



**March 10 & 11, 2020  
Hurghada, Egypt**

**Preliminary Agenda**

<b>Tuesday March 10, 2020</b>	
<b>Registration</b>	
<b>Opening Ceremony</b>	
<b><u>Unleashing the Power of Client Centricity in Advancing Financial Inclusion</u></b>	
<p>Financial inclusion has become a mainstream priority for governments and policymakers in the Arab world because it contributes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty alleviation</li> <li>• Poverty reduction</li> <li>• Economic activity and growth</li> </ul> <p>However, the Arab world lags behind other regions in many financial inclusion indicators and this is why a series of measures were taken by all the relevant stakeholders to promote financial inclusion and overcome the challenges. A core challenge to financial inclusion is the access-usage gap which can be solved by embedding client centric approach into financial institutions. A client centric approach helps financial institutions to design financial services and products based on deep understanding of clients’ needs. As a result, these financial services and products will attract clients because of the values they bring to clients’ lives and overtime, these financial products and services will have a high enrollment followed by high usage.</p> <p>This session will shed light on the importance of client centric approach and how it leads to greater financial inclusion by discussing the outcomes of adopting client centric approach on reaching out and serving the low-income people.</p>	
<b>Coffee Break</b>	
<p><b><u>Human Centered Design: A Powerful Tool in Achieving Greater Client Centricity</u></b></p> <p>Human centered design (HCD) is relatively new approach in financial inclusion although, it has been implemented for many years in other industries. HCD allows financial service providers to design solutions based on clients’ insights; therefore, HCD is considered to be a step toward incorporating underserved segments into the formal financial sector.</p>	<p><b><u>Financial Risk Management in Times of Crises</u></b></p> <p>Given the recent events taking place in Lebanon, this session aims to shed light on the exposure of microfinance institutions to financial risks, and how this exposure can be managed during times of crises.</p> <p>The session will present basic categories of financial risk, shedding light on how they interact, change and escalate. It will then draw on examples from other regions to demonstrate</p>



<p>Embracing HCD leads to the development of desirable, feasible and viable solutions; thus, it is one of the powerful tools that moves financial service providers toward more client centricity. During this session, the panelists will provide an overview of what is the Human Centered Design (HCD), share the steps of the HCD process and then, they will zoom into real world examples where the HCD approach was implemented and succeeded in serving vulnerable segments.</p>	<p>how microfinance institutions were able to withstand such financial crises and continue serving their clients.</p> <p>Finally, the session will highlight the role development finance institutions (DFIs) can play and will present some of the mechanisms they have available to support microfinance institutions in managing their financial risk.</p>
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**Lunch**

**Digital Transformation; Is It the Solution!!**

In the last few years, the financial market has gone through some changes, caused by a big shift in the behavior of consumers, the availability of new technology and the arrival of new players in the field. This plenary will provide an overview of the landscape of digital financial services today. It will discuss how microfinance institutions considering digitalization can begin the process, starting from the design of a digital transformation strategy through to its implementation. It will also address the steps and partnerships involved, pre-requisites, typical project lifecycle as well as some rough approximations of the size of investments. The session will be complimented with first-hand experiences of institutions who have started this process from both the MENA region and beyond.

**Coffee Break**

**Agricultural Finance (Means of Engaging in Agricultural Finance and Experiences Doing So)**

The panel will unite representatives from donor, network, Agricultural tech company, and MFI to discuss why they advance and/or engage in agricultural finance, their reasons for doing so, and how they see institutions or how their institution engaged in agricultural finance.

The discussion will be targeted so as to highlight why and how institutions have/can

**The Missing Middle: How Have MFIs Leveraged This Opportunity?**

Increasing access to finance for very small and small enterprises has become an important goal for many governments and development agencies as they are viewed as main drivers of economic growth and creators of employment.

Many microfinance institutions across the region have come to this realization over the past few years. This session will look at how MFIs in MENA have managed to design products that cater to the needs of this unique



engage to expand the supply of finance to the agricultural sector, being client-centric in rural areas.

segment, what changes they have had to make to their organizational structure and the impact that this shift to serve VSEs has had on their bottom line.

