NEDC) – participated in the pilot phase.</p>

93 https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C190

Evidence-based	<p>The JP used international evidence of the benefits from adopting codes of conduct against violence and harassment. The international convention was also a referral point.</p> <p>The JP supported the PGFTU to generate evidence from Palestine. A pilot project was established, and the evidence was used to design the model for replication and reaching out to more companies.</p>
Replicability and Scalability	<p>The approach is replicable in similar contexts. To further improve the practice, and in order to facilitate the conversation and accelerate the process, it is recommended to condition the adoption of the code of conduct by companies, for example, on licence renewal. This would facilitate the conversation and accelerate the process which otherwise proved to be time consuming.</p> <p>Moreover, the good practice has shown to have potential for scaling up. During the JP implementation, within a limited timeframe the PGFTU managed to increase the number of companies adopting the code of conduct from one to 22 companies. With the adequate resources, the PGFTU is now equipped with what it takes to support companies in adopting and implementing the code.</p>
Innovation	<p>Testing the approach with one company before scaling up to ensure the lessons learned are captured for an improved support to private companies by the PGFTU is considered a valuable decision. Also, combining the theoretical capacity building with hands-on practical experience could be a contributing factor to the success of this approach.</p>
Sustainability	<p>The PGFTU and its Gender Unit are more capable and equipped with all skills needed to advocate for workers' rights and working conditions and represent them effectively. The resources are in place to sustainably continue supporting companies to combat all forms of violence and harassment by raising awareness, building capacity of the management and staff and facilitating the signing of the code of conduct.</p> <p>In the absence of a reformed legislative and judicial system to address gender-based violence and harassment at home or in the workplace, a reform process currently halted due to the situation in Palestine, the PGFTU is striving to establish an interim alternative system. This system aims to ensure the existence of mechanisms for reporting and collecting complaints, then subsequently addressing them through mediation and dialogue. Trade unionists have undergone training on C190, and workplace committees are being formed to gather complaints and report them to the complaint units at PGFTU. Subsequently, cases will be referred to the PGFTU's legal units regionally for further review and action⁹⁴.</p>

94 KII Meeting with PGFTU representatives

Specific Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a set of indicators to assess the impact from implementing the code of conduct adopted to fight the violence and harassment at workplace. Such indicators can include: the per cent of reduction in staff turnover rate, the number of sick leave days per year, the per cent reduction in absenteeism, the percent change in productivity level, the per cent change in profits, the per cent change in market shares, # of women employees etc. • Collecting and disseminating evidence can have a significant impact on persuading companies to join in fighting the violence and harassment against women at workplace. • Invite the WEPs signatories to adopt the code of conduct. Use the WEPs network and promote widely the results.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend training to company management and workers on eliminating harassment at workplace. Use the “Sexual Harassment in the World of Work” toolkit and training developed at the regional level to encourage employers to implement effective policies on violence and harassment elimination and prevention. • The PGFTU has the skills and needs sustainable resources to continue providing support to the companies to adopt, implement and monitor progress from having the code of conduct in place. Scaling up the approach with adequate resources could mean safer, harassment free workplaces for approximately 290,000 women and men workers represented by PGFTU⁹⁵.

10. Good Practice Model 10: Improving working conditions for women in the education sector in Palestine

#10	Improving working conditions for women in the education sector in Palestine
The issue	<p>According to a sectoral study on working conditions conducted in 2019 by ILO and UN Women⁹⁶, about 76% of workers in kindergartens and 51.8 per cent of workers in private schools are working without written contracts. Even among those with long years of work experience, the share of those without fixed term contracts is relatively high. The same study finds that about 7 per cent of the workers in kindergartens and 28 per cent of the workers in private schools receive monthly salaries that are less than the minimum wage.</p> <p>Another study of the administrative occupations sub-services sector provided evidence on the challenges and obstacles that women workers encounter and formed the basis for the actors within the sector to engage in bipartite and tripartite social dialogue towards improving labour relations and conditions of work within the private sector.</p>

⁹⁵ <https://projects.ituc-csi.org/pgftu>

⁹⁶ National Decent Work programme funded by Italian Cooperation

<p>The Approach</p>	<p>Reforming the Palestinian labour law has been a key priority for the tripartite partners as an imperative objective for addressing labour market inequalities and the realization of labour rights for women. In 2019, the JP supported its social partners (employers' and workers' representative organizations, and Ministry of Labour who were tasked to reform the labour law) to draft an issue paper that formed the basis for the Labour Law reform, with an integrated gender perspective.</p> <p>Reforming the Palestinian labour law has been a key priority for the tripartite partners as an imperative objective for addressing labour market inequalities and the realization of labour rights for women. In 2019, the JP supported its social partners (employers' and workers' representative organizations, and the Ministry of Labour who were tasked to reform the labour law) to draft an issue paper that formed the basis for the Labour Law reform with an integrated gender perspective.</p>
	<p>The labour law reform process took a break due to the COVID-19 outburst in 2020. A study was commissioned to assess the impact of the pandemic on the labour market. The constituents agreed the focus of the study is to address the emergent issues stemming from the pandemic including, wages, dismissals, occupational safety and health and home quarantine, sick leave, teleworking, and protection of women – for whose rights violations were exacerbated during the pandemic. The study provides recommendations looking at immediate economic interventions that might mitigate the impact of the lockdown on workers and their families; and structural interventions to set the economy on an inclusive growth path.</p> <p>In 2021, the tripartite constituents agreed to resume the labour law reform process. The government, workers and employers' organizations initiated extensive social dialogue aiming at bridging disagreements and reaching consensus on reform issues in the Labour Law. The JP facilitated the process by ensuring the integration of International Labour Standards (ILS) and cross-cutting matters of gender equality, violence and harassment, and that occupational safety and health are taken into consideration. Expanding on successful approaches, the JP supported the formation of a national coalition between the PGFTU and CSOs representatives of youth, women and people with disabilities. This coalition amplified the trade union's influence, enhancing its capacity to advocate for labour law reform in Palestine that benefits workers. The JP also provided data and evidence to support the reform process, such as the assessment of working conditions in the education and sub-services economic sectors.</p> <p>The JP supported the establishment of a national tripartite committee, responsible for labour law reform. After a period of intensive dialogue with this committee, a number of policy recommendations were developed and submitted to the Palestinian Cabinet for approval. These policy recommendations are applicable for the sectoral level and enterprise level, and they are: i) flexible and part-time working arrangements, ii) the C190 definition for violence and a code of ethics, iii) provisions against all forms of gender-based violence in employment and increased penalties for non-compliance, iv) introduction of specialized labour court for protection of workers v) termination of working contract by workers in case of sexual harassment.</p>

	<p>In March 2021, the national tripartite committee appointed a private schools and kindergartens national committee. A tripartite social dialogue over workers’ rights and improved working conditions for the sake of improving the performance of the sector was launched, using the data from a 2019 sectoral study assessing working conditions in private education and kindergartens. As a result of evidence-based intensive social dialogue, the workers and employers’ organisations representing private schools and kindergarten sector agreed to enforce the application of a unified national working contract as of beginning of September 2023. The agreements cover a written employment contract for workers (90 percent women) in the private schools and kindergartens in line with the Palestinian labour law⁹⁷.</p> <p>The dialogue with the Ministry of Education proved complex. As per current regulations, all private education entities are obligated to provide individual contracts to their employees. Until these regulations undergo modification, the Ministry of Labour, through its labour inspection directorate, will meticulously examine individual contracts to verify their alignment with the standardized contract content agreed upon through the collaborative efforts of the social dialogue partners⁹⁸. Further, an awareness raising campaign on workers’ rights in private education and the unified working contract was organised. MoL, MoE and the PGFTU started organizing joint monitoring field visits to private schools and kindergartens to monitor compliance with the Palestinian labour law.</p> <p>The approach to signing bargaining agreements to improve the working conditions of women was similar to concluding a social dialogue with a unified working contract. The sub-service sectors in focus were those with a high representation of women mainly in administrative positions: law firms, engineering offices, private medical clinics, accounting and auditing offices. The JP supported evidence generation to supplement the negotiations. The study touched upon policies that govern the sub-sector, the existing mechanisms for worker’s protection, representation and organization and assessing the working conditions. The objective of the study was to foster sectoral industrial relations and improve working conditions.</p> <p>The PGFTU relied on the findings and recommendations from the study in the intensive dialogue with social partners to finally conclude four collective bargaining agreements with the private sector (tourism, stone and marble, medical laboratory association).</p>
<p>Effectiveness and Efficiency</p>	<p>The JP conducted 4 assessments of corporate policies in favour of gender equality (surpassing the PMF target of two assessments). The JP facilitated one unified contract for private education (includes kindergartens), on track to achieve the PMF target of two collective bargaining agreement negotiations initiated with a gender lens.</p> <p>The PGFTU and its Gender Unit knowledge and experience gained through the JP supported interventions was critical to achieving the results. Further, the data and evidence on the returns from investing in workers’ rights and wellbeing, supported the negotiation process.</p>

97 The labour law provisions include: minimum wage, equal remuneration of work of equal value, decent working conditions, paid leave entitlements stipulated in the law (maternity leave, sick leave), safe and healthy working environment, complaints mechanism to report on cases of violence and sexual harassment, referral system of survivors of sexual harassment to include legal and psychological support, etc.

