

## **RYSE Graduation Model -PAC updates**

**1<sup>st</sup> Sept. 2020**

1. The RYSE consortium partners, consisting of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Mercy Corps and the Jordan River Foundation, are currently designing the pioneering Graduation approach project to be implemented in Jordan. During the inception phase, the convened Economic Empowerment Technical Working Group (EETWG) including the Consortium Management Unit (CMU) and representatives from three partners (DRC, MC and JRF) continued to work on the design of the graduation approach and the contextualization of the model to suit the Jordanian context. This covered the selection of the main graduation criteria, development of mentorship guidelines and development of staff training material.
2. Taking into consideration the implementation of the model in the field will be conducted by three different partners it was crucial to agree on a unified approach and process for implementation and to build the capacity of the execution teams in the field to understand the main elements, outcomes and using the related tools. Main characteristics of the model agreed include:
  - RYSE partners agreed on the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the selection of targeted household (HH) taking into consideration the HH ability to commit to the program, that the HH mix of members will allow the implementation of all the interventions included in the designed GM, HH with debt and not receiving consistent financial support, children who dropped off school, facing food insecurity or risk, Female household member of working age, HH member with disability, more than one youth member. The total targeted HH by RYSE GM will reach to 480 HH.
  - RYSE GM will be relying on available national poverty databases for Jordanian and UNHCR for Syrian refugees to get lists of candidate HH
  - Currently working on the development of A Selection Survey (Means Test) that will be administered by – MEAL/Outreach staff from each implementing organization for 500 Syrian and 500 Jordanian households from the list of candidates.
  - Partners agreed on the detailed process flow for the implementation of the graduation model including number of visits, main deliverables and time frame
  - Currently working on the development of tools and detailed mentorship guidelines
3. Partners agreed on the main graduation criteria: Required criteria were selected on the basis of two things: (1) the consortium's ability to programmatically produce/deliver interventions to target these criteria (programmatic strengths) and (2) the relative importance of these criteria in improving household self-reliance according to Jordan-context reports like the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF). There are also some optional criteria that the graduation program will collect information on and also train/provide mentorship on, but these optional criteria do not need to be met for a household to be considered successfully "graduated. Required criteria include:

- **Self-efficacy:** Youth member meets a minimum mean self-efficacy score. This minimum score will be determined upon analyzing baseline data. In other contexts, the mean score ranged from 10-40 with an average mean score of 29.9. (GSE, 1981)
  - **Income & employment:** Income per capita must exceed Jordan's poverty line of 68 JOD per capita (Jordan VAF, 2019). Household must have 2 or more income sources in the last month (Trickle Up, 2019).
  - **Financial inclusion:** Household savings should cover at least one month's expenses (basic needs) (SRI, 2020).
  - **Women's empowerment:** Gender attitudes: Households accept females to work outside the home in a regular wage-paying job. Women's reported decision-making and purchasing power: Females in the household make decisions that affect the family.
  - **Food security:** Household has 2 or more nutritious meals per day for last 3 days. Meals are nutritious if they include two or more of the five food groups (Ultra Poor Graduation Programme Trickle Up, 2019).
4. RYSE contracted iMMAP to conduct Employment and Market Systems Assessment. The market assessment's results will be utilized as the base to build the relevant graduation model (which is a model used to help individuals in extreme poverty to graduate to a better economic status that enables them to have an income generation channel). The scope of the assessment will cover the governorates of Amman, Irbid, Karak, Zarqa, Madaba, Mafraq, and Ajloun. The comprehensive market assessment will identify specific market sectors (i.e. services, industrial, retails, agricultural, construction sectors, etc.) and subsectors (specific opportunities within a sector) in which there is current and future growth that can provide stable, safe career opportunities for youth and refugees, including both wage-employment (in small, medium, or large businesses) as well as self-employment (home-based, freelance, and entrepreneurship). The assessment should also identify specific occupational labor shortages in each region. It will provide the consortium program staff with a complete labor-market picture (including types and number of available jobs, wages, work environment, job demands, scheduling/consistency of work, unionization, security, accessibility to target youth populations, and causes of turnover, saturated areas, growth potential, etc.) and offer an overview of the existing livelihood challenges and employment opportunities in the target governorates.

