



ILO at 100

Advancing Social Justice, Promoting Decent Work Jordan, 2019

Jordan has a long history of collaboration with the ILO. It has strived, through the common commitments of the Government, workers' and employers' organisations, to promote decent work, social justice and equity.

Tackling the unemployment situation, including the country's low labour force participation rate, particularly among women and youth, remains a key priority for the government and social partners.

The ILO and Jordan recently pledged to further promote decent work through the implementation of the country's third Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP). Building on previous DWCPs, the ILO and partners will continue collaborating in areas including employment promotion, rights at work, social protection, social dialogue, pay equity and youth employment.

Jordan's Drive to Promote More and Better Jobs

Through continued cooperation and support of the ILO, Jordan has made significant progress and achieved key milestones in promoting decent work in recent years.

Jordan Response to the Syrian Crisis - Adopting a development approach to tackle immediate challenges and pre-existing weaknesses of the labour market.

■ The Government of Jordan has been working with the international community to address the livelihoods needs of vulnerable Jordanians and Syrian refugees, through a **development approach aimed at tackling immediate challenges and pre-existing weaknesses of the labour market.**

■ 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.

■ 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. Access to skills and vocational training opportunities as well as job-matching services for both Jordanians and Syrians have also been enhanced.



**SOCIAL JUSTICE
DECENT WORK**

■ These recent milestones have allowed the ILO, together with international and local partners, to upscale interventions to address the decent work needs of the national population alongside those of refugees. A comprehensive **ILO Programme of Support to the Jordan Compact** was designed relying on three pillars tackling short-term and long-term challenges of the Jordanian labour market: (a) improved governance for greater compliance to decent work principles; (b) private sector support to allow companies to take advantage of the new trade agreement; and (c) immediate creation of decent jobs for Jordanians and Syrian refugees to ease current conditions.

■ More than 140,000 work permits have been issued to Syrian refugees since 2016 in Jordan.

■ Since 2016, the ILO's Programme of Support to the Jordan Compact has reached **more than 108,339** direct beneficiaries and an estimated **450,000** indirect beneficiaries- through:

- **FORMALIZATION:** 90,000 work permits issued to Syrian workers in the agriculture and construction sectors, (8 per cent of which were issued to women).
- **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT:** 12,300 Jordanians and Syrian refugees benefitted from skills development interventions.
- **CAREER COUNSELING:** 18,967 Jordanian and Syrian refugee job seekers registered at Employment Service Centre (ESCs).
- **JOB MATCHING:** 11,076 Jordanian and Syrian refugee job seekers referred to job opportunities and 6,113 successfully employed, (36 per cent of whom are women).
- **EMPLOYMENT INTENSIVE INVESTMENTS (EIIP):** 5,000 Jordanian and Syrian refugee workers (15 per cent of whom are women) are employed in Employment Intensive Infrastructure Projects, resulting in 320,020 working days.
- **SME DEVELOPMENT AND JOINT BUSINESS VENTURES:** 86 Jordanian and Syrian refugee beneficiaries supported to launch Joint Business Ventures in the construction sector.
- **PRIVATE SECTOR SUPPORT:** 5 companies supported to network and start exporting to the European buyers, access qualified workers, legal advices, enhance knowledge through JCI/CBI export coaching and e-learning on the Relaxed Rules of Origin Agreement.

Garment export and compliance – Boosting exports and improving working conditions through a compliance model grounded on social dialogue.

■ Jordan's garment industry, **one of the country's main exporting sectors**, has enjoyed continuous growth in the past decade. Its 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.

■ Apparel exports exceeded **US\$ 1.7 billion in 2018**, accounting for around 25 per cent of the country's total exports value. Jordan exported about US\$ 1.5 billion worth of garments to the US and over US\$ 57 million to the EU market in 2018.

■ The country's **garment industry employs over 68,300 workers**; the majority (51,500) of whom are migrant workers, mostly from South and South-East Asia. There are an estimated 16,700 Jordanians employed in the sector. Women represent 69 per cent of the total labour force.

■ Through support from **Better Work Jordan (BWJ) - a joint initiative of the International Labour Organization and the International Finance Corporation**, the sector has worked to improve labour conditions and boost competitiveness in the Jordanian apparel industry through enhancing economic performance at the enterprise level as well as improving compliance with Jordanian labour law and International Labour Standards.

■ Better Work Jordan provides its core services to garment factories which includes – assessment, advisory, training and productivity. **Currently, 86 factories** exporting to the United States, including their subcontractors, employing 95 percent of the industry's workforce and accounting for **95 percent of Jordan's apparel exports**, participate in Better Work Jordan's programme.

■ **A Collective Bargaining Agreement**, aimed at promoting social dialogue and improving the working conditions for the tens of thousands of workers in the sector, has led to enhanced productivity in Jordanian garment factories and boosted the levels of trust in the working environment inside these factories, improving the supply chain in the sector.