98 KII meeting with Ministry of Labour representative

	<p>The negotiations over the unified contract for the private sector and kindergartens happened during the period of labour law reform efforts led by the national tripartite committee. Capitalizing on this opportune momentum likely played a significant role in the successful outcome of the social dialogue and the agreement reached for the implementation of the unified contract for this sector. Nevertheless, the process encountered challenges. Entering into an agreement with the workers' union involved a commitment from employers to implement specific workplace policies and practices with financial implications.</p> <p>This complexity rendered the negotiation process a challenging dialogue, particularly in a labour market with an excess supply of labour. The frequent turnover of employers' representatives during social dialogues often hindered progress and nullified agreements from prior iterations. The PGFTU exerted dedicated efforts to finalize the collective agreement within the private education sector by inclusively involving the community and political leaders in the negotiation process. Further, since October 2023 the legislative reform as well as the process of testing application of the unified contract among private sector entities was halted due to the escalation of the war in Palestine.</p> <p>The costs of the approach were shared with national counterparts. For example, the negotiation process was led by human resources staff appointed by the PGFTU.</p>
Key partners	The national committees, the workers' and employers' representative organizations, MoL and Ministry of Education, the PGFTU
Evidence-based	The committee used the data and evidence from the sectoral study assessing the working conditions in the private education and kindergartens done in 2019 and the sub sectoral study on law firms, engineering offices, private medical clinics, and accounting and auditing offices done in 2021. The evidence-based data and main findings generated by the studies helped in shaping affirmative actions and gender responsive policies by the employers for improved working conditions of female workers in the sub-sectors, leading to more job opportunities in the sector.
Replicability and Scalability	<p>The approach demonstrates strong potential for replication in similar contexts. One vital consideration is to ensure the involvement of all relevant parties from the outset. For instance, the committee formed as a result of the social dialogue conference to address issues in the private education sector initially included members from the Ministry of Labour, employers, and workers. However, it was only later that the Ministry of Education, crucial due to its oversight of the sector, became involved.</p> <p>Furthermore, scalability is evident through the ample human resources and consistent financial support available to the PGFTU from various organizations, highlighting its pivotal role in the ecosystem. This capacity enabled efficient expansion of operations to address additional economic sectors as necessary. Similarly, the Ministry of Labour possesses the necessary capacity and resources to continue its monitoring role through the labour inspectorate.⁹⁹</p>

Innovation	A forward-thinking strategy for enhancing working conditions in private schools and kindergartens places a strong emphasis on the ready availability of data as well as sufficient human and financial resources. From the very beginning of the intervention's implementation, the JP prioritized empowering local partners with the skills and resources necessary for sustained service delivery.
Sustainability	The implementation of this approach is led nationally by the PGFTU, with key national institutions involved such as the Ministry of Labour, Education and Women's Affairs. A tripartite committee for private schools and kindergartens has been established, consisting of representatives from the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, worker and employer organizations. This committee is equipped to sustain the dialogue, oversee the implementation of the unified contract, and manage sector-related activities as required. Additionally, both the PGFTU and the trade union of workers (such as those in the medical laboratory sub-sector) will oversee employer compliance and evaluate the agreement's impact on workers.
Specific Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework under the auspices of the PGFTU for systematically gathering data concerning the effects of the endorsed unified contracts. It is advisable to create standardized performance metrics applicable across various sectors, enabling cross-regional and international benchmarking. • Boost efforts to raise awareness and advocate for the social and economic advantages stemming from enhanced working conditions for both women and men. Utilize the data collected by companies implementing unified contracts to reinforce the case for these improvements. • Sustain and enhance investments in strengthening the collaborative alliance between PGFTU and CSOs. Prioritize gender equality advocacy and its prominent role in influencing the labour law reform process, making it the primary objective, rather than a secondary outcome of coalition efforts. • Consider institutionalization of a sectoral approach to the social dialogue based on the evidence generated and results achieved to date

3.2.3. Outcome 3. Gender stereotypes about women and men's responsibilities concerning unpaid care and household work are challenged.

11. Good Practice Model 11: Challenging discriminatory norms over women and occupations in Egypt (TVET-STEM)

#11	Challenging discriminatory norms over women and occupations in Egypt
The issue	The government of Egypt has made significant efforts to boost Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) quality. More than half of students enrolled in TVET are women ¹⁰⁰ . About 47.2 per cent of STEM graduates are women (CAPMAS 2019/2020).

100 <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/middle%20east%20and%20africa/women%20at%20work%20in%20the%20middle%20east/women-at-work-in-the-middle-east.pdf>

<p>The issue</p>	<p>However, women tend to choose professional development in sectors such as education, arts, health, etc. and are under-represented in engineering and technology sectors. Further, women working in STEM fields prefer to do so in the public sector (21 percent) over the private sector (11 percent) (British Council Study, 2021).¹⁰¹ Occupational segregation has led to a gender pay gap. According to World Economic Forum, in 2022 men in Egypt earned four times more than women in relation to GDP per capita.</p> <p>A tri-partite partnership approach was introduced in support to applied technological vocational schools, whereby the government, a TVET school and an international arm, collaborated to enhance the labour market outcomes of the TVET students. The role of the private company in the model (providing uniforms, workshop supplies, apprenticeship, etc. was instrumental and crucial for the success of the tri-partite approach to TVET education. However, the absorption capacity of the one partner company per TVET school is limited, and women students have less chance to be selected for apprenticeship. Employers perceive women as not having interest in such jobs or suggest that they lack the necessary technical skills and practical work experience compared to men. Among the reasons for unfair recruitment processes, employers cite women’s lack of soft skills or their inability to work in remote areas due to lack of safe transportation. As such women have limited access to training programmes and job placements, perpetuating the gender gap in the labour market (UN Women, 2023)¹⁰².</p>
<p>The Approach</p>	<p>The JP, following a competitive call for proposals, supported the tripartite partnership between the Ministry of Education, three Technical Vocational Education and Training Schools in the electricity sector and the European Institute for Cooperation and Development (IECD) (as international arm). The electricity sector was selected in close consultation with the national counterparts. The JP approach focused on three fronts: to raise awareness and knowledge of gender issues among students and teachers, to equip the women students with soft skills needed in the labour market and to facilitate partnerships with private companies to offer apprenticeship opportunities.</p> <p>The JP invested in awareness raising among TVET students and teachers about gender norms and stereotypes regarding women in non-traditional sectors.</p> <p>Activities to address gender issues included sports days for change, interactive theatre performances, and gamification boards on social norms and misconceptions.</p> <p>Women students of the partner schools were provided training¹⁰³ on soft skills to complement their technical skills, as well as entrepreneurship training¹⁰⁴. Through peer-to-peer learning, VET students of the three partner schools were exposed to knowledge on environmental issues, including renewable and green energy.</p>

101 https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_booklet_spreads_-_2021.pdf

102 <https://egypt.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/04/opportunities-in-employing-women-technicians>

103 Soft skills training: problem solving, time management, professional attitude, presentation and communication skills to enhance their employment prospects;

104 Entrepreneurship training: the basics on business ideas/prototypes, management, costing (profits/expenses), and (digital) marketing as part of the entrepreneurship journey training. English language course that would help them access jobs in the hospitality sector as technicians, was also provided.

TVET school teachers increased their understanding of the challenges and misconceptions about gender issues. The teachers had access to a gender awareness guide, that was developed with the JP support and is added to the school curricula as an Annex¹⁰⁵. Such guidance adapted to the TVET context has been developed for the first time and is available in Arabic. This helped teachers to use gender sensitive examples and practice more gender responsive actions with students. The teachers were also trained on computer literacy enabling them to continue performing their jobs in the newly adopted blended learning approach introduced due to the pandemic.

