

JORDAN

The ILO Work4Youth project worked with the Department of Statistics of Jordan to implement two rounds of the School-to-work transition survey (SWTS) in 2012–13 (December–January) and 2015 (March–April). The results of the first survey were published in V. Barcucci and N. Mryyan (2014): *Labour market transitions of young women and men in Jordan*, Work4Youth Publication Series No. 14 (Geneva, ILO) and were also highlighted in the regional synthesis report, R. Dimova, S. Elder and K. Stephan (2016): *Labour market transitions of young women and men in the Middle East and North Africa*, Work4Youth Publication Series No. 44 (Geneva, ILO). The objective of this country note is to offer a general summary of youth labour market trends in Jordan based on the SWTS. Youth is defined as 15–29.

Main findings of the ILO SWTS

Human capital and mismatch

- Almost all surveyed youth had attended school or a training programme at some point in their lives (only 0.6 per cent of youth had never attended school as of 2015). Less than one-third (27.6 per cent) of the youth population had completed their education in 2015 while 42.1 per cent was still attending school. Young women in Jordan have equal opportunities to young men in terms of access to education.
- SWTS results show a correlation between the levels of education and a young person's labour market transition: a young person with university education was able to complete the transition from school to a first stable/satisfactory job in 10.8 months, while 15.6 months, on average, were need for youth with secondary education.
- Although most youth in Jordan are able to stay in school at least to the primary level, it is not enough to ensure that a majority of employed youth are adequately educated for the job they are doing. Less than one-half (45.9 per cent) of young workers in 2015 had a level of education that matched what would be expected for their occupation. A higher share (48.7 per cent) were classified as undereducated for the job and only 5.4 per cent of working youth were deemed overeducated for their occupations.
- The majority (62.2 per cent) of current students in Jordan had a preference for future work in the government/public sector. While the attraction of public sector employment is understandable given concerns with job security, the ability of the sector to absorb a significant number of young workers is limited.

The ILO **School-to-work transitions surveys (SWTS)** are implemented as an outcome of the Work4Youth (W4Y) project, a partnership between the ILO and The MasterCard Foundation. The project has a budget of US\$14.6 million and will run for five years to mid-2016. Its aim is to “promote decent work opportunities for young men and women through knowledge and action”. The immediate objective of the partnership is to produce more and better labour market information specific to youth in developing countries, focusing in particular on transition paths to the labour market.

See the website www.ilo.org/w4y for more information.

Underutilization of the youth labour potential remains a top concern

- The youth labour underutilization rate in Jordan was comparatively low at 34 per cent in 2015, a slight increase from the 2012 value of 32.9 per cent. The share of underutilized labour potential consisted of 2.6 per cent of the youth population in irregular employment (either in self-employment or paid employment with contract of less than 12 months), 15.5 per cent unemployed and 15.9 per cent inactive non-students.
- The youth unemployment rate increased between 2012 and 2015 from 24.1 to 25.5 per cent but remained below the regional average (Arab States) of 30.6 per cent in the latter year.¹ The unemployment rate of young women was more than double that of young men (46.4 per cent compared to 18.2 per cent for males in 2015).
- The unemployment rate of youth increased with the level of educational attainment. The rate of university graduates was the highest at 27.8 per cent unemployed in 2015 compared to 20.2 per cent for youth who finished secondary (general) education.
- The duration of unemployment is often long. More than one-half (58.3 per cent) of unemployed youth had been looking for work for longer than one year in 2015.
- The share of youth neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs) in Jordan decreased slightly between 2012 and 2015 from 29 to 28.7 per cent. The share among young women was almost triple that of young men in 2015 at 43.8 and 14.5 per cent, respectively), and is explained primarily by the obligation of many young women to remain outside of the labour force to tend to family responsibilities.

Low employment rates for youth, especially young women, remain a strong hindrance to the country's productive transformation

- Just under one-third (31.2 per cent) of youth in Jordan were employed, a slight increase from 29.9 per cent in 2012. Young men were almost four times more likely to work than young women (employment ratios in 2015 were 49.3 and 11.9 per cent, respectively).
- The vast majority of young workers were in paid employment (92.7 per cent), and only a small share remained in vulnerable employment as own-account workers (2.8 per cent) or unpaid family workers (1.5 per cent). In 2015, slightly more than one-third (35.7 per cent) of youth in paid employment were engaged without a written contract.
- The services sector absorbed the largest portion of Jordan's young workers (81.1 per cent of young male workers and 86.8 per cent of young female workers), followed by industry (17.1 and 9.3 per cent, respectively) and agriculture (1.9 and 3.9 per cent, respectively).
- Informal employment affected almost one-half of young workers in Jordan; the informal employment rate increased slightly between the two years (46.8 to 47.9 per cent, respectively).

