



International
Labour
Organization

Jordan Decent Work Country Programme 2014 - 2015



Donor countries supporting the programme:



ILO Regional Office for Arab States



Jordan



Nearly half of Jordan's population of 6 million is under the age of 19 and its unemployment rate was at 12 per cent for the first three quarters of 2015, putting an increased focus on the need to provide jobs to a growing workforce. Of great concern also is Jordan's low labour force participation rate, currently standing at 38 per cent. This is particularly the case among women, with a 14 per cent labour force participation rate, and youth.

By November 2015, the number of registered Syrian refugees in Jordan had reached 630,000, the majority of whom live in urban areas and outside refugee camps. This influx has put considerable additional strain on Jordanian society, natural resources and economy, including the labour market.

The Jordanian government placed employment and Decent Work at the heart of its National Employment Strategy in 2011, and the Jordan Vision 2025 includes clear targets on reducing unemployment. The ILO is supporting these efforts with technical assistance in a range of areas grouped under a single framework: the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP).





Decent Work Country Programme

The ILO implemented its second Decent Work Country Programme in Jordan from 2012 - 2015, to support national initiatives aimed at reducing Decent Work deficits and strengthening national capacity to mainstream Decent Work in social and economic policies. The DWCP extension, covering the period of 2016 - 2017, will contribute to the implementation of the recently adopted United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, with particular focus on Goal #8: decent work and economic growth.

In 2012 - 2015, the ILO's three priorities in Jordan were:

- expanding decent work opportunities for young Jordanian men and women through the promotion of better working conditions, non-discrimination and equal rights at work
- extending a minimum level of social security to the most vulnerable groups of society through the Social Protection Floor as part of a more comprehensive social security system in Jordan
- enhancing employment opportunities, with a focus on youth employment





Selected achievements

With the support of the ILO Decent Work Country Programme, Jordan has achieved several milestones for more and better jobs, including:

-  extending **social security** to all formal and informal enterprises
-  reaching a **sector-wide collective bargaining agreement** for the garment sector
-  improved access of **Syrian refugees to the labour market**, en par with migrants
-  expansion of the **national framework to combat child labour** to new governorates
-  improved signaling of **skills of E-TVET graduates** – with a new testing and certification methodology of the Center for Accreditation and Quality Assurance
-  fostering **entrepreneurship education** in vocational training and technical education





Better working conditions, non-discrimination and equal rights at work

A. Strong workers' and employers' organizations and effective collective bargaining

- ● ● The ILO built the economic, social and legal literacy of **workers' organizations** in order to improve their capacity to participate effectively in policy debates, influence public decisions, and defend workers' rights and interests. In particular, the ILO built the capacities of the General Federation of Jordan Trade Unions (GFJTU) and the Federation of Independent Trade Unions in Jordan (FITUJ), to enable them to effectively engage in the implementation of Decent Work Country Programme activities, and to develop their structures in order to better represent their members. Moreover, it trained a group of women and men to become trainers and build the capacities of their colleagues, especially in the areas of gender equality, organizing and social dialogue.
- ● ● The ILO built the capacity of **employers' organizations** to engage in dialogue towards creating an enabling environment for sustainable enterprise and employment. A survey on an enabling environment for suitable enterprises was conducted in order to guide future planning, resulting in the establishment of a Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) unit at the Jordan Chamber of Industry (JCI) that will contribute to national SME policy development.
- ● ● An institutional capacity building programme for **employers and workers organizations** to promote responsible workplace practices and deliver the ILO **Work Improvement in Small Enterprises Programme** combined with business management training is currently being implemented in both Jordan and Lebanon.
- ● ● In 2015, a new two-year **collective bargaining agreement** for the garment sector was negotiated with the support of the Better Work programme, a joint initiative of the ILO and the International Finance Corporation. It increased access for unions in garment factories and improved standards of dormitories for foreign workers.
- ● ● A **national strategy to promote collective bargaining** was prepared in June 2014 to support collective bargaining at the sectoral level. In 2015, studies on collective bargaining were prepared to provide the ILO and its partners with basic information on the economic situation, working conditions and industrial relations arrangements of four selected sectors in Jordan: **electricity, construction, food processing and the pharmaceutical sector**.
- ● ● Through Better Work programme support, **the Al Hassan Workers' Center**, the first of its kind in Jordan, was opened in the Al Hassan Industrial Zone in 2014. The center offers workers recreational activities, including a gym and dance classes, but also English and computer lessons, legal advice, trade union support and mental health counselling.



B. Effective elimination of child labour

- There were over 30,000 child labourers in Jordan in 2007.
- Their number has significantly increased with the influx of Syrian refugees, with both Syrian and Jordanian children entering the workforce.