As part of the tri-partite government modality, the private sector companies partnering with technological schools would offer internship opportunities to the students. However, when the partner company could not meet the demand, it was often the case that women students that were the ones left out of the opportunities to be enrolled for internships at workplaces. The JP supported in finding alternatives so young women students have the opportunity to gain practical experience through internships in other companies. In order to do so, the JP tapped into the network of WEPs signatories and promoted the initiative among potential WEPs network members (i.e. members of the French Chamber of Commerce).

A number of companies opened up to admitting Interns in the workplace for a month from the partnering TVET schools during the summer or winter breaks between the last semesters. The IECD implementing partner of the JP served as the facilitator between the TVET school, the WEPs companies and students for internship placement. The companies interviewed the young students. During their internships, the students were under the close monitoring and guidance of an appointed company employee. The TVET teachers would visit sporadically. An IECD trainer would accompany the young women during the internship to ensure their safety and security. All the women enrolled completed the internship and received certificates of completion after being assessed by the company. Young women were given the opportunity to access the labour market and gain soft skills and technical experience in the world of work. This work experience verified through internship certificates obtained, helped the young women to find employment. The JP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education “School-to-Work” unit, organized a job fair with over 26 companies participating. Companies were filtered before admission to the fair to ensure decent job. Women also filled vacancies advertised through other means.

<p>Effectiveness and Efficiency</p>	<p>Through this approach, 874 women benefited from capacity building and internship opportunities to enhance their employment prospects (PMF 2022 target: 540). As of December 139 ,2022 women students accessed internships in private companies and 38 women graduates gained employment as electrical technicians. The private sector (WEPs signatories) contributed to achieving the results. The majority of women decided to pursue further education and enrolled for university degree.</p> <p>Aligning with government plans and capitalizing on the ongoing work to strengthen the TVET sector was a success factor. The gender awareness sessions, including the peer-to-peer learning for students, teachers, and private companies, also contributed to the results. The students and teachers openly discussing the value of women at work was considered a success. Girl and boy students positively assessed the interactive activities to increase their understanding of gender issues and boost their self-confidence¹⁰⁶.</p> <p>Internship opportunities with the private sector provided to the young students made the approach more attractive. Capitalizing on the WEPs signatories network expanded the opportunities for internships. Producing documentaries on the interventions with testimonials from students and the private sector helped promote women’s work in the technical jobs.</p> <p>To encourage women to enter non-traditional occupational profiles, it was important to showcase the employment prospects. As such, one of the challenges identified was the limited absorption capacity of the private companies to offer internship and employment opportunities to all students. This shortage of opportunities resulted in a smaller number of women accessing internships.</p> <p>With the economic downturn due to the pandemic, many companies set gender issues as their least priority, offering jobs and internships– when available – to men believed to be the main breadwinners for the family.</p> <p>The cost of transportation and meals during the internships were shared by the company and the JP. The internship placement and the monitoring costs were covered by the JP. Employability and entrepreneurship training provided by external companies was covered by the JP. The JP partially paid for gender awareness events and in-depth analysis research whenever relevant to other ongoing programmes for a cost-share modality, resulting in a wider outreach and expanding to additional sectors including the electricity field.</p>
<p>Key partners</p>	<p>The Ministry of Education and Technical Education, the IECD, the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Egypt, Caritas Egypt, four public TVET schools,¹⁰⁷ the private sector¹⁰⁸ and other local organizations.</p>

106 JP Regional team Field visit report on February 2023 at the ElectroMisr Applied Technology School, Al Salam, Cairo

107 IECD works with four public TVET schools that includes Electro Misr Applied Technology School in Cairo, Al Wardian Industrial Secondary School for Girls, Al Ras Al Soda Industrial Secondary School for Boys in Alexandria, and DonBosco for boys in Cairo.

108 Companies which welcomed female internships (such as Nestle, Groupe SEB, Bisco Misr, Cargill, Schneider Electric, Top Selection, Hilton Green Plaza Hotel, Alstom, GILA, GAD, Memico, MAM, and Le Grand), and consulting companies (such as YAT, HLB Egypt Makary Consulting, Aspire, Well-Spring, Flink Studios, Speak-Up, Skills Bank, Mortagal, and National Employment Pact).

Evidence-based	<p>The JP used the population council study on the TVET sector to design the component. The sex-segregated data was used to conduct analysis and propose the JP interventions.</p> <p>In order to better understand the situation and identify employment opportunities for women technicians, the JP conducted an in-depth analysis looking at six economic sectors (i.e., automotive, electricity, ICT, agribusiness, FMCG and hospitality). The findings of the study paired with the JP’s experience with women technicians helped in designing further interventions for better labour market integration of women technicians and in STEM fields. Access to the study https://egypt.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/04/2023/opportunities-in-employing-women-technicians</p>
Replicability and Scalability	<p>The JP successfully replicated its model and expanded into non-traditional sectors¹⁰⁹, thereby enhancing women’s employability prospects and promoting employment in the private sector. Recommendations for similar interventions included adopting a gender awareness guide as part of the standard Ministry of Education curricula and establishing gender referrals at partnering schools. Additionally, gender awareness events should involve parents to ensure a supportive environment for women technicians at home.</p> <p>Furthermore, the model exhibits potential for scalability within the country and regionally. Sectoral promotion of Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs), particularly Principle 4, which calls upon companies to invest in education and training for career advancement within their business, can contribute significantly to scaling up the approach.</p>
Innovation	<p>The JP’s strength lies in its well-established partnerships with private enterprises through the WEPs initiative. This foundation enabled the JP to devise innovative solutions ensuring that every young woman and girl has the chance to successfully complete their internships in a private company.</p>
Sustainability	<p>Building on the lessons learned and assessments undertaken, the JP is closely collaborating with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour to design programmes and interventions in support of women in non-traditional sectors that are sustainable and fully integrated in institutional structures and systems¹¹⁰. The JP highlights the importance of employment mediation and support to labour market access and is in discussion with national counterparts to find the modalities that help expand the collaboration with private companies for training/job placement. Capacities of the teachers in the partner schools are strengthened to identify and address issues related to gender equality that may impede women TVET students from advancing in their professional development and career. The boys and girls in the schools gained more knowledge on gender issues as reported during JP monitoring visits.</p>

109 Sectors included: creative industries and ICT/web development/mobile maintenance and applications development in addition to various vocations and handicrafts that are male dominated

110 KII meeting with JP team in Egypt

Specific
Recommend-
ation

- An alternative model for collaboration between private companies and educational institutions should be developed and standardized for replication and scaling up to ensure there are sufficient internship opportunities for women and men students alike.
- Institutionalize Gender Awareness: work with the Ministry of Education to institutionalize gender awareness programmes within the vocational education curriculum. Ensure that gender-sensitive content and a gender awareness guide become standard components of teacher training and student education. This will create a sustainable framework for challenging gender stereotypes and promoting gender equality in vocational education.
- Extend collaboration with Public Employment Service (PES) providers: engage PES to (a) facilitate training and employment opportunities by providing employment counselling and job matching support, (b) gather data and provide systematic labour market information.
- Expand Systematic Private Sector Partnerships: develop a systematic and scalable approach to connect vocational education students with private sector internship opportunities. Capitalize on the WEPs network. Consider creating platforms for matching students with suitable internships.
- Ensure workplace safety and security measures: provide safe transportation and work environment. Consider workplace insurance for students attending internships in company premises.
- Advocate for Policy Changes: advocate for policy changes at the national level to support gender equality in vocational education and non-traditional professions. Promote the inclusion of women in male-dominated STEM jobs.
- Explore opportunities to integrate the model into the Gender Accelerator initiative, including tapping on the WEPs network on WEPs principle4 Education and Training for Career Advancement