For each type of employment, assessment will provide suggestions aimed at identification of specific gaps, needs, growth sectors, and other information to inform the implementation of an employment focused program targeting vulnerable Jordanian and Syrian youth, including women, in Jordan. At least 10 distinct options for each type of employment (wage/formal, self-employment, and home-based businesses) will be identified and analyzed as a result of this assessment. Each suggested option will be backed by evidence through desk review of existing studies and validated through primary data collection/interviews. Options should be very specific, and not just a sector or industry (e.g. agriculture, construction, manufacturing, etc.). The assessment should evaluate industries with key private sector actors to identify necessary competencies (soft and hard skills, including job-readiness skills) of in-demand occupations as well as employer hiring practices, requirements per governorate, as well as broader workforce requirements, standards, and practices to enable marginalized groups to

be competitive in the labor market. Self-employment opportunities will be evaluated by conducting market analysis and will take into account which sectors are open to non-Jordanians and be viewed through a gender lens to understand gender dynamics within industry sectors. For home-based businesses, a market survey for the targeted area will be conducted to clarify the possible businesses to be started or expanded and the new sectors to be considered. And maybe to assess the current existing businesses what would it take to sustain a home-based or small and medium business.

5. RYSE consortium engaged in several meetings with MOPIC and other line ministers including Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Youth and Ministry of Education. This engagement started during the design phase of the RYSE project and is continuing throughout the implementation of the project. The Consortium will be assessing the necessary attributes, interests, and capacity of the Jordanian government to replicate the graduation model, or aspects of it, within its own structures, policies, and programming. Through the feasibility study, DRC will explore the options available, working closely with the government, to determine the most appropriate approach to sustain the Consortium activities following its completion and to promote this among other actors.
6. RYSE began working on COVID-19 contingency plans Objective 2 program implementation and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL). The plans are currently under review by partners and will be updated to reflect their feedback. They include identification of risks, risk likelihood and severity, potential impact, possible mitigations for risks, and finally needed actions. Potential risks identified include:
  - a. Being unable to do in-person recruitment and training of new implementing project staff, including Livelihoods Mentors and Family Advisors.
  - b. Being unable to meet physically with key stakeholders including UNHCR and MOPIC for household identification/targeting, private sector companies for provision of employment opportunities to GA participants, and training providers for establishing training agreements.
  - c. Being unable to do research for the market assessment in-person.
  - d. Being unable to deliver home visits in-person. This includes home visits to collect data for household selection, household verification, and research studies like the Longitudinal Study.
  - e. Being unable to conduct participant trainings in-person.
  - f. Higher drop-outs due to lack of in-person contact with participants.
  - g. Lower data collection quality due to lack of in-person visits.
  - h. Higher risk of complaints and feedback coming in due to COVID-19 situation and its impact on families and also potentially due to the lack of in-person visits that would otherwise clarify programmatic services.

Some potential mitigation strategies that were identified jointly with the partners include:

- a. Doing online recruitment and training of new implementing project staff
- b. Calling, emailing, or digitally connecting with key stakeholders including UNHCR and MOPIC for household identification/targeting, private sector companies for provision of employment opportunities to GA participants, and training providers for establishing training agreements.

- c. Conducting research via online interviews for the market assessment. We may also need to ask the market assessment consultants to seek out more private sector and training providers in case those who were to be interviewed before are not operational due to COVID-19.
- d. Delivering home visits and data collection exercises via phone call or online. For verification home visit, this has to be done in-person, so TWG discussed delaying the process if COVID-19 restrictions apply during this time.
- e. Conducting trainings online and possibly delaying those trainings that cannot be done online. This would require the provision of participants with smart devices as well as possible internet connection and then training them on using the devices. These considerations have to be done in consultation with the budget.
- f. Increasing the sample size if budget allows.
- g. Training staff on how to collect data remotely.
- h. Prepare each organization's accountability teams for the possibility of receiving more frequent complaints and specific types of feedback on program delivery.