

DRAFT AGENDA
**WOMEN'S ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT FORUM**



**Gender-sensitive education
and skills development
policies in the MENA region**

*Developing girls' digital skills in the
post-COVID-19 world*

5 July 2021 – 11am – 1.15pm CET

[Register here](#)

The objective

The Women's Economic Empowerment Forum (WEEF) webinar "*Gender-sensitive education and skills development policies in the MENA region: Developing girls' digital skills in the post-COVID-19 world*" has been designed to achieve three results:

- i) Gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the digital transformation for women and girls in the MENA region;
- ii) Get a clear sense of the central role of gender disaggregated data in supporting policy making for gender equality;
- iii) Identify innovative ways to promote girls' acquisition of relevant skills for the digital economy and facilitate their successful transition to working life through improved public-private partnerships.

To that aim, the webinar will discuss **good practices** emerging from the policies and programmes promoting **women's and girls' digital skills** in the MENA and OECD countries, including the **role of the private sector and the civil society** in facilitating women's digital skills development. The panel discussion will be informed by a presentation of OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results in the MENA region,ⁱ pointing to the areas where gender gaps persist (e.g. performance, confidence, and expectation) and to the potential pathways for both boys and girls to reach their full potential.

The event will gather **policymakers** from OECD and MENA countries, **PISA** Governing board members, **private sector and civil society representatives** as well as **international organisations and experts**. This **multi-stakeholder dialogue** will provide an opportunity to exchange experiences, lessons learned and good practices to promote women's economic empowerment in the post-COVID-19 economy.

Policy issue

The acceleration of the **digital transformation** brought new opportunities for women's economic empowerment in MENA economies. McKinsey estimates that the share of women in professional and technical jobs will double by 2030 through digitisation, online platforms and entrepreneurship (Assi and Marcati, 2020)ⁱⁱ. Recognising the importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) credentials as the foundation for women's access to diversified employment opportunities, MENA governments have been implementing **targeted gender-sensitive education policies**, which indeed have translated into promising improvements. A number of MENA countries have expanded their female talent pool in STEM: some 34%-57% of STEM graduates in Arab countries are women – higher than the average for OECD countries (UNESCO, 2019).ⁱⁱⁱ Yet, in the MENA region, girls and women are not adequately equipped with the skills required to take advantage of these new opportunities. Few women graduates pursue STEM careers, and are therefore under-represented in STEM-related occupations and businesses.

Ensuring **access to quality education and to STEM**, strengthening the role and effectiveness of **Vocational Education and Training (VET) and apprenticeships**, promoting a culture with **no stereotypes about which career choices are suitable for boys and girls**, as well as forging effective **public-private partnerships** are all pivotal factors to improve girls' employability in high-productivity sectors of the region.

Agenda

Interpretation will be provided in English, French and Arabic

11h00-11h15 Opening session

The co-chairs of the MENA-OECD Women's Economic Empowerment Forum (WEEF) will highlight how the multilateral network offered by the WEEF can contribute to greater engagement of women in the digital economy in the MENA region.

Speakers:

- ▶ H.E. Dr. Hala EL SAID, Minister of Planning and Economic Development, Egypt, Co-Chair of the MENA-OECD Women's Economic Empowerment Forum
- ▶ H.E. Jan THESLEFF, Commissioner General Expo 2020 for Sweden, Co-Chair of the MENA-OECD Women's Economic Empowerment Forum

11h15-11h35 Keynote speeches

The keynote speakers will introduce key challenges to develop girls' digital skills and increase women's employability in the digital sector.

Speakers:

- ▶ H.E. Ms. Sybel GALVÁN GÓMEZ, Ambassador, Permanent Representative to the OECD, Mexico (TBC)
- ▶ H.E. Dr. Maya MORSI, President, National Council for Women (NCW), Egypt (TBC)

11h35-11h50 Session 1: Girls' and Boys' Performances in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in the MENA region

This session will present gender differences in the PISA results in the MENA region.

Speaker:

- ▶ Ms. Miyako IKEDA, Senior Analyst, Directorate for Education and Skills, OECD

11h50-12h00 Questions and Answers

12h00-12h50 Session 2: Initiatives to develop girls' digital skills

MENA and OECD government, private sector and civil society representatives will share perspectives, challenges and good practices about the development of girls' digital skills in the post-covid-19 world. The Panel discussion will also address the pivotal role of gender data and a multi-stakeholder approach in informing policy-making for gender equality.

Moderator:

- ▶ Dr. Dima JAMALI, Dean, College of Business Administration, University of Sharja and WEEF focal point, United Arab Emirates

Speakers:

- ▶ Mr. Adil BAJJA, Director of Strategy, National Education Department, Morocco
- ▶ Ms. Claude ROIRON, Ministerial delegate for gender equality, Ministry of Education, France
- ▶ Dr. Nayef STETIEH, CEO, Business Development Center, Jordan
- ▶ Ms. Basmah OSMAN, Senior Advisor, Federation of Egyptian Industries, Egypt
- ▶ Ms. Francesca BORGONOV, Head of the Skills Analysis team, OECD Centre for Skills.

12h50-13h05 Questions and Answers**13h05-13h15 Closing session**

The OECD's Deputy Secretary-General will conclude with consideration on how the webinar's discussions can be reflected in the gender activities of the 2021-2025 Programme of work.

Speaker:

- ▶ Mr. Ulrik KNUDSEN, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD

Further reading

- OECD (2021), 21st-Century Readers: Developing Literacy Skills in a Digital World, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/a83d84cb-en>
- OECD/ILO/CAWTAR (2020), Changing Laws and Breaking Barriers for Women’s Economic Empowerment in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, Competitiveness and Private Sector Development, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/ac780735-en>.
- OECD (2020), PISA 2018 Results (Volume VI): Are Students Ready to Thrive in an Interconnected World?, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/d5f68679-en>
- OECD (2020), PISA 2018 Results (Volume V): Effective Policies, Successful Schools, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/ca768d40-en>.
- OECD (2019), PISA 2018 Results (Volume II): Where All Students Can Succeed, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b5fd1b8f-en>.
- OECD (2019), PISA 2018 Results (Volume I): What Students Know and Can Do, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5f07c754-en>
- OECD (2015), The ABC of Gender Equality in Education: Aptitude, Behaviour, Confidence, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264229945-en>

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ⁱ PISA usually includes 8 MENA Countries: Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. However, Algeria and Tunisia were not participated in PISA 2018.

ⁱⁱ Assi, R. and C. Marcati, 2020, *Women at work: Job opportunities in the Middle East set to double with the Fourth Industrial Revolution*, McKinsey.

ⁱⁱⁱ UNESCO, 2019, UIS.Stat, <http://data.uis.unesco.org/> (accessed on 20 May 2021).