Selection of data tables

Table 1. Youth population by educational status, 2012 and 2015 (%)

Educational status	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2015	2012	2015	2012	2015
Never attended school	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.6
Dropped out before graduation or completion of school	26.8	29.8	29.9	34.1	23.5	25.2
Currently attending school	42.9	42.1	40.7	39.6	45.2	44.7
Education completed	29.8	27.6	28.8	25.7	30.9	29.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

¹ ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Youth 2016* (Geneva). Note, the regional figure covers youth aged 15–24 while the data on the SWTS refer to youth aged 15–29. The youth unemployment rate in Jordan for the age range 15–24 was very close to the regional average at 30.1 per cent in 2015 based on the SWTS.

Table 2. Key youth labour market indicators – traditional distribution, 2012 and 2015 (%)

	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2015	2012	2015	2012	2015
Employed	29.9	31.2	47.2	49.3	11.2	11.9
Unemployed (strict definition)	9.5	10.7	10.8	11.0	8.1	10.3
Inactive	60.6	58.2	42.0	39.7	80.7	77.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Youth labour force participation rate	39.4	41.8	58.0	60.3	19.3	22.2
Youth unemployment rate (strict definition)	24.1	25.5	18.7	18.2	41.8	46.4

Note: The "strict" definition of unemployment refers to persons without work, available to work and actively engaged in a job search. The "broad" definition excludes the job search criteria. The youth unemployment rate is the number of unemployed persons divided by the youth labour force (employed plus unemployed).

Table 3. Key youth labour market indicators – alternative distribution, 2012 and 2015 (%)

	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2015	2012	2015	2012	2015
In regular employment	27.2	28.5	43.0	45.8	10.1	10.1
In irregular employment	2.7	2.6	4.2	3.4	1.1	1.8
Unemployed (broad definition)	12.8	15.5	13.4	13.8	12.2	17.3
Inactive students	39.9	37.5	36.4	33.1	43.7	42.1
Inactive non-students	17.3	15.9	3.0	3.9	32.8	28.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Youth labour force participation rate (broad definition)	42.8	46.7	60.6	63.0	23.5	29.2
Youth unemployment rate (broad definition)	12.8	15.5	13.4	13.8	12.2	17.3
Youth labour underutilization rate	32.9	34.0	20.6	21.1	46.2	47.7

Table 4. Distribution of NEET youth by composition, 2012 and 2015 (%)

Sex	2012			2015		
	NEET rate	of which:		NEET rate	of which:	
		Inactive non-students	Unemployed non-students		Inactive non-students	Unemployed non-students
Total	29.0	20.0	8.9	28.7	19.3	9.4
Male	14.9	4.9	10.0	14.5	5.0	9.5
Female	44.2	36.5	7.7	43.8	34.5	9.3

Table 5. Employed youth by status in employment, 2012 and 2015 (%)

Status in employment	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2015	2012	2015	2012	2015
Wage and salaried workers (employees)	93.8	92.7	92.8	91.8	98.7	96.9
Employers	1.7	2.5	2.1	3.0	0.0	0.3
Own-account workers	2.8	2.8	3.1	2.9	1.3	2.4
Contributing (unpaid) family workers	1.7	1.5	2.1	1.8	0.0	0.4
Not classified	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 6. Distribution of youth employment by sector at the 1-digit level, 2012 and 2015 (%)

Sector	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2015	2012	2015	2012	2015
Agriculture	1.6	2.3	1.7	1.9	1.4	3.9
Industry	16.6	15.6	17.2	17.1	14.0	9.3
Services	81.7	82.1	81.1	81.1	84.6	86.8
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1.6	2.3	1.7	1.9	1.4	3.9
Mining	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.0
Manufacturing	9.9	8.6	9.4	8.9	12.5	7.6
Electricity, gas, steam	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.0
Water supply	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.5
Construction	6.2	5.6	7.3	6.6	1.5	1.1
Wholesale and retail trade	16.9	16.1	18.7	16.8	8.8	12.9
Transport	4.2	6.1	4.9	6.8	0.9	3.0
Accommodation	3.5	3.6	4.2	4.3	0.6	0.6
Information and communications	1.8	2.4	1.7	2.2	2.0	3.4
Financial activities	1.4	6.5	1.2	6.5	2.5	6.7
Real estate	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.0
Professional scientific activities	2.0	4.1	1.8	4.4	3.2	2.6
Administrative and support activities	1.1	1.4	1.0	1.1	1.3	2.8
Public administration	30.8	24.3	35.0	28.0	11.7	7.6
Education	10.1	8.4	4.9	4.3	33.4	26.7
Health and social work	6.3	5.5	4.4	3.0	15.2	16.2
Arts and entertainment	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.3
Other services	2.3	2.1	2.3	2.3	2.4	1.2
Private households	0.4	0.7	0.2	0.4	1.6	1.9
Activities of extraterritorial organizations	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.9

