

Amsterdam, 09 April 2019  
Commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

## Jordan: education, labour market, migration

Annex B to “Dutch labour market shortages and potential labour supply  
from Africa and the Middle East” (SEO Report No. 2019-24)

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## Acronyms

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GDP	Gross domestic product
USD	United States Dollar
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN	United Nations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
VTC	Vocational Training Corporation
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
DoS	Department of Statistics
E-TVET	Employment Technical and vocational education and training fund
GESC	General Secondary Education Certificate
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
DEE	Development and Employment Fund
UAE	United Arab Emirates
EU	European Union
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
JRP	Jordan response plan
MOL	Ministry of Labour
MoFA	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mol	Ministry of Interior
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IRO	International Refugee Organisation

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## Summary

**Jordan is a small, middle-income country, established in 1921, that has been termed ‘the top refugee hosting country in the world.’** Since 1948, the political instability in the region has led to substantial inflows of migrants over the years, including from Palestine, Iraq, Yemen, and more recently large numbers of Syrian refugees. As a result, the Jordanian population is estimated to have increased by nearly 45%, from around 7 million in 2011 to around 10 million in 2017, and over 30 percent of the population are now non-Jordanians.

**The Jordanian population is characterised by relatively high levels of education compared to the neighbouring countries, but the quality of education is a concern.** Primary enrolment rates are nearly 100 percent for the native population, and nearly 18% of Jordanians have a university degree. While Jordan does host several top universities with international rankings, there are indications that the quality of education in Jordan deteriorated during 2007-2015. Mathematics test scores are now at a similar level as in Morocco (and worse than in Egypt).

**Jordan has hosted 1.3 million Syrian refugees since the start of the Syrian war in 2011, leading to an increase of the Jordan population by 20%.** Only about half of these are registered as refugees by the UNHCR. The majority of 81% is living in host communities, whereas the remainder is resided inside living camps. Syrians in Jordan tend to come from rural villages and smaller towns in Syria, and are substantially lower educated than Syrian refugees in Europe, with 60% above the age of 15 not having completed high school. Most of them tend to work in low-skilled jobs, mostly in the informal sector. Around one third of Syrian refugees are of school-going age, but only 65 percent for Syrian refugee children are enrolled in Jordanian schools.

**The Jordanian labour market faces significant challenges.** Youth unemployment is around 37%, and has risen for 20-24 year olds in recent years. Unemployment among women rose from 24% to over 30%. Jordanians with a bachelor’s degree face the highest unemployment rate (23%). As many as 54 percent of women with a university degree were unemployed in 2017. In this context, facilitating the labour force integration of Syrian refugees is a major challenge. With support from the international community, the Jordanian government is committed to taking numerous measures to support labour market integration of Syrian refugees.