12. Good Practice Model 12: Women in sports - a traditionally male-dominated sector in Jordan

#12	Women in sports – a traditionally male-dominated sector in Jordan
The issue	<p>The gender gap in labour force participation among youth in Jordan, aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, remains significant. In the first quarter of 2023, about one in three women were unemployed compared to one in five men. The unemployment rates are higher for university graduates, in particular for women – eight out of ten women with a bachelor’s degree or higher were unemployed according to Department of Statistics (DoS) (three out of ten were unemployed among men)¹¹¹.</p> <p>Some economic sectors were more harshly hit by the pandemic than others. The government introduced support packages but not all sectors benefited the same, partially due to tight fiscal space and the need for prioritization. For example, the sports sector was not spared by Covid-19 and was one of the sectors with less immediate attention for the recovery support. About 70 percent of the graduates from physical education universities who are unemployed are women¹¹². Opportunities in the sector are few. Doing sports/physical exercise was perceived a men’s activity for the purpose of “bodybuilding”. The pandemic has shifted a bit the mindset and more people started to be aware of the need for regular exercise and considered exercising at gyms or at home as part of a healthy lifestyle. The demand for gyms and fitness clubs have increased and have been assessed with high growth potential. This can lead to more employment opportunities opening up for women, including as coaches.¹¹³ However, women have faced difficulties in entering the labour market and finding decent jobs in the sector.</p>
The Approach	<p>The Mudarib company, a private sports centre, conducted a survey among graduates or near graduates and analysed the reasons for their inability to enter the labour market. The data pointed out several issues, revolving around the stigma and gender-based discrimination which has produced a gap between women’s qualifications and skills and the needs of the industry. Based on this knowledge, Mudarib developed a proposal for the Ministry of Youth, and in partnership with the JP they launched the “Goal for Life” programme to train unemployed recent university graduates holding physical education degrees and enhance their employment prospects in the sector.</p> <p>The pilot phase was designed and implemented in 2021. To select the women to undertake the training, an open call for registration was organised. The demand was very high. A selection committee with members from Mudarib, Ministry of Youth and the JP was established. A thorough process was put in place establishing a number of criteria such as age, previous experience in the sector, the level of academic qualification etc. With the available resources for the pilot phase, the project could support less than 10% of the interested women.</p>

111 <https://jordantimes.com/news/local/unemployment-rate-hit-219-q1-2023>

112 <https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/ilo-programmeme-empowers-female-graduates-gain-foothold-physical-education>

113 <https://www.sport-for-development.com/news/analysis-of-sport-industry-shows-success>

	<p>The training content was aligned with the needs of the labour market and complemented the theoretical education gained at the university. The content of the training was a combination of some. general world of work principles and technical skills. A session was also organised on how to write a CV, prepare for an interview etc. aiming at enhancing trainees' employability. 83 out of 88 women¹¹⁴ that completed the training found employment at gyms, schools and sports facilities in Jordan and the region. A number of lessons were noted from the pilot, such as the need for clear communication, customized scheduling of the training and rigorous assessment methods. Based on the success of the pilot and lessons learned, a second and third cohort of women were enrolled in the training.</p> <p>The training lasts six months. The first four months combine theoretical training and a bootcamp. Mudarib has agreements with 32 gyms across Amman where women are placed in two months internships (three days a week up to 18 hours) depending on potential vacancies at the gyms. Mudarib designed a phone application through which it was possible to monitor the hours worked, the progress made etc. Throughout the internship period, Mudarib conducted regular check-ins to ensure smooth progress and promptly address any concerns raised by interns or the company. Mudarib supported the trainees to find employment. In addition to writing CVs and interview skills, the women were encouraged to create social media profiles branding themselves as personal trainers and coaches in response to the high demand in the market. Out of 124¹¹⁵ women completing the six-month training, 98 of them found jobs¹¹⁶.</p>
<p>Effectiveness and Efficiency</p>	<p>As of December 2022, the JP facilitated training and employment opportunities for 212 women in total, surpassing the target of 188 (JP PMF 2022). The collaboration Ministry of Youth, Mudarib, Universities and JP was proven successful during the pilot project, so that a second and third round of women trainees were recruited – resulting in 85 percent of women enrolled finding employment upon completion of the training and/or internships.</p> <p>The interest from women university graduates to work in this sector exceeded expectations and initial plans developed by Mudarib. As articulated by one of the project participants during the KII, societal pressure and stigmas become more pronounced when a woman is selecting her profession or field of study. Once this initial hurdle is overcome and family support is established, the journey becomes more manageable. The strong interest from women in the training and internships further motivated the partners to ensure the success of this initiative. The demand for women coaches also increased after the pandemic, as more people became aware of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. The results achieved during the pilot phase and the lessons learned were instrumental in improving phase two. Real stories of women who transformed their lives by acquiring skills and finding fulfilling jobs helped shift societal perceptions about women's capabilities in this industry. The women were employed at women-only as well as gender-mixed gyms.</p>

114 KII Meeting with Mudarib representatives
115 JP PMF 2022
116 KII meeting with Mudarib, JP reports

	<p>Promoting these success stories also boosted confidence and self-esteem among other women with similar career aspirations. The partnership with the Ministry of Youth added credibility to the initiative, and the involvement of international organizations enhanced its reputation. Accreditation from EuropeActive, a recognized European Health and Fitness Association, further solidified the initiative's credibility. Mudarib also promoted the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) program of International Certified Personal Training. Finally, effective use of the media by Goal for Life played a significant role in dispelling misconceptions and stereotypes about women's abilities and the types of occupations they could pursue.</p> <p>The project idea initially faced resistance from institutional counterparts and communities. It aimed to involve women in a sector traditionally seen as less socially acceptable for them. Additionally, families were not always supportive, adding to the pressure on the women graduates. Securing a location with adequate space for training proved challenging. Alternatives like Innovation Centres were used as free-of-charge facilities whenever possible. Organizing internships presented another hurdle, as gyms were hesitant to offer placements due to concerns about potential financial costs during the internship period. To minimize transportation expenses, Mudarib made efforts to secure internships at gyms close to the interns' homes. However, internship shifts were sometimes scheduled at inconvenient hours for the participants¹¹⁷.</p> <p>The cost of transportation and meals during the internship period were covered by Mudarib as part of the JP collaboration. The Ministry of Youth supported through lending facilities to conduct the training in the beginning of the implementation until another alternative solution was found.</p>
Key partners	<p>The model was implemented by partners from government (Ministry of Youth) – private sector (Mudarib) – academia (Universities) – international organisations (JP/ILO). In addition, the families of the women graduates, and the community had an important role throughout the process.</p>
Evidence-based	<p>Mudarib conducted an analysis using available data to gain a deeper understanding of the factors contributing to the low employment rates of women in the sector after graduating from university. The initiative was implemented in phases to allow for improvements based on the lessons learned from the pilot phase.</p>
Replicability and Scalability	<p>The good practice demonstrates replicability and adaptability to similar activities in other non-traditional economic sectors and occupational profiles for women.</p> <p>Following the achievements in Amman, the company has plans to expand both within Amman and other governorates of Jordan. A comprehensive assessment of the initiative is scheduled to refine and scale up operations. Additionally, apart from employment opportunities in gyms and as personal coaches, private educational institutions and newly established teams for women in various sports such as football and volleyball present potential avenues for project participants' employment.</p>

117 Reported during interviews, JP progress reports

Innovation	<p>The approach was developed by a private sector company that recognized the opportunity to economically empower women through employment in a non-traditional sector that was experiencing growth due to the increased interest in a healthy lifestyle. This approach combined government support, private sector leadership in the initiative's design and implementation, and expertise from international organizations to ensure adherence to standards and the incorporation of global best practices.</p>
Sustainability	<p>The JP assisted in developing a standardized curriculum and is actively advocating for the integration of tested curricula into formal education materials. The JP and partners succeeded in receiving European accreditation for two professions. The UN Participating Organization/ILO intends to continue the initiative beyond the JP's lifespan to ensure its full development, functionality, and transfer to local partners for sustained outcomes. This also entails the handing over of the accredited material to the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Committee (TVSDC) and the MoY for use by all training providers in governorates of Jordan.</p>
Specific Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider engaging Public Employment Services to support the internship and employment facilitation component, for example by assisting to formalize sustainable collaboration agreements between employment offices, universities and private sector companies. • Plan for the programme's expansion to other governorates in Jordan to reach a wider audience and tap into regional employment opportunities. • Continue leveraging technology to streamline programme management, including job placement assistance. • Continue promoting success stories to change societal perceptions about women's capabilities in non-traditional industries. • Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system to continually assess the programme's (cost) effectiveness and make necessary adjustments. • Collect data on graduates' career progression, job satisfaction, and income levels to measure the long-term impact of the programme. • Explore opportunities to replicate the programme's success in other non-traditional sectors where women face employment challenges. Conduct sector-specific research to identify the unique needs and opportunities in those sectors. • Develop strategies to engage with families and communities to garner their support for women pursuing careers in non-traditional sectors. • Explore the possibility to integrate this approach in the government led National Employment Programme in the Private Sector, Focused on Jobs for Youth and Women for sustainability of results

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, our conclusion is that the JP is on the right path towards achieving the set forth goal to reduce the barriers to women's entry and retention in decent work¹¹⁸. The JP design was strategic with medium to long-term sustainable impact. The interventions planned aimed at systemic and structural changes by creating a conducive environment for women's productive and decent employment. These interventions implemented at macro, meso, and micro levels focused on legislative reform, produced a shift in business conduct and change in perception and attitudes of communities around women's role in families and economies. These strategic interventions would in the long run have an impact on job creation and enhanced labour force participation of women. In the short term however, the JPs goal was by design not to generate employment. A number of small-scale initiatives focusing on enhanced employability and employment facilitation for women, i.e. in non-traditional occupations and economic sectors, in leadership positions, as entrepreneurs etc, were developed and tested. These interventions can be scaled up into full-fledged employment creation programmes with focus on supporting labour market disadvantaged women.