Table 7. Young wage and salaried workers by type of contract, 2012 and 2015 (%)

Type of contract	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2015	2012	2015	2012	2015
Written agreement	66.0	64.3	63.4	61.3	77.0	77.0
Oral agreement	34.0	35.7	36.6	38.7	23.0	23.0
Unlimited duration	85.0	91.8	86.8	94.6	77.1	80.0
Limited duration	15.0	8.2	13.2	5.4	22.9	20.0
– Less than 12 months	32.5	48.0	29.8	35.6	39.2	62.0
– 12 months to less than 36 months	35.2	46.5	31.1	60.0	45.3	31.3
– 36 months or more	32.2	5.5	39.1	4.4	15.5	6.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 8. Youth informal employment by composition, 2012 and 2015 (%)

	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2015	2012	2015	2012	2015
Youth formal employment rate	53.2	52.1	51.2	54.1	62.0	43.4
Youth informal employment rate	46.8	47.9	48.8	45.9	38.0	56.6
Of which:						
– Informal employment outside the informal sector (share in informal employment)	78.4	76.0	76.5	73.4	89.4	85.4
– Employment in the informal sector (share in informal employment)	21.6	24.0	23.5	26.6	10.6	14.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 9. Employed youth by overeducation, undereducation or matching qualifications, 2012 and 2015 (%)

Qualifications match	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2015	2012	2015	2012	2015
Undereducated	44.4	48.7	51.3	55.1	13.0	21.6
Overeducated	6.2	5.4	5.8	4.7	8.1	8.4
Matching qualifications	49.4	45.9	43.0	40.2	78.9	70.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 10. Youth unemployment rates by level of completed educational attainment, 2012 and 2015 (%)

Educational attainment	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2015	2012	2015	2012	2015
Less than primary (including no schooling)	9.4	13.9	9.5	15.9	-	-
Primary	23.5	22.3	21.5	19.5	41.8	50.0
Secondary vocational	11.4	22.1	9.8	20.5	41.4	33.2
Secondary general	22.7	20.2	17.4	10.9	50.8	48.2
Post-secondary vocational	22.6	27.7	10.9	11.4	39.6	49.3
University and postgraduate studies	29.5	27.8	17.4	14.3	41.9	43.1

Table 11. Unemployed youth by duration of job search, 2012 and 2015 (%)

Duration of job search	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2015	2012	2015	2012	2015
Less than a week	2.1	1.2	2.1	0.4	2.1	2.2
1 week to less than 1 month	5.4	4.2	6.7	3.7	3.5	4.7
1 month to less than 3 months	9.8	12.5	9.6	14.3	10.0	10.5
3 months to less than 6 months	10.4	5.6	11.3	4.8	9.1	6.4
6 months to less than 1 year	16.6	18.2	14.7	19.6	19.3	16.6
More than a year	55.8	58.3	55.4	57.1	56.0	59.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 12. Youth population by stages and subcategories of transition, 2012 and 2015 (%)

Stage of transition	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2015	2012	2015	2012	2015
Total transited	24.1	26.1	37.8	41.5	9.2	9.7
Transited to stable employment	21.6	23.4	33.6	36.8	8.6	9.1
Transited to satisfactory temporary employment	1.5	1.4	2.2	2.1	0.6	0.5
Transited to satisfactory self-employment	1.0	1.4	2.0	2.5	0.0	0.1
In transition	23.7	26.5	25.0	23.9	22.3	29.2
Unemployed (broad definition)	11.6	12.8	11.9	10.6	11.3	15.1
In non-satisfactory temporary employment	3.5	2.5	5.5	3.4	1.2	1.6
In non-satisfactory self-employment	0.6	0.6	1.0	1.0	0.1	0.2
Active students	3.0	4.6	4.4	6.5	1.5	2.6
Inactive non-students with aim to work in the future	5.0	5.9	2.2	2.4	8.0	9.7
Transition not yet started	52.2	47.4	37.2	34.6	68.5	61.1
Inactive students	39.9	37.5	36.4	33.1	43.7	42.1
Inactive non-students with no plans to work in the future	12.4	9.9	0.8	1.5	24.8	18.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Unless otherwise specified, the categories exclude current students.