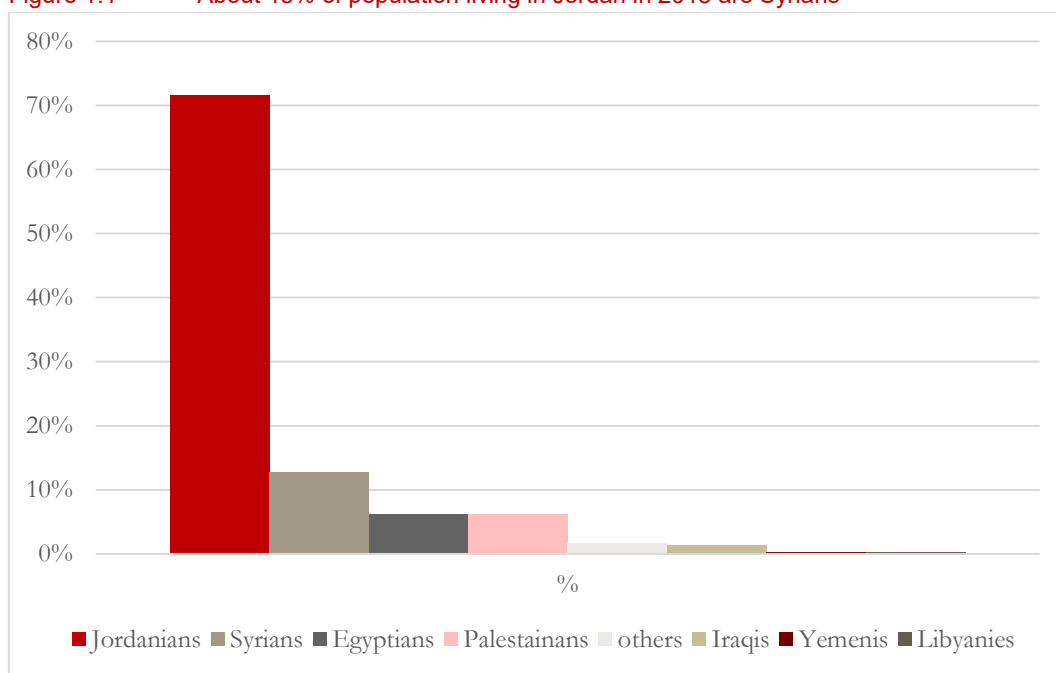


# 1 Introduction

**The Jordanian economy suffers from low economic growth rates due to the lack of available economic resources.** In addition, Jordan’s economy has been affected by crises, conflicts and wars in the region ever since 1948. The inflow of refugees to Jordan has played a key role in the Jordan’s increased total population. The migrants’ and refugees’ main countries of origin include Palestine, Iraq, Syria and Yemen<sup>1</sup>. 31% of Jordan’s total population consists of non-Jordanians. The majority of this population group are refugees living in camps or in host communities.<sup>2</sup>

**A continuous increase to a total population of 10.5 million in 2018** has led to more pressure on Jordanian economic resources and an increase in economic challenges.<sup>3</sup> Among these challenges are the high youth unemployment rate, low labour participation rate, increased labour supply by refugees and foreign workers, and a shortage of available work opportunities.

**Figure 1.1 About 13% of population living in Jordan in 2018 are Syrians**



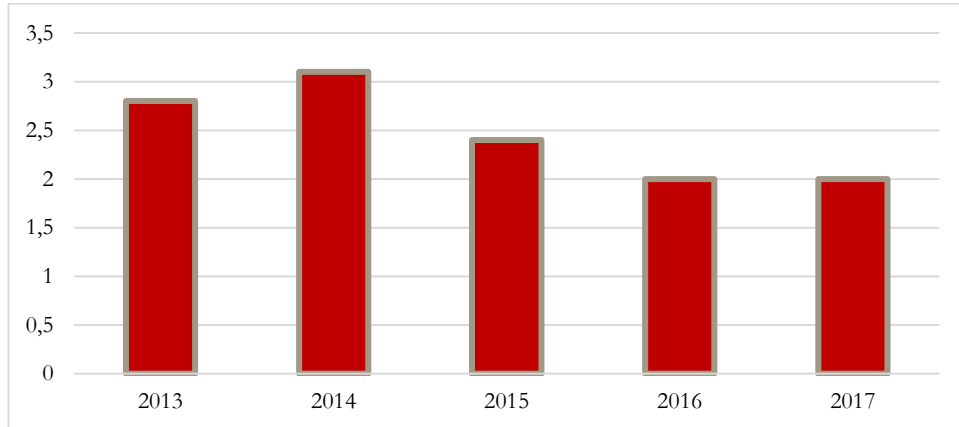
Source: <http://www.dos.gov.jo,census 2015, latest updates reports>

As shown by Figure 1.1, 72% of the population are Jordanian, 13% are Syrians and 6% for Egyptians and Palestinians. The nationality with the smallest share is Lebanese with 0.2%.

**Economic growth rates have remained low during the last five years.** According to the IMF’s World Economic Outlook, Jordan’s GDP grew by 2% to US\$ 41.7 billion in 2017. The figure below shows the trend of the annual GDP growth rate during the years 2013-2017.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [www.DOS, annual statistics, population census, 2015](http://www.DOS, annual statistics, population census, 2015)  
<sup>2</sup> <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/09/21/jordan-s-refugee-crisis-pub-61338>  
<sup>3</sup> [www.DOS, annual statistics, latest ubdtae,2018](http://www.DOS, annual statistics, latest ubdtae,2018)  
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/JOR, annual growth rate index>

Figure 1.2 GDP growth has been high in recent years (2013), but has recently slowed down



Source: <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/JOR>, annual growth rate index

The figure above shows a slight average decrease from 2.8% in 2015 to 2% in the 4th quarter of 2017, with a peak of 3.1% in 2014.

**Human development Index for Jordan:** In 2015, the Human development Index (HDI) for Jordan equalled 0.741. Ranked 86 out of the 188 countries and territories around the world, Jordan's HDI is considered relatively high.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, Jordan is ranked only 59 out of 180 in the corruption perception index. However, with the new government in place, more efforts are being taken to control corruption.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en>, 2015

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.libertadciudadana.org/archivos/corruption\\_perceptions\\_index](http://www.libertadciudadana.org/archivos/corruption_perceptions_index), 2017

