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Netherlands-ILO Collaboration in Jordan

In 2016, Jordan became the first country in the Arab region to facilitate Syrian refugees' access to the labour market. This milestone was achieved through the signing of the Jordan Compact, which reduced barriers to the legal employment of refugees in the kingdom.

It also resulted in the signing of a trade agreement between Jordan and the European Union, simplifying the 'Rules of Origin' by facilitating Jordanian companies' access to the EU market. In this way, Jordanian employers were incentivized to recruit Syrian workers in addition to their Jordanian employees, in order to meet the requirements under the Jordan Compact. This has led to a number of policy shifts, including easing procedures and waving the fees to obtain work permits in selected sectors and allowing Syrians residing in the camps access to jobs in host communities.

Within this context, the ILO is implementing a Programme of Support to the Jordan Compact which addresses the decent work needs of the national population alongside those of refugees. The Programme of Support addresses short-term and long-term challenges of the Jordanian labour market by way of:

- Improving governance for greater compliance to decent work principles;
- Supporting the private sector to allow companies to take advantage of the new trade agreement; and
- Creating decent jobs for Jordanians and Syrian refugees to ease current conditions.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is one of the key development partners supporting the ILO in its implementation of the Programme of Support through number of projects including the following:

I. Decent jobs for Jordanians and Syrian refugees in the manufacturing sector

This project supports hundreds of Jordanian companies, expanding their activities under the EU-Jordan trade agreement, to employ thousands of qualified Jordanians and Syrian refugees. The project supports these companies to export and create jobs through improving information on the export process as well as strengthening their links to EU buyers.

Activities are being implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, the Jordan Chamber of Industry, the General Federation of Jordan Trade Unions, and the Jordan Investment Commission to ensure that Syrian refugees and Jordanians, both men and women, find decent work in the Kingdom's manufacturing sector, through the establishment of employment offices, offering job seekers employment and training opportunities, as well as job matching services. It also helps Syrians obtain work permits, facilitating their access to formal employment in the country's labour market.



II. Advancing Decent Work in Jordan's Agriculture Sector: A compliance model

The project is part of a broader partnership between the [ILO and the Netherlands that supports refugees and their host communities in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East](#). It focuses on the creation of jobs and livelihoods so that refugees can contribute to their new communities and prepare for a possible return to their countries of origin once that becomes possible. The project also strengthens the resilience of the countries and communities that continue to offer their support to refugees.

Building on recent initiatives and activities achieved under the Programme of Support, this ILO project is developing a compliance model for the agricultural sector in efforts to improve the living and working conditions of those working in agriculture. The project is addressing (1) the lack of regulatory frameworks and support structures to govern agriculture activities, protect its work force and address concerns collectively; (2) decent work deficits at the farm level including instances of child labour, force labour, fraudulent recruitment practices, insufficient occupational safety and health measures, poor housing and accommodation and lack of social protection coverage; and (3) inadequate work skills and knowledge to support safe working environments and enhanced productivity.



At least 2,000 agriculture workers, including Syrian refugees, migrant workers, in addition to Jordanian workers, and 20 farmers will directly benefit from initial interventions. Women farmers of all nationalities are key target in this project, through special activities and gender inclusive measures to ensure the inclusion of women in the agriculture sector.

Netherlands-ILO in Jordan: Key achievements

I. Supporting women workers through apprenticeship scheme:



The ILO and the Jordan River Foundation (JRF) have joined forces to help Syrian refugee and Jordanian women find employment, including opportunities to produce and sell items to IKEA.

An apprenticeship programme teaching embroidery and sewing skills was launched by the two organizations, with a sales tie-up to the Swedish furniture giant. Women were given a two-month-long training programme in November 2018, which focused on practical, on-the-job training. In addition to

embroidery and sewing skills, the training included theoretical aspects such as Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) and employability skills.

Those who completed the training were employed as home-based artisans producing pieces of unique and locally-inspired embroidery and sewing that are made into items like cushions, and sold to IKEA.

The ILO-JRF apprenticeship scheme is part of the Dutch-funded ILO project that supports the implementation of an EU-Jordan trade agreement to relax rules of origin for products.

II. Working with cooperatives to promote decent work:

Drawing on earlier work and interventions, the ILO is further strengthening cooperatives in Jordan with the project [Advancing decent work in Jordan's agriculture sector: A compliance model](#) to promote decent work for Jordanian workers and Syrian refugees in the agriculture sector.

Since 2016, the ILO is supporting Jordanian workers and Syrian refugees to access jobs and improve working conditions in the agriculture sector. Cooperatives have been one of the key partners in the implementation of different activities, given their capacity to reach Jordanian, refugee and migrant agricultural workers and their credibility in the rural communities toward advancing decent work. One of the main activities undertaken by these cooperatives to date includes the [facilitation of work permits for Syrian refugees in Irbid and Mafraq](#). The project also supports individual farmers to organize so they could benefit from collective action to improve their businesses.

The activities that will be undertaken under this work includes training of trainers (ToT) targeting both public and private service providers and direct beneficiaries (farmers and cooperatives), using ILO training tools [Think.Coop](#), [Start.Coop](#), [Manage.Coop](#), [My.Coop](#) and Cooperatives and Decent work ([child labour](#) and OSH modules).