**Gala Dinner**



**Wednesday March 11, 2020**

**Regulations and Financial Inclusion;**

Financial inclusion is an important enabler of the sustainable development goals (SDGs); therefore, many Arab countries have introduced comprehensive regulations of financial inclusion. Jordan and Palestine developed and launched a National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS). While, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen are working to finalize these regulations. The NFIS focuses on improving financial literacy, enhancing financial access through modifying regulatory framework, data collection and measurement, increase consumer protection and expansion of digital financial services.

To achieve the objectives of the NFIS and regulations of financial inclusion, a relentless focus on client centricity is required. Therefore, regulators in many Arab countries are developing and issuing regulations, circulars and guidelines that aim to improve client experience, confidence and relationship. Examples of these are:

- Know your customer (KYC) regulations,
- Client protection guidelines,
- Customer due diligence rules,
- Digital payment regulations

Therefore, this session will shed light on how the regulators in the Arab countries are focusing on advancing financial inclusion by developing regulations that are more client centric, enhance the quality of financial products and services and increase access to finance.

**Coffee Break**

**Identifying and Remediating Risks in Digital Credit**

One of the emerging services within microfinance is digital credit which has great potential in advancing financial inclusion by expanding the scale, scope and reach of formal credit services. However, digital credit is associated with risks such as:

- poor disclosure of prices, terms, and conditions
- exclusion of certain groups of population
- over indebtedness
- weak client communications

**Inclusion of Refugees via Digital Identity Solutions**

Digital identities have the potential to transform financial inclusion by improving “know your client” procedures, providing detailed information about prospective clients’ financial transactions and employment records, and mitigating risk.

However, unlocking this potential requires institutional change, capacity building, and digital identity solutions that meet client and institutional needs.

In this session, MFIs will explore the pilot of a block-chain based digital identity solution for



<p>It is important to manage these risks in order to optimize the potential of digital credit; therefore, great efforts have been made by stakeholders to develop solutions for these risks.</p> <p>Examples of these are efforts are the G20 High Level Principles for Digital Financial Inclusion (DFI Principles) in 2016, The Consumer Protection Standards for Digital Credit (Digital Credit Standards) in 2019 and CEGA’s Digital Credit Observatory (DCO).</p> <p>This session and its speakers will present the main risks and challenges of digital credit and the approaches and standards that are addressing and managing these risks.</p>	<p>refugee borrowers to learn more about the potential and pitfalls of these new technologies and how microfinance institutions can prepare to integrate them into their operations.</p>
<p><b>Lunch</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Women in the Workforce</u></b></p> <p>Gender equality is recognized as a necessary goal for sustainability, therefore; it is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. There has been progress toward gender equality; however, 27 % of managerial positions worldwide were held by women in 2018. In the MENA region, the average of 48% of the workforce is female, but only 7% of CEOs are women. Such statistics indicate the non-helpful behaviors in today’s workplace which are known as micro-aggressions that are left unresolved, only fester and get bigger.</p> <p>The women who have reached to managerial positions have used their own professional development to boost them, and by creating their own path to success, are paving the way for future female leaders.</p> <p>Therefore, this session will discuss:</p>	<p><b><u>Putting Clients First: The Value of Client Protection Certification</u></b></p> <p>Responsible Finance has gained importance in recent years due to the series of crises that hit the microfinance industry globally.</p> <p>Across the world, a number of efforts and campaigns are underway to promote the adoption of responsible finance practices within MFIs and the sector at large.</p> <p>This session aims to present the experiences of microfinance institutions from the region who have embarked on and recently completed their journey towards consumer protection certification. It will present some of the integral changes that these institutions have had to make, the challenges they faced along the way, and the impact they believe that this has had on their clients.</p>



- The barriers that women face in the workforce and the strategies to overcome them
- How women use professional development to excel in their careers
- Why mentoring and building a strong network is important
- What advice current female leaders would give to help others build a successful career
- The importance of increasing diversity in organizational leadership

**Coffee Break**

***The Strong Impact of Financial Services Digitalization on Improving Access to Finance and Client Centricity***

The panel will explore how the recent push to digitize financial services has led to the expansion of access to finance to previously underserved segments of society. Not only that but technological advancement has made possible to provide more customer-centric financial products and services strongly geared to the needs of the consumers.

In light of the drive to expand access to finance the panel will also explore potential pitfalls and challenges that may arise when relying solely on digital onboarding and distribution. In that respect what should be the response of the investor community when assessing and addressing such challenges and what does the future hold for digital financial services?

**Closing Ceremony**