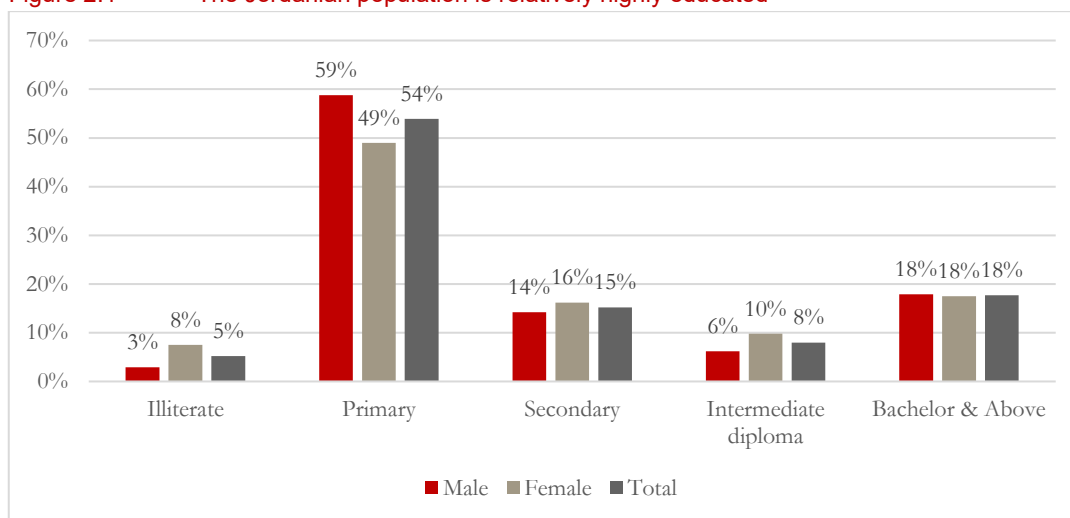
## 2 Education

### 2.1 Introduction

The education and training system in Jordan offers various levels and pathways. It consists of basic and secondary education in schools (under the Ministry of Education), higher education at universities (under the Ministry of Higher education) and community colleges (under al-Balqa Applied University), in addition to the vocational training programs offered mainly by the public Vocational Training Corporation (VTC).

The Jordanian population is relatively highly educated compared with the other countries in the region. Jordan also scores relatively high in terms of quality of education. Nevertheless, there are issues with the quality of education that the government is planning to address. The figure below shows the distribution of the Jordan population separated by gender and educational levels.

Figure 2.1 The Jordanian population is relatively highly educated



Source: [www.DOS.gov.jo](http://www.DOS.gov.jo), Annual statistics book, 2017

There is only a small minority that can be considered illiterate among the Jordanian population. Namely 54% of the Jordanian population has obtained only primary education (59% male while the female is 49%), 15% of the population has obtained secondary education (almost equal percentages between males and females.), 8% of the population has obtained an intermediate diploma (6% for female while 10% for male), and 18% of the population has completed bachelor and above (the same percentages for male and female 18%). In 2017, his majesty has issued Jordan Human Resources Strategy which focuses on linking the basic education, higher education and vocational technical education and training together. The government recently realised that the output of basic education serves as the input to the labour market, including technical and vocational training as well as higher education.

In the past few years, the government noticed a decline in the quality of education in Jordan. Major indicators suggest that Jordanian graduates may not be up to labour market

expectations. TIMSS scores show a decline in the average Jordanians students' scores. The average score for Jordanian students is 406 compared to students in other counties of the same categories scoring 498.<sup>7</sup>

**The education system in Jordan is facing several challenges.** These including outdated teaching methods and curricula, limited teacher training, and limited parental and community engagement.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, public expenditure per student is low compared to other countries, and the infrastructure of schools (class rooms, air-conditioning systems and educational equipment) is poor.

**Developing the education sector in Jordan has always been a key challenge.** This is due to the large scale, low performance of teachers, limited infrastructure, an increase of the number of students every year, limited funding available, and other factors. However, a key driver behind the development of the sector is her Majesty Queen Rania who is following up on the development of the challenges of the sector.