III. The employment centres:

Jordan has provided employment services to its citizens for decades, mainly through bureaus set up inside Ministry of Labour Directorates. In 2016, the ILO Programme of Support considered ways to expand these services for Syrian job seekers. A network of 13 Employment Service Centres across Jordan has now been set up, providing a physical place where job-seekers can meet counsellors face-to-face to seek employment and training advice, job matching services and career guidance.

These centres, fully equipped and staffed to support both Jordanian and Syrian job seekers, have also been set up in two refugee camps hosting Syrian refugees in collaboration with UNHCR.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is supporting eight of those centres – including the centre which was opened in Azraq refugee camp. The Azraq Centre for Employment (ACE) is facilitating access to formal work opportunities across Jordan for Syrian refugees living in the camp. Similarly, through the employment centre, the ILO is facilitating access to work permits for refugees who have not received one yet. Once issued, UNHCR records the work permit in a data base linked to the Jordanian authorities, enabling movement in and out of the camp. Refugees who obtain these work permits are able to leave the camp for up to one month at a time. This leave system provides refugees with increased protection and allows them to take up job opportunities anywhere in the country, within specified sectors. The centre also provides refugees with counselling services, information on labour rights, training opportunities and job matching services.

IV. Reaching workers remotely through the e-counselling system:

The first on-line job counselling and guidance platform to target Syrian workers has been launched by the ILO in Jordan. The platform, which is also available to Jordanians, offers workers improved access to job and training opportunities across multiple sectors. It is also the first of its kind to integrate web, mobile and telephone services under one platform, making the new system easily accessible to more workers.

Available in Arabic and in English, the new platform facilitates the matching of workers with suitable employment and training opportunities. At the same time, it facilitates employers' access to a qualified workforce. It is anticipated that this platform will help support the employment of Syrian refugees and Jordanians in qualifying companies under the new EU-Jordan trade agreement.

Co-funded by the European Union, The US Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the platform is connected to the ILO Employment Centers across Jordan.

V. Reaching workers through mobile work permit centres:

Isolation and limited geographical mobility of farm workers prevents them from accessing needed employment services and support.



In order to address these challenges, the ILO together with the Ministry of Labour launched mobile work permit centres to cater to Syrian refugee workers, bringing work permit services closer to the workers themselves and allowing them to apply for, renew and obtain work permits on the spot.

Two converted vans equipped with computers and work permit printers visit workers at their workplace to provide work permit services in hard-to-reach areas.

Supported by the Kingdom of the Netherlands under the compliance model project, the mobile centers also provide other employment services which target Jordanian, Syrian and migrant workers, including information on career guidance, job referrals and placements; as well as awareness sessions on labour rights.

From September 2017 to April 2019:

13 ILO employment centres set up across Jordan, with 8 generously supported by the Netherlands.

5,521 Syrian and Jordanian job-seekers who successfully found employment through employment centres funded by the Netherlands.

45.4% of female participants who have secured jobs through the centres

5 companies supported to network with European buyers through access to qualified workers, legal advices, enhance knowledge through JCI/CBI export coaching and e-learning on the Relaxed Rules of Origin Agreement.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

On The Apprenticeship Scheme:

Ghazzala, Syrian mother of five, joined an embroidery scheme to help her find employment, including opportunities to produce and sell items to IKEA. The scheme, run by The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Jordan River Foundation (JRF) applies a new on-the-job training model which takes into consideration the family responsibilities of women, allowing them to work from home, in an effort to encourage them to take on work opportunities that can help improve their living conditions.

“I chose this profession because it is good and I can work from home and I don’t need to leave the house to work ... I met some friends (through the training). There are nine of us who take the bus to Jordan River Foundation. Every day, we have breakfast together and we have a WhatsApp group. Our children play together.”

On Finding Employment at a Garment Factory:

Jordanian Hidaya Ahmad Bida, 22, found out about an ILO-supported training and work opportunity at a garment factory through social media. She says her life has changed since she was able to find work at the factory and encourages other women to do the same.

“My father and I are the only members of our family who work. We are a family of ten. I studied chemistry in Yarmouk University but I didn’t want to just sit there and wait for a job to become available in my field. I wanted to find work opportunities straight away. So, I found out about this work and it has been a good experience. I have learnt a new profession. This is a positive thing for me because I want to be a productive member of society. At first, I didn’t know how to sew and I didn’t know anything about it but then through social media, through Facebook, I found out that there were trainings being offered in sewing. I took part in the one month training and I learnt how to sew on six different machines. After the training and working on a machine, I became a quality supervisor. I am happy at work. I encourage others to do the same.”





Read more about the impact of Netherlands-ILO in Jordan:

- [Job centre for Syrian refugees opens in Jordan camp](#)
- [Apprenticeship scheme offers Jordanian and Syrian women chance to sell to IKEA](#)
- ["Made in Jordan": EU trade agreement creates opportunities in manufacturing sector](#)
- [ILO launches first of its kind employment platform that targets both Syrian refugees and Jordanians](#)
- [New strategic partnership to promote jobs and education for refugees and host communities](#)
- [Strengthening cooperatives in Jordan to improve livelihoods and advance decent work for Jordanian workers and Syrian refugees](#)
- [Advancing decent work and better living conditions for workers in Jordan's agricultural sector](#)

See more impact stories (videos):

- [How can trade help create decent jobs?](#)
- [Working from home, Jordanian and Syrian women offered a chance to sell to IKEA](#)
- [Advancing decent work and better living conditions for workers in Jordan's agricultural sector](#)
- [Employment Counselling System in Jordan](#)