

Women in Jordan hope to see their educational achievements translating into economic productivity, as women's labor force participation has been consistently low, both in absolute terms and relative to other countries in the MENA region and worldwide. Investing in girls' education and skills development is crucial for building their human capital, as it paves the way for their seamless integration into the labor market and, ultimately, their economic empowerment. The first Mashreq Gender Facility State of the Women Report identified barriers women face at four critical turning points at which some decide to withdraw from the labor market or never enter, including caregiving responsibilities, public transportation, the legal environment and the gap between the law on paper and the law in practice, in addition to social norms. This piece focuses on two key areas where policy reforms and actions can make a difference in women's ability and willingness to work: (i) expanded access to affordable, quality childcare; and (ii) the extension of a well-functioning, comfortable and safe public transport system. Women's low participation does not have a single cause, but is rather affected by a complex combination of factors encompassing social, economic, regulatory and structural elements in addition to personal preference. This focus piece follows girls and women in Jordan from birth through education and into the labor market, going through the main milestones on their way to economic empowerment. As they enter the labor market, key constraints may discourage them or make their integration more difficult.