



**ERF WEBINAR ON
THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HOUSEHOLDS AND FIRMS IN THE MENA
REGION**

MAY 23-24, 2022

CONTEXT AND WEBINAR OBJECTIVES

During one of the most turbulent beginnings to a decade in recent history, we have observed the spread of a global pandemic with unprecedented social and economic consequences. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to take its toll on the MENA region, and while the region still accounts for relatively fewer cases, the numbers are rising. As countries strive to contain the virus, the economic repercussions and impact keep growing, leaving millions of workers vulnerable to income loss and layoffs.

The impact on income generating activities is especially harsh for unprotected workers and the most vulnerable groups in the informal economy, which constitutes a considerable share of economic activity and employment in MENA. Moreover, women are among the most affected groups, as women are over-represented in more affected sectors (such as education) or in occupations that are at the frontline in dealing with the pandemic (e.g., nurses) and will bear a disproportionate burden in the care economy, with the closure of schools and care systems.

Against this background, ERF has developed the COVID-19 MENA Monitor Survey, which is a wide-ranging, nationally representative panel survey. This series of bi-monthly short panel phone surveys, including multiple waves of interviews with the same respondents, allows for an accurate assessment of changes over time in this rapidly developing crisis. The range of questions monitor the effect of the crisis on households, workers as well as micro and small enterprises, and the ways in which households and enterprises are coping with the pandemic. The purpose of this panel survey is to provide data for researchers and policy makers on the socio-economic and labor market impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The ERF COVID-19 MENA Monitor Survey covers a number of Arab countries in the MENA region including Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, and Sudan.

This project was made possible by the generous contributions of the International Labor Organization (ILO), Agence Française de Développement (AFD), The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the Government of the United Kingdom (formerly known as DFID), the World Bank and the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development (AFESD).

Furthermore, [the ERF and the Agence Française de Développement \(AFD\) set up a Research Partnership Collaboration](#) to strengthen scientific knowledge and evidence-based dialogue for understanding the short-term consequences of the social and economic crisis generated by the pandemic. The aim of the collaboration was to provide a platform to answer some pressing questions regarding the impact of COVID-19 on people's lives and firms' behaviors and shed light on the coping mechanisms that have been taken to help them in these tough times. This project was led by Ragui Assaad (University of Minnesota and ERF), Caroline Krafft (St. Catherine University), and Mohamed Ali Marouani (Université Paris1-Panthéon-Sorbonne and ERF).

Under this collaboration, a call for proposals was launched on "[The Impact of COVID-19 on Households and Firms in the MENA Region](#)" with a view to understand the consequences of the social and economic crisis generated by the pandemic. ERF received 53 proposals, and the review process led to the acceptance of six proposals, which were developed into six



papers, and six policy briefs. Moreover, four policy briefs were developed by the project's PIs, summarizing key findings and policy issues facing households, workers, farmers, household enterprises, caregivers and firms. The aim of the two-day webinar is to present the policy recommendations and the main findings of the project.

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(AT 3:00 PM CAIRO TIME)**

AGENDA

Day one: Monday, May 23, 2022	
03:00-03:10	Welcoming Remarks (5 min) Ibrahim Elbadawi (Economic Research Forum) Hélène Djoufelkit (Agence Française de Développement)
03:10-04:00	Session 1 Regional Perspective: The Impact of COVID-19 on Middle Eastern and North African Labor Markets (50 min)
	Moderator: Hassan Aly (<i>Nile University and ERF</i>)
	Speakers: Ragui Assaad, <i>University of Minnesota, ERF</i> Caroline Krafft, <i>St. Catherine University</i> Mohamed Ali Marouani, <i>Université Paris1-Panthéon-Sorbonne and ERF</i>
	Lead Commentator: Khalid Abu Ismail (<i>UN ESCWA and ERF</i>) (15 min)
	Q&A (15 min)
<p>The session will showcase the findings of the regional policy briefs series, highlighting key ongoing issues on the Impact of COVID-19 on Middle Eastern and North African Labor Markets. To check out the Policy Briefs:</p> <p>https://bit.ly/3jv90kS https://bit.ly/37HCvby https://bit.ly/3KIEw5W https://bit.ly/3M2xI92</p>	
04:00-04:50	Session 2: (50 min)
	Moderator: Hala Abou Ali (<i>Cairo University and ERF</i>)
	Speakers: Shireen Alazzawi and Vladimir Hlasny, <i>Women and Youth labor market outcomes during Covid19: evidence from Egypt and Jordan (15 min)</i>
	Amira El-Shal, Eman Moustafa, Nada Rostom and Yasmine Abdelfattah, <i>Social Safety Nets and Food Insecurity in MENA in the Time of COVID-19 (15 min)</i>
	Lead Commentator: Racha Ramadan (<i>Cairo University and ERF</i>) (10 min)
	Q&A (10 min)



Day Two: Tuesday, May 24, 2022	
03:00-03:50	Session 3 (50 min)
	Moderator: Mona Said (<i>The American University in Cairo and ERF</i>)
	Speakers: Zouheir El-Sahli and Mouyad Alsamara, <i>Resilience in the Time of Covid-19: Lessons Learned from MENA SMEs (15 min)</i> Samia Satti, <i>The Impact of COVID-19 on Households and Firms in the MENA Region: the case of Sudan (15 min)</i>
	Lead Commentator: Rim Mouelhi (<i>Institut Supérieur de Comptabilité et d'Administration des Entreprises and ERF</i>) (10 min)
	Q&A (10 min)
03:50-04:40	Session 4 (50 min)
	Moderator: Taieb Hafsi (<i>University of Montreal and ERF</i>)
	Speakers: Moundir Lassassi and Idres Lahna, <i>Populations' Behavior Analysis Toward Covid-19 Safety Measures: Evidence from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (15 min)</i> Irene Clavijo, Anna Spinardi, Kevin Henkens, and Nigora Isamiddinova, <i>Gender and Mental Health: COVID-19 shock-related factors (15 min)</i>
	Lead Commentator: Caroline Krafft (<i>St. Catherine University</i>) (10 min)
	Q&A (10 min)
04:40-05:10	Closing Remarks 5: Lessons learned from the Crisis: How can we do better
	Moderator: Mahmoud Haddad (<i>University of Tennessee at Martin and ERF</i>)
	Panelists: Cecilia Poggi, Development Agency perspective. Ragui Assaad, Labor Markets perspective. Mohamed Ali Marouani, Firms resilience and recovery perspective.