- ● ● The ILO is supporting the Jordanian government in implementing the **National Framework to Combat Child Labour (NFCL)**. Since March 2013, the NFCL has been operational in six out of 12 governorates in Jordan, and is being extended to include all governorates by the end of March 2016. **A National Child Labour Database** has been developed to identify information specific to child labour that links with larger child and family protection information systems.
- ● ● The ILO is providing support to partners on **upgrading informal apprenticeships**, in order to improve learning experiences and create Decent Work opportunities for vulnerable youth, including working children above the minimum age of employment.
- ● ● The ILO is supporting the capacity of the **Greater Amman Municipality** to identify and report on child labour cases, and to increase awareness on child labour amongst children through peer-to-peer education.
- ● ● The ILO is developing the capacity of the **Ministry of Social Development** and the **Ministry of Education** to address child labour at the governorate level by developing training tools for a new cadre of master trainers.





C. Labour migration in conditions of freedom and dignity

- Jordan has a very high population of non-nationals and over half the new jobs created annually are reportedly filled by migrant workers.
- Migrant workers in Jordan come primarily from Egypt and several countries in South Asia.
- They are mostly employed in agriculture, construction, domestic work, as well as the garment industry.

In support of Jordan's national policies to protect migrant workers, the ILO is managing several projects in Jordan related to **labour migration and human trafficking**. These projects promote the adopted fair migration agenda, and through them ILO offers capacity building services and policy advice in migrant intensive sectors.

It is also seeking to promote **fair recruitment practices** in the Nepal-Jordan migration corridor.

The ILO provides technical assistance on provisions of **Convention No. 189 on decent work for domestic workers and Recommendation No. 201**, aimed at bringing national policy in line with these International Labour Standards.

In 2015, following earlier consultations with the ILO, the Jordanian government adopted Regulation No. 12 on **“organizing recruitment of non-Jordanian domestic workers,”** giving migrant domestic workers more protection and new benefits relating to their mobility, insurance, rating of recruitment agencies, and the creation of a government safe house for victims of abuse.

The ILO also provided technical advice on planning a survey on the impact of mobile groups, including **refugees and migrant workers**, on the Jordanian labour market (to be implemented through the Ministry Of Planning and International Cooperation in 2016).

A **new unified contract for all migrant garment workers** in Jordan was announced in 2015. Facilitated by the ILO, the contract represents a significant step towards the elimination of discriminatory practices between the different migrant worker nationalities.

The Better Work Jordan programme works **to improve the lives of workers in the garment sector**, the majority of whom are migrants, by driving sector-wide, sustainable improvement in adherence to Jordanian labour law and international conventions on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, as well as promoting the business competitiveness of the apparel sector in Jordan within the global supply chain. The sector's success can be demonstrated in improved compliance with international labour standards and Jordanian labour law, in addition to an increased desire of buyers to source from Jordan.

While the vast majority of workers in the garment sector are migrant, there are approximately 15,000 Jordanians employed in the sector. As part of its policy of nationalizing the labour force, the government of Jordan, with the support of the Better Work Programme, has set up **satellite garment factories in remote and impoverished areas** across the country to encourage more Jordanians, particularly women, to work in the apparel sector. The goal of the satellite units is to reduce poverty in Jordan through the employment of Jordanians – especially disadvantaged women - living in remote areas.





D. Equal pay for work of equal value

- Some 27 per cent of female private school teachers receive a monthly wage that is less than the minimum wage of 190 Jordanian dinars (267 USD).
- Around 30 per cent of female teachers in private schools sign the Collective Contract that guarantees a set of rights at work.
- Many female teachers are not enrolled in the national social security programme.

- ● ● The ILO is supporting the **National Committee for Pay Equity (NCPE)** chaired by the Ministry of Labour and the Jordanian National Commission for Women. The NCPE is lobbying for and sensitizing constituents, authorities and the general public **on issues relating to patterns of discrimination in the workplace**, including gender wage discrimination and unfair working conditions, that affect women's ability to enter and remain in the labour market on an equal footing with men.
- ● ● The project initially focused on advocating for **legal change through a policy-oriented legal review**. Its findings and recommendations have led to a national debate and it is expected that suggested amendments to current legislation (as it pertains to ILO Convention on Equal Remuneration – No. 100 and ILO Convention on Employment Discrimination - No. 111) will be integrated into the labour law in the near future.
- ● ● A campaign entitled **“Stand-up with Teachers”** was launched in the northern governorate of Irbid in 2015 in partnership with Ahel, a Jordanian organization that specialises in community organizing. The campaign aims to inform teachers on legislation and sectoral agreements that guarantee their rights in the workplace. The campaign is being implemented by female private school teachers, with the support of the ILO and the National Committee for Pay Equity.





2 A social protection floor as part of a more inclusive social security system

- Jordan is ranked as an upper middle-income, high human development country.
- Although Jordan enjoys a good standing with regards to its human development and social indicators, a coverage gap still exists.