The JP benefited from its regional implementation approach. A number of initiatives were undertaken to address issues in common for the region. For example, in support of filling in the data gap, a number of regional/multi country researches were conducted, such as the care economy in Arab States report¹¹⁹, a COVID-19 Gender Response Tracker Arab States Fact Sheet¹²⁰ and a study on the impact of macroeconomic policies on women's economic empowerment¹²¹. Policies and programmatic tools were developed and adopted to serve partners from public institutions¹²² and private enterprises such as the toolkit on harassment and violence in

the workplace being finalized as a joint UN Women and ILO product. Other regional initiatives included the launching of the [Equal Pay International Coalition for Arab States](#)¹²³, the development of the Regional WEPs strategy along with a roadmap as guidance for country teams to engage with private sector etc. The Joint Programme (JP) provided a vital platform for regional collaboration among countries in the Arab States. This collaboration facilitated the sharing of knowledge and best practices. For instance, Egypt drew from Jordan's experience on childcare and maternity insurance fund management, resulting in policy recommendations. Similarly, Jordan's labour law reform and engagement with civil society offered valuable lessons for other nations, with Palestine looking to Jordan for guidance in forming coalitions for labour law reform. Additionally, Egypt's successful "Women on Board Observatory" model inspired Jordan, while countries exchanged insights on private sector engagement and collaborated on topics like Convention 190 and gender-sensitive fiscal policy assessment, enhancing regional gender equality efforts.

At the national level, the initiatives undertaken in Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine represent commendable strides toward gender equality through policy reform in labour markets and economic policies and implementation of actions to advance women's economic empowerment. These initiatives were implemented in partnership with various regional, national, and international entities that share the commitment to women's access to quality and productive employment. The JP has demonstrated the potential for transformative change when policy frameworks prioritize gender equality and engage diverse stakeholders in the process of empowering women economically.

118 JP MTE report

119 <https://www.undp.org/arab-states/publications/covid-19-global-gender-response-tracker-fact-sheet>

120 <https://www.undp.org/arab-states/publications/covid-19-global-gender-response-tracker-fact-sheet>

121 <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/10/assessing-macroeconomic-response-policies-to-covid-19-in-the-arab-region>

The joint programme implemented 36 country-wide initiatives across the three main outcomes in the three focus countries. Following a set of criteria, 12 good practices were highlighted, out of which four were related to policy reform, six were related to private sector engagement for gender equality and two were related to challenging social norms around women and occupations. These practices covered a range of themes and sectors, such as the care economy, gender responsive budgeting, violence in the workplace, women in leadership positions, occupational segregation, human resource policies and practices, women's empowerment principles, collective bargaining for improved working conditions, employment mediation in engineering and sports.

4.1. Common Success Factors

Several common success factors have been identified among the 12 selected good practices, indicating patterns and elements that contribute to their effectiveness and positive outcomes:

1. **Alignment, Relevance, Ownership:** the JP overall and the good practices in particular are aligned with national strategies, sustainable development goals and international standards and conventions. They address issues that are relevant for the countries they are implemented in. The plans of action are designed together and under the lead of the national partners strengthening the ownership and the commitment to deliver on the national goals set in the country strategies on women's economic empowerment.
2. **Evidence based approach:** all the good practices are designed based on previous experience and evidence generated. Often, the data collection and analysis are done by the national counterparts with expertise and support from JP to ensure capacities remain for similar future research. For

example, in Egypt, to enhance evidence-based policymaking on the care economy, the JP supported CAPMAS to develop a module integrated in the Egypt Labour Market Panel Survey to collect time-use survey data for the first time.

3. **First high level regional strategic coordination committee & first country technical level platforms on decent work for women (horizontal & vertical communication):** Multi-Stakeholder Collaborations are critical to advocate for, implement, and sustain gender-responsive policies. Working together with governments, trade unions, civil society organizations, private sector entities, academia and international partners has been instrumental in driving policy change. At the regional level the strategic coordination committee brought together for the first-time high-level representatives from the three countries on the topic of decent work for women, giving strategic guidance and supporting the advancement of the women's economic empowerment agendas.

At the national level, technical committees were established with the support from the JP and had an open channel of communication with the executives at public institutions and private companies which resulted to be critical for the successes achieved. In the case of Egypt conveying the concerns from the private sector to the Minister of Labour contributed to the legislative change over women and professions/shifts. Similarly, in Jordan, the decision to allow nurseries to continue operations amidst COVID-19 or to allow private kindergartens to benefit from the government subsidy programmes was a result of a direct evidence-based dialogue with the Minister's cabinet. The significant number of entities adopting the code against violence at the workplace came as a result of extensive social dialogue, including at the senior level between PGFTU and the entities' leadership.

122 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/04/policy-tool-care-economy>

123 <https://www.equalpayinternationalcoalition.org/events/arab-states-pledge-to-reduce-gender-pay-gap-in-the-region/>

4. Institutionalizing gender mainstreaming (systematic capacity building, on the job practice, tools): Institutionalization of interventions is vital for sustaining gender equality efforts and seamlessly integrating them into government processes. Strengthening the capacities and knowledge dissemination among policy makers and social partners has played a central role in achieving successful policy reforms. Resources, tools, and on-the-job training have facilitated the policy reform. Notable examples include the case of various ministries in Egypt integrating gender responsive budgets with clear sex disaggregated performance indicators for every ministry's programme-based; the case of Jordan where the JP supported gender mainstreaming and responsive budgeting and reviewed maternity protection legislation in collaboration with the SSC; the case of Palestine where the JP supported the developing of gender-responsive policy tools for micro and small enterprises.

5. Multi-disciplinary specialized gender teams/committees: The shift towards gender teams, rather than relying solely on gender focal points, proved to be a successful approach. It allowed for a more comprehensive and sustainable integration of gender considerations into policy development and implementation in the case of Jordan and Palestine. The capacity-building component of these diverse teams was essential. Knowledge dissemination began with fundamental gender concepts and local disparities, followed by more technical skills development. In both cases, capacity building was complemented by on-the-job training, allowing gender teams to use acquired tools, knowledge, and execute gender responsive policies. In Palestine, working through gender teams instead of gender focal points approach has been applied also in the work engaging private sector.

6. Intensive Social Dialogue: employers' and workers' organizations have significantly enhanced their capacity to champion gender equality in the private sector through extensive training programmes, exceeding most JP targets. Trade unions played a pivotal role in social dialogues, providing vital assistance to private firms in aligning with international conventions and implementing gender-responsive policies and measures. This collaborative effort resulted in notable progress, including the initiation and signing of collective bargaining agreements with gender equality provisions in Jordan and Palestine, surpassing the initial targets. The HR and Gender Academy in Egypt, conducted in collaboration with the Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI), has achieved noteworthy results in terms of promoting gender-responsive HR policies and practices in Egyptian private companies.

7. Capitalizing on private sector partnerships: The three focus JP countries have made significant strides in engaging the private sector to promote gender equality, aligning with global and regional approaches. The companies received valuable support in the form of resources, tools, and technical assistance to empower women in the workplace, marketplace, and the wider community. Notably, the number of companies committed to gender equality by signing WEPs has more than doubled in Egypt and Palestine. Jordan has witnessed a remarkable increase, with the number of businesses growing by a factor of approximately 18 times between 2018 and 2022. The JP has capitalized on these networks. Regionally, the private sector was engaged in policy making, design of tools for promoting WEE in business, mentoring women entrepreneurs and contributed to enhance the employment prospects of women in non-traditional occupations and sectors.