Satellite factories – Supporting the scalability of satellite factories established in remote areas to encourage Jordanian women’s access to formal work.

- To address the low female labour force participation in Jordan, the government, through a partnership with garment manufacturers, has supported the creation of **satellite factories in rural and impoverished regions where there were few employment opportunities, especially those of interest to women.**
- Garment satellite units are small subsidiaries of larger garment factories that benefit from government incentives, **providing employment opportunities to Jordanians, particularly women,** in targeted pockets of poverty in Jordan.
- These have so far helped bring over **4,700 Jordanian women into the formal labour market.**
- Better Work Jordan is working with partners in 16 satellite units across Jordan to **increase productivity in these satellite garment factories** through technical and soft skills training, while also exploring ways to enhance productivity through improvements in processes and better working conditions.
- With targeted support, satellite garment factories can be transformed into **sustainable businesses.**

Pay Equity and Childcare- Improving wage protection mechanisms for women teachers through organised workers and mediation, an approach that can be replicated in other sectors.

- **The National Committee for Pay Equity (NCPE)** chaired by the Ministry of Labour and the Jordanian National Commission for Women was created in 2010 with the support of the ILO, to promote fairer working conditions and women’s economic empowerment. Through its work, NCPE’s 22 member organizations have been lobbying with the Ministry of Labour for gender-responsive amendments to the labour law.
- **In 2015, it launched the ‘Stand Up with Teachers’ campaign in partnership with Ahel** in Irbid and expanded to Amman, Zarqa and Salt, to empower 5,000 private school teachers to negotiate for fair remuneration and better working conditions. As a direct result of the campaign’s strategies, a proper inspection and complaint system was put in place with the Ministry of Labour, where it had assigned 30 focal points across the kingdom, as well as with the Social Security Corporation, where a clearance letter is needed to renew annual school licence. In 2018, the campaign received over 260 complaints of wage discrimination – 60 of which were resolved by the campaign’s mediation team.
- Most recently, **Jordan adopted digital payments for private school teachers,** helping guarantee that they receive their financial compensation in full, while ensuring transparency and openness in how women and men are remunerated.
- The demand for and commitment to digital payments was initially encapsulated in the **Collective Bargaining Agreement,** established between the sectoral employers’ organisation and the trade union, and recently in the Regulation of Private Educational Institutions endorsed by the Prime Ministry.
- Jordan is currently the only Arab member of the **Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC), a global platform of governments, employers and workers and their organizations** which works to reduce the gender pay gap across all countries and sectors. In its last meeting, Jordan committed to ensure that digital payments mechanisms are implemented in both private education and health sectors, the two sectors where most women are employed.
- The ILO, with its strategic partner SADAQA, has promoted the care economy from a gender perspective. **A national framework for workplace daycare facilities** was developed to create high quality daycare facilities for working parents in a more supportive legal environment. This resulted in boosting the number of daycare facilities from around 20 in 2011 to 124 by end of 2018.
- Recently, **labour law gender-related recommended amendments** of NCPE were approved by the parliament and are currently awaiting final endorsement. The amendments include the rights to pay equity, flexi-work arrangements, paternity leave and daycare access to children of both working men and women.



Social Protection - Expanding the social impact of social security in Jordan

- In 2014, Jordan was the first country in the Middle East to ratify the **Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)**, the flagship of all ILO social security conventions, as it is the only international instrument, based on basic social security principles, that establishes worldwide-agreed minimum standards for all nine branches of social security.
- The **new Jordanian Social Security Law No. 2014) 1)**, drafted with the support of the ILO was adopted by Parliament in January 2014, expanding the outreach of social security. Previously excluded categories include enterprises employing less than five workers, casual workers and the self-employed. These are now covered under the law, which also allows for voluntary affiliation by stay-at-home females, and students.
- The law also includes **maternity and unemployment benefits**. Besides promoting mothers and children perinatal health, the scheme is meant to promote women involvement in the labour market in the private sector and encouraging employers to recruit women.
- According to latest estimates, coverage of the SSC **reached 63 per cent** of the working population in 2016, amongst the highest in the region. Coverage is higher amongst working women (78 per cent) compared to men (59 per cent).
- Despite a steady increase in coverage, **approximately 2 in 5 workers do not access social security**. Further efforts are underway to enhance compliance models and administration modalities to increase access to the social security system amongst hard to reach populations.
- National stakeholders are also engaged in the development of a National Social Protection strategy. The establishment of a national **Social Protection Floor (SPF)** is a national priority and reflected in the National Plan, Vision 2025 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SPF will help Jordan achieve the SDGs, particularly SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 8 (Decent Work and economic growth) and SDG 10 (reduce inequality), which explicitly refers to the SPF.

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