- To ensure sustainable and adequate **pensions and other social security benefits**, the Social Security Corporation (SSC) of Jordan and the ILO concluded a Funds-in-Trust project, under which the ILO carried out the **7th and 8th Actuarial Valuation** of the pension schemes administered by the SSC, and assessed the maternity and unemployment insurance schemes in light of international standards and best practices.
- The new **Jordanian Social Security Law No. 1** (2014) was drafted with the support of the ILO and adopted by Parliament in January 2014, fully taking the ILO's recommendations into account.
- The ILO also succeeded in supporting the SSC in strengthening social security in alignment with the SSC strategic plan and the national priority of strengthening principles of social justice and equal opportunity included in the **National Agenda and the Government Executive Plan**.
- The ILO is also supporting the full application of the **ILO's Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)**. Jordan ratified the Convention in February 2014, the only country in the Middle East to do so.
- As the Jordanian social security system is regarded as a best practice model in the Arab region, the ILO facilitated the exchange of knowledge between tripartite stakeholders from other Arab countries and the Jordanian SSC through study visits. The ILO is also in the process of concluding a **Memorandum of Agreement** with the Government of Jordan and the Palestinian Authority regarding the **exchange of knowledge in the field of social security policy making and administration**.
- Currently, the ILO is carrying out a **study on universal health care**, which should serve as the guiding document for extending health care coverage to all in Jordan.
- A **national Social Protection Floor (SPF)** has been endorsed by Jordanian tripartite stakeholders and a national SPF Advisory Board has been established with the support of the ILO. The ILO supported national Social Dialogue efforts on Social Protection in Jordan through a workshop enhancing in-depth knowledge of Employers on SPF. Currently, the ILO is carrying out a study assessing the **fiscal space for closing the social protection gaps**, and an **impact assessment study**, which demonstrates the impact of a national SPF on the economy, labour market, health and reduction of child labour in Jordan. These studies should guide tripartite stakeholders in setting up a pilot SPF in one of the poorer governorates in Jordan, which should progressively be extended to all Jordanian governorates.





3 Enhanced employment opportunities

A. Response to the Syrian crisis

- There are over 630,000 registered Syrian Refugees in Jordan. An estimated 99 per cent of those who work do so without a work permit.

- ● ● The ILO published a study entitled **“Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labour Market”** which provided a better understanding of the employment profile of Syrian refugees in Jordan, and recommended strategies to address challenges facing the refugees and Jordanian host communities in their search for employment and livelihood. The study and related regional consultation events were part of a campaign that advocated successfully for the government to facilitate Syrian refugees’ access to work and livelihoods through giving them **work permits in specified sectors** in line with Jordanian labour regulations.
- ● ● The ILO is implementing **Employment Intensive Investment Programmes** in Irbid and Mafrq, aimed at creating employment opportunities for both host communities and Syrian refugees, as well as enhancing local infrastructure in both affected areas. While ILO interventions for host communities have so far largely focused on agriculture, a **three-year local economic development plan** is being drafted and aimed at generating employment in various industries, such as the industrial sector, transportation and tourism.
- ● ● The ILO is supporting the **elimination of child labour among Syrian refugees and their host communities** in Jordan by building the capacity of government, worker and employer institutions to combat and prevent child labour.





B. Jobs, skills and entrepreneurship for youth

- The socio-demographic structure of Jordan is characterized by a large youth population with around 70 per cent of the population being under the age of 30.
- According to ILO's School-to-Work Transition Survey, done in collaboration with the Department of Statistics, 60 per cent of youth in Jordan are inactive, or not in the labour force.

- The ILO supported the government, workers' unions and employers' organizations in **addressing youth employment issues**, including through (a) evaluating the **National Employment Strategy** and proposing specific recommendations for taking the new economic context following the Syria crisis into account, (b) upgrading the capacity of the **National Employment Strategy Unit** to monitor and evaluate the projects it implements, and (c) the elaboration of a **national apprenticeship system** proposed for adoption after tripartite negotiations.
- In collaboration with the International Youth Foundation (IYF,) the ILO implemented successfully a pilot initiative for **upgrading informal apprenticeships in auto-repair workshops**, which aimed at (a) developing apprenticeship **contents and processes**, (b) **linking trainees with employers** for on-the-job training, (c) improving **occupational health and safety conditions** at the workplace, (d) improving **organization and workplace management**, (e) organizing **testing for occupational licenses of the trainees**. This approach is now being replicated in other sectors.
- The ILO also built the capacity of the Employment-Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ETVET) Council and the National Employment Strategy (NES) Unit to establish **monitoring and evaluation systems**.
- The ILO is implementing a project aimed at fostering an **entrepreneurial culture** in Jordan by promoting entrepreneurship education among youth in vocational schools. The ILO is also implementing its entrepreneurship education programme "Know About Business" in vocational training centres that graduate young entrepreneurs who then become potential beneficiaries looking for financial and non-financial services.
- The ILO's **Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED) methodology** was applied in the food processing and beverage sector and the pharmaceutical sector, to identify the skills that need to be strengthened for improved success in international trade. The ILO is further providing support to these sectors for the implementation of these recommendations, including a modular course on human resources, marketing, technical training for machine operators and a course on bio-similars and bio-technology.



For more information, contact:

International Labour Organization

Regional Office for Arab States

Aresco Center, Justinien Street, Kantari

P.O.Box 114088- Riad El Solh 1107 - 2150

Beirut – Lebanon

Tel: +961 - 1 - 752400

Fax: +961 - 1 - 752405

Email: beirut@ilo.org

Website: www.ilo.org/arabstates

Follow ILO in Arab States on Twitter: [@iloarabstates](https://twitter.com/iloarabstates)