8. Engaging communities and families: Gaining the backing of families is crucial, particularly when it comes to implementing best practices that challenge societal norms. Family engagement plays a vital role in dispelling negative stereotypes related to private sector jobs, particularly those traditionally associated with men. This, in effect, has the capacity to bring about significant transformative shifts within communities. For instance, the Women in Sports initiative in Jordan invites families to visit girls during their training and workplace internships, illustrating this approach. Similarly, in Egypt the JP supported organisation of parenting camps. The involvement of the civil society to shift the mindset is critical.

9. Advocating for change: Challenging societal perceptions about women's capabilities by sharing transformative real-life stories is a common strategy used by the national counterparts in many of the good practices. The messages are more powerful coming from i.e. the women engineers at workplace, women entrepreneurs accessing rights and benefits from moving from informal to formal economy, CEOs implementing women's empowerment principles, women feeling safer after their employer adopted the code of conduct to eliminate workplace harassment etc.

4.2. Shared Challenges

Several challenges are encountered when implementing these good practices, and they warrant attention and proactive management to ensure successful outcomes:

1. COVID-19: The pandemic significantly and disproportionately impacted women, particularly those without social protections in informal, low-paying roles. Adjusted

implementation methods required new skills and often faced lower initial benchmarks, causing delays and interruptions in strategic initiatives and their timelines. For instance, support packages to WEPs signatories are still in finalization, hindering the ability to implement, learn, and institutionalize based on experience. Several firms revamped HR policies with JP support to advance women's economic empowerment, making it vital to evaluate these changes for advocacy and awareness purposes.

2. Limited fiscal space: Advocating for gender mainstreaming within ministries and institutions, ensuring consistent integration of gender considerations in planning and policy development, requires adequate funding. In times of fiscal constraints, seeking alternative methods to promote gender equality is imperative.

3. Limited knowledge on the gender concepts and the socio-economic benefits from gender equality. A notable challenge lies in addressing the limited awareness within the private sector about gender concepts and the profound socio-economic benefits associated with gender equality. There was hesitance among private companies to join the gender equality journey, especially with limited evidence from the region to make the business case. Limited knowledge and evidence also affect the social dialogue, for example the negotiation with companies to adopt the code of violence against women in Palestine. Overcoming this knowledge gap is vital for unlocking the full potential of women's economic empowerment and achieving greater gender equity in the business world.

4. Elections and related transitions in the institutions can pose a challenge in realizing commitments made during programme implementation. As new leadership takes

office, their focus and priorities may evolve, potentially leading to shifts in commitment to ongoing initiatives. This can disrupt programme continuity and necessitate efforts to re-establish support and engagement from the new leadership to ensure the sustained progress of gender equality goals.

5. Enrooted discriminatory social norms: Overcoming deeply entrenched discriminatory social norms is an important obstacle in fostering women's increased participation in the labour market, often hindering their full economic empowerment and contribution to society. It requires innovative strategies and consistent efforts to break these barriers and ensure equal opportunities for women to thrive in the workforce.

6. Availability and access to data: The lack of necessary national data and sex disaggregated data, including access to poverty data, data on the financial allocation for childcare, and the national thresholds for care providers remunerations, hinders the completion of some research studies and work implementation of the JP. This includes for example, research studies on the macro and micro economic impact of investment in childcare, or gender responsive budgeting in some of the countries (Egypt and Jordan).

7. Complexity of the joint programmes may at times slow the implementation of the interventions. While the benefits from joint programming are indisputable, there is a need for concerted efforts to ensure collaboration and coordination. Where synergies are clearly defined from the start and there is active support from the leadership of organisations and partners, the collaboration is smoother. The dedication and increased accountability demonstrated by the implementation teams are instrumental in maintaining the initiative's momentum.

8. Partial funding affected the planning and use of resources. Securing sufficient human and financial resources at the regional and country level right from the start of the JP is vital for building and sustaining reliable partnerships and achieving the intended outcomes. The uncertainty around mobilizing the complete JP budget and the yearly fundraising challenges complicated resource allocation planning. High turnover rates in certain country teams, influenced by various factors, including job security concerns, also impacted programme continuity.

9. Regional and global wars (Palestine, Ukraine). The global economic challenges resulting from the pandemic and the situation in Ukraine added significant stress to the national contexts of the three implementing countries. High inflation, increased import costs, and recurrent currency devaluations have impacted various sectors, including the private sector, employment, and gender-related priorities. The escalation of the war in Palestine has halted the JP interventions in the country and has impacted the overall implementation of the JP in the region. The ongoing intensive war and its effects on the JP are uncertain. At this point, ensuring safety of the JP personnel and families is of paramount importance.

4.3. Strategic Recommendations

The following section elaborates on some strategic recommendations to consider for future programme development, including strategies for replicating and upscaling the programme's good practices¹²⁴:

1. Strategically assess and rigorously enforce reformed policies and programs to measure their impact and enhance their efficiency. Perform a comprehensive impact

¹²⁴ Specific recommendations are also provided in the tabular format under each individual good practice identified (Report section III)

assessment of the policies and programs that have demonstrated their effectiveness during the program's implementation. This assessment should aim to understand their efficiency in achieving the desired outcomes. To ensure the sustained success of these initiatives and the continued progress of the programme's objectives, it's advised to rigorously enforce and continuously monitor their implementation in future programming.

2. Adhere to existing fiscal constraints while adeptly reallocating resources to prioritize and drive gender equality initiatives: Explore redistributing the fiscal budget for macroeconomic policies and programmes favouring gender equality. Assess and prioritize sectors with high returns on investments, generating jobs for both women and men, enhancing business competitiveness, and family well-being. The JP's macroeconomic assessment¹²⁵ report offers practical recommendations to help national counterparts progress toward achieving female labour force participation targets within the existing budgets.

3. Ensure that all government and public employment and income generation programmes have integrated gender-responsive measures and performance indicators: In all three countries, there are a number of programmes in support of employment, vocational education and training, entrepreneurship, rural development, etc. Women benefit disproportionately less than men from these public funds and programmes. Conducting assessment, revising the implementation modality, enhancing capacities for gender responsive service provision and introducing performance-linked gender responsive indicators can have a significant impact with modest budget intervention.

4. Extend the proven model of multidisciplinary specialized committees and gender teams to various government ministries and institutions for a more comprehensive approach: Provide comprehensive support, including capacity-building, resources, tools, and guidance, to facilitate the replication of successful approaches. Promote knowledge exchange and peer learning with ministries in Jordan and Palestine. Leverage technology for online training, monitoring, and reporting to enhance sustainability. Develop and institutionalize a monitoring and evaluation framework integrating gender-responsive performance indicators.

5. Formally (re) establish regional and national multi-stakeholder platforms that facilitate purposeful dialogue and collaboration to amplify the impact of gender equality efforts: The success of good practices was significantly influenced by effective collaboration among various stakeholders, including government institutions, trade unions, civil society organisations, and the private sector. To replicate and scale up similar initiatives, it is essential to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships. These platforms should be specialised around decent work for women and could be co-led by NCW and MoL to serve as spaces for policy discussions, advocacy, and knowledge sharing. The platforms would ensure coordination of efforts in promoting decent work for women and provide collective input in the policy reform and advocacy for gender equality in the labour markets. Use technology to facilitate the coordination, planning and reporting by all stakeholders on the progress achieved. Consider involving academia and industry federations/associations.

6. Systematically involve social partners in policy reform within both the public and

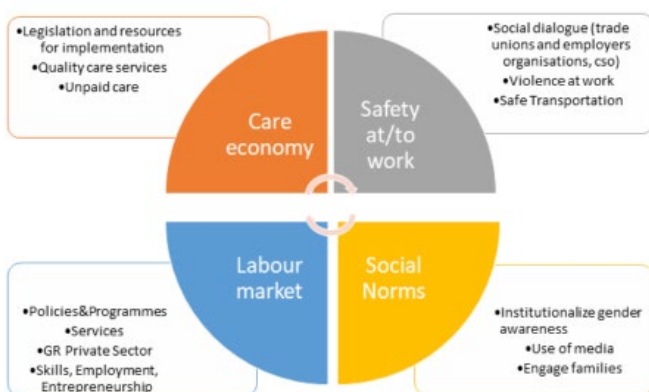
¹²⁵ <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/10/assessing-macroeconomic-response-policies-to-covid-19-in-the-arab-region>

private sectors, harnessing their collective power for gender responsive policies and practices. In line with the international conventions. Encourage establishment of coalitions between employers' organisations, trade unions and civil society organisations representing women to amplify voice when influencing and promoting gender responsive policy reform and implementation. Strengthen capacities of women and men unionists and employer organisations to understand better issues and rights of women's labour market integration.

7. Strengthen and broaden partnerships with the private sector to propagate gender-equal business practices, creating a lasting impact. Operationalise the Regional WEPs Strategy at the country level. Collaborate with governments to incorporate WEPs principles into national gender equality strategies and initiatives. Develop National Action Plans and Implementation Guides with budgets and monitoring frameworks integrated. Carry out an annual review to measure and report on the progress of WEPs signatories against the roadmap. Promote the evidence and lessons learned during the WEP signatories' journey, ultimately reaching a larger scale. Seek alignment with government-led programmes to promote sustainability and government support.

Figure.11. Recommendation for future programming

COORDINATION AND POLICY ADVOCACY PLATFORM (NCW/MOL)



ROBUST MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK AND RESOURCES

8. Elevate women's employability and facilitate their entry into the workforce and entrepreneurship opportunities through strategic initiatives. Develop large scale employability and job generation programme for women building on the experience and the documented good practices and approaches tested in the three countries. Ensure adequate human and financial resources are in place to replicate and scale up these initiatives. Specific recommendations to consider in the design of the interventions are elaborated for each good practice separately.

9. Establish and institutionalize a framework for systematic collaboration between private sector enterprises, vocational education and training institutions, and public employment services, strategically aligning their efforts to catalyse women's economic empowerment and enhance opportunities. Ensure inclusive and adequate internship and apprenticeship opportunities are available for all young women and men students. Safety to and at work, learning plans, monitoring, assessment and certifications should be integrated in the internship programmes. This requires strong partnership with private sector and involvement of public employment services (PES) to facilitate the conversation with the businesses, strengthen career guidance, provide employment mediation for women and share labour market information with the education institutions.

10. Institutionalize a culture of gender mainstreaming within government ministries and institutions to embed gender considerations into their core functions. The JP's success in Jordan provides a valuable blueprint for advancing gender equality through institutionalized gender mainstreaming and budgeting. The institutionalisation of Gender Units within relevant ministries, both at the central

and local levels in Egypt and Palestine are other good practices to learn from. These units should be responsible for gender mainstreaming, policy implementation, and monitoring. Develop clear action plans, such as costed National Gender Action Plans, to guide their activities and coordinate gender-related initiatives. By replicating these practices within the three countries and sharing experiences with neighbouring countries, the impact can be amplified, contributing to more inclusive and gender-responsive governance across the region.

11. Develop strategic approaches to engage families and communities, securing their active support for promoting gender equality and challenging discriminatory social norms. Involving families and communities is essential, as it helps challenge stereotypes and transform perceptions, particularly in fields, sectors and occupations traditionally dominated by men. An example of the approach is the engagement of families and communities in Egypt and Jordan to support women in engineering and sports, traditionally professions occupied by men.

12. Prioritize the development of the care economy as a central and transformative component of future women's economic empowerment programmes. Research underscores that the availability of quality care services and alleviating the burden of unpaid care work, are pivotal factors influencing women's participation in the labour force. To illustrate, during the JP's experience in Egypt, nearly 12 per cent¹²⁶ of women who initially enrolled in a corporate board readiness training programme had to withdraw due to caregiving responsibilities. The countries in the region should leverage global policy frameworks related to the care economy to assess its requirements, costs, and potential returns on investment. To support these endeavours, it is imperative to ensure that data availability and accessibility,

along with the necessary analytical expertise, are in place. The recommendations resulting from these analyses should be considered essential interventions to boost women's labour force participation in the region.

13. Champion the creation of safe and secure workplaces as a cornerstone of women's economic empowerment. The JP approaches adopted to promote elimination of violence at workplace were successful, surpassing targets in two out of the three countries. The experience in the three countries has highlighted the importance of conducting a comprehensive legal gap analysis to follow with encouraging the adoption of violence and harassment prevention policies and codes of conduct within organizations in line with the international conventions. Foster collaboration between relevant stakeholders and deliver capacity strengthening programmes aimed at increasing awareness of workplace violence and harassment, among employees, decisionmakers, managers, and HR professionals. Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework that integrates gender-responsive performance indicators. This framework should enable organizations to assess the effectiveness of their anti-violence measures over time.

14. Capitalize on the region's potential for influential policy dialogue, targeted advocacy, and heightened visibility to drive gender equality goals. Country offices can optimize the programme's regional approach by capitalizing on shared resources, knowledge, and expertise. Collaborative engagement with the regional programme unit and other country offices can significantly enhance the effectiveness and impact of individual national interventions, offering valuable insights and strategies for tackling common regional challenges. This collaborative approach should be actively encouraged to maximize the programme's overall success.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A. Data collection - Sample of meeting material

Drafting the Regional Learning Document for the UNW and ILO JP Work for Women

Meeting with the JP W4W Focal points, dt. 13 June 2023, Jordan

Purpose of the assignment: As per the Terms of Reference, the purpose of the Regional Learning Document is **to capture the good practices, learnings and scalable approaches** implemented by UN-Women and ILO Joint Programme (JP) Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine during 2019 – 2023.

Purpose of the meeting today: Introduction to the methodology and discussion on prioritizing the **good practices** to capture in the Regional Learning Document

Definition of a Good Practice (adapted from the standard definition):

A good practice refers to a method, approach, strategy, or action that has demonstrated effectiveness, efficiency, and positive outcomes in achieving desired objectives or results. It represents a proven solution or approach that has been successful in addressing a particular issue or challenge in a specific context. Good practices are often characterized by their innovative, evidence-based, and replicable nature. Key characteristics of a good practice to consider:

1. Effectiveness: What was the issue the project intervention tried to address? What was the approach the JP undertook? Did the intervention produce the desired results or is it on track? What contributed to achieving these results? What were the challenges?
2. Efficiency: Was the approach JP utilized cost effective? Were the available resources used effectively, maximizing the use of available inputs (e.g., time, funding, human resources) to achieve the desired outcomes
3. Inclusive: Does the model ask for multi-stakeholder partnerships? Who was involved and what were their respective roles?
4. Evidence-based: Was the approach utilized based on evidence (research, empirical evidence, knowledge available, lessons learned from previous experience etc)?
5. Replicability: Can the approach be adapted and replicated in similar contexts or settings? Are there any specific considerations worth highlighting?

6. Scalability:	Does the model have the potential for scaling up? If yes, kindly highlight any specific considerations.
7. Innovation:	Does the model use creative or innovative elements that distinguish it from conventional or traditional approaches? Does the model make use of technology to address the challenge?
8. Sustainability:	Is the model sustainable (does the approach consider factors such as durability, scalability, institutionalization, and the potential for continuous positive impact beyond the project implementation)
9. Environment:	Does the approach promote considerations for environmental protection and adaptation?

For the Regional Learning Document, **good practices are defined** as those JP approaches that achieved and/or are on track to achieving the intended results, and whether the approach is recognized as a good and/or promising practice in the MTE report (page 3 and 4 below).

Guiding questions for the meeting with the JP Focal points:

1. Could you please share (list) any additional good practice from Jordan, with focus on the JP implementation period 2022 and 2023?
2. Reviewing the overall list of practices for Jordan (the extracted from MTE report and your proposals from 2022/2023) kindly suggest the practices you believe are a must to include in the Regional Learning Document. When prioritizing kindly consider the following:
 - The table with the key characteristics of a good practice. The example you share should at least comply with points 1,2,5 and 8 of the list above.
 - Focus on results that have brought about the biggest positive impact for women in Jordan. Step back and elaborate the approach taken to achieve the result, the success factors and the challenges.
 - Think beyond the activity and output level boundaries when prioritizing the good practices. This should help in viewing the successful models as part of a comprehensive approach instead of segmented activities organized in smaller outputs as part of the JP Results and Resources Framework.
 - It is important to document the value of the joint nature of the JP.
3. What did not work well? What would you do different if you were given the chance?
4. The mid-term evaluation report highlighted a number of challenges and areas for improvement. What was the CO response?
5. In your opinion, what is the one thing the JP is most known for among the stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries in Jordan?
6. If you were to choose one theme/topic/issue¹²⁷ to which JP contributed the most, ideally at macro and micro levels, what would it be? What was the JP contribution?
7. What are the CO plans to capitalize on the lessons learned of the JP beyond year 2023? How is the CO ensuring sustainability of results?

The list of good practices extracted from the JP W4W Mid-Term Evaluation Report (2019 – 2021):

Outcome1: # of reforms to the regulatory/legal framework which responds to and promotes gender equality in the labour market

Extent of change in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment among programme parties

The practices highlighted from Jordan:

In the case of Jordan, JP used the crisis to **support female owners of private kindergartens and schools to launch the National Committee of Independent Kindergartens.**

In case of Jordan, **JP's contribution to the Maternity Social Protection regulation under the Social Security Law** was widely appreciated as the regulation enables working mothers to return to work by securing childcare for their children either at a childcare facility or at home. It also allowed for registered childcare centres to receive direct cash benefits to cover operational costs. As a result, the Social Security Corporation (SSC) launched the "Ri'aya Programme" (in Arabic "Care") in 2021 to support working mothers returning to work after maternity leave and support centres caring for children of working families¹²⁸. As of December 2021, according to Ri'aya records 9,163 mothers were eligible to benefit from childcare subsidy. Of these women, 5,484 applied for assistance, and 4,757 got support. The result of this work was recognized by the International Social Security Association in March 2022

Establishment of Gender Unit within Ministry of Labour

Training of government staff: on gender-responsive policy making (including budgets, services and workplans) as well as training on prevention of violence and harassment in the workplace at the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC); and its contribution to develop a cadre of labor inspectors from the Ministry of Labour for conducting gender-sensitive labour inspection (Egypt and Jordan).

JP's use of **social dialogue between the tripartite representatives to facilitate normative and legislative changes** also received appreciation from the stakeholders.

Evidence generation: The stakeholders consulted spoke highly of the knowledge products developed by the JP - their relevance and quality. They appreciated the contribution made by JP to generate evidence to set agenda for policy change. At the same time, some of them suggested that more work is needed to reflect the generated evidence and data in the national documents referencing JP- a testimony of recognition by the national authorities (list of knowledge products attached as Annex2)

Outcome2: Proportion of women in managerial position (per cent)

Per cent change in gender parity in staffing (disaggregated by level) - Proportion of permanent full-time workers that are female (per cent)

127 i.e. access to information, unpaid care, employability, retention, occupational segregation, leadership, pay gap, informality, behavioral change, gender stereotyping, data and research etc

128 Assessment of the Maternity Insurance in Jordan https://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_776223/lang--en/index.htm

Number of companies committing to implement gender equality policies in MENA region

The practices highlighted from Jordan:

The Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) approach have been one of the most successful approaches with a potential to scale up.

The evaluation noted overall positive feedback from the stakeholders about these models. These JP's interventions have the potential to strengthen women's representation at the decision-making positions in the private sector. However, the evaluation noted that some interventions, although quite relevant, in some countries are either at a nascent stage or have not started yet. Specifically, based on the 2021 JP PMF data, **the evaluation noted that work related to Private sector adopting code of conducts on violence at work in line with forthcoming international labour standards (Output 2.6)** is yet to materialize in case of Egypt and Palestine, but this has been successful in case of Jordan where it is obligatory by internal bylaws. Similarly, JP's work **on Private sector and government investment in child-care facilities and work/life balance provisions in the workplace** (planned in case of Egypt and Jordan) in case of Jordan has been strong as it is obligatory by law for companies to provide paternity leave and flexible work arrangements in the selected sectors

The number of companies committing to GEWE (through signing WEPs) in Jordan

The evaluation noted that Jordan programme has been successful in developing and **launching a WEPs Jordan Network to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration between like-minded WEPs signatories**. A similar network preparation is underway in Palestine. Moving forward, it is expected that these networks will help to share experience and knowledge.

The evaluation also noted the emerging results to translate the WEPs commitment into concrete action. In case of Jordan, **two WEPs signatories revised the company's processes (recruitment & procurement) to be gender sensitive and promote representation of women in their workforce**.

Outcome2: Per cent of men and women with positive perception on importance of women's work and on equal sharing of unpaid care work

The practices highlighted from Jordan:

JP used a range of approaches to challenge gender occupational segregation to increase women's access to the non-conventional jobs and labour market. In Jordan it worked with the Ministry of Youth to support entry into the sports sector.

Annex1: JP's contribution to normative provisions introduced or amended during 2019- 2021.

Jordan
<ol style="list-style-type: none">One article was amended in Social Security Law in late 2019 (article 42)Three-days paternity leave for private sector workers , 2019Endorsement of the Regulation No. (93) on Maternity Social Protection under the 2020 Social Security Law, 2020Childcare Facilities Instructions of 2021Agriculture Workers Regulation of 2021A four-year action and collaboration plan developed and approved by the Jordanian Ministry of Labour in October 2019 to mainstream gender more strongly into its institutional policies and operations.Ministry of Labour (Women's Labour and Gender Directorate) drafted its first Gender Mainstreaming Policy. The policy is in the process of validation and approval.

Annex2: Knowledge Products

Jordan ILO	Other	Position Paper “Labour Law Reform”	2021
Jordan ILO	Other	Assessment of the Maternity Insurance in Jordan	2021
Jordan ILO	Report	Legal Gap Analysis on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work	2019
Jordan ILO	Report	A rapid assessment of COVID-19’s impact on businesses	2020
Jordan ILO	Other	National Strategy for the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work	2022
Jordan ILO	Report	Decent Work for Women Programme- Jordan	2021
Jordan UNW	Report	Reality of Gender Mainstreaming from an Institutional Perspective in the Ministry of Labour	2022
Jordan UNW	Report	COVID-19 and Women's Economic Empowerment: Policy Recommendations for Strengthening Jordan's Recovery	2020
Jordan UNW	Report	COVID-19 and Women's Labour Force Participation in Jordan	2022
Jordan ILO	Other	Position Paper “Labour Law Reform”	2021

ANNEX B. Data collection - List of KII meetings

Date	Meeting with (Name)	Institution	Country	Related to which model?
2023/09/13	Dima Qaisi	Private Kindergarten Committee	Jordan	Model 2. Care services
2023/09/14	Tareq Mustafa	Mudarib company	Jordan	Model 12. Women in sports
2023/11/27	Azmi Abdel Rahman	Ministry of Labour	Palestine	Model 10: Improving working conditions
2023/11/29	Kholoud Ghnaimat	Social Security Corporation	Jordan	Model 2. Care services
	Tasnim Saad Ahmed Sakr Dana Dahbour	Programme participant/beneficiary		
2023/11/30	Aisha Hmouda	Palestinian General Federation of the Trade Union	Palestine	Model 9. Violence at workplace
	Waseem Kalboneh	Palestinian General Federation of the Trade Union	Palestine	Model 9. Violence at workplace
2023/12/7	Lara Tameme	Ministry of Labour	Jordan	Model 3: GRB and GM
2023/12/11	Eng. Ashraf Kamal Rady	Federation of Egyptian Industries	Egypt	Model 6 Corporate reform
	Eng. Adel Noureddine	Federation of Egyptian Industries	Egypt	Model 6 Corporate reform
2023/12/11	Nadine Khalife	European Institute for Cooperation and Development	Egypt	Model 12 Women in non-traditional occupations
	Ahmed Ismail	European Institute for Cooperation and Development	Egypt	Model 12 Women in non-traditional occupations
2023/12/12	Sereen Shanti	Ministry of National Economy	Palestine	Model 4 Gender Responsive Stimulus Packages
	Amal Shihade	Ministry of National Economy	Palestine	Model 4 Gender Responsive Stimulus Packages
	Fatima Da'na	Ministry of National Economy	Palestine	Model 4 Gender Responsive Stimulus Packages
	Asma' Khayyat	Ministry of Finance	Palestine	Model 4 Gender Responsive Stimulus Packages
	Mohanad	Palestinian Monetary Authority	Palestine	Model 4 Gender Responsive Stimulus Packages
	Siba Assaf	Palestinian Monetary Authority	Palestine	Model 4 Gender Responsive Stimulus Packages
2023/12/12	Suzan Mansour, Hala Hussein	Bank of Palestine	Palestine	Model 8 WEPs in-depth
	Rania Kheiry	Vitas	Palestine	Model 8 WEPs in-depth
	Muna Qutob, Fida Azar	Apic	Palestine	Model 8 WEPs in-depth
2023/12/12	Sally Mahmoud A. Abbas	American University of Cairo	Egypt	Model 5 Women in C suits
2023/12/13	Dina Naguib	Beneficiary - women on boards	Egypt	Model 5 Women in C suits
2023/12/14	Rebeca Ygberg Amarya	The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	Regional	Donor