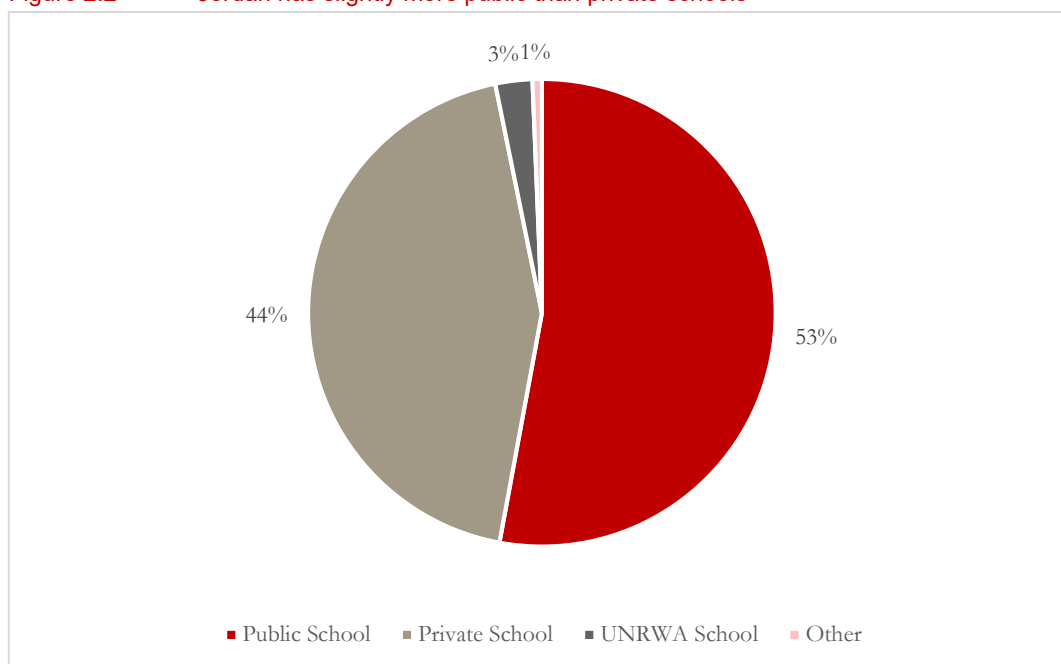
**The education system in Jordan is divided over public and private education, both consisting of basic and secondary education.** In general, the private schools provide more and higher quality education because they are often found to have more expensive fees leading to expanded budgets. However, the relative price of private education depends on the type of education and quality that is provided to the students. For example, some private schools provide additional services such as private transportations, private meals, private clothes and other services. There are 3.683 thousand public schools compared to 3.055 thousand private schools in Jordan.

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<sup>7</sup> TIMSS, International Results in Mathematics, 2015 (<http://timss.org>).

<sup>8</sup> Jordan Vision 2025

Figure 2.2 Jordan has slightly more public than private schools



Source: <http://www.moe.gov.jo/sites/default/files/report-2015-2016.pdf>

## 2.2 Primary Education

**School-based basic education is compulsory and free in public schools and consists of ten levels (grades).** After a student has successfully completed the ten grades of basic education, (s)he can join an academic or vocational track of secondary education or join a vocational training program at one of the VTC's depending on his/her average grades. For each level of education and training, there is an accreditation body that ensures the required quality is in place. Basic education is the same for all students and consists of 10 grades. Once students complete the 10<sup>th</sup> grade they have the choice to either go to directly into the labour market or to continue with higher education.<sup>9</sup> When students choose to enrol in secondary education, consisting of grade 11 and 12, they can choose between the academic and the vocational stream. On average, class units consist of 25 students, equally divided over male and female students. For every 16 students, one teacher was in place, with the majority of the teachers being female. In total, 19.4% of the total population was enrolled in basic and secondary education.<sup>10</sup>

**Entry to the academic- or vocational track of secondary education is based on average grades, and the pathways from one type to another are very limited.** Almost 90 % of the students who complete the 10<sup>th</sup> grade of basic education are streamed on the basis of their performance either to general education (high performers) or to vocational education in the comprehensive secondary schools (medium performers), while the remainder (low performers) can continue to one of the VTC institutes. There is no accreditation to allow mobility across the system pathways, and this, together with the low-status image of employment technical and vocational

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Education 2016/2017 statistical report

<sup>10</sup> Yearly statistical book 2016

education and training (E-TVET) as an educational last resort, has a negative impact on the demand for E-TVET.

## 2.3 Secondary Education

Secondary education lasts for two years and ends with students sitting for the national General Secondary Education Certificate (GSEC) examination (also called “Tawjihi”), which qualifies successful graduates to join public and private universities and community colleges, depending on their grades and resources. Students who attend two years in community colleges prepare for a national examination called “Al-Shamel” (the comprehensive one), which qualifies students to work in the public or private sectors or to join universities (with certain conditions). The rigorous General Secondary Education Certificate (GSEC) examination, or Tawjihi, determines whether students are qualified to go to university, at which public university they can enrol, and in which specialism they can major. Secondary school in Jordan consists of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade and has a duration of two years.<sup>11</sup> In total, 101,730 students were enrolled in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade in the 2016-2017 academic year.

**Table 2.1** The number of students 11th and 12th Grade for (2016-2017) academic year

Number of students 11th and 12th grade	
Grade	Numbers
11	53,294
12	48,436
<b>Total</b>	<b>101,730</b>

Source: <http://www.moe.gov.jo>, annual statistical report, (2016-2017)

**Table 2.2** Most high school graduates specialise in Science or Literature

2017 Graduates from high school per stream /specialisation	Students	%
Literature	9,667	24%
Science	18,028	45%
Information Technology	4,467	11%
Health	306	1%
Shari'a	17	0.04%
Agriculture	926	2%
Manufacturing	2,420	6%
Hotel	439	1%
Home Economics	3,517	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,787</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: <http://www.moe.gov.jo>, statistical annual report, (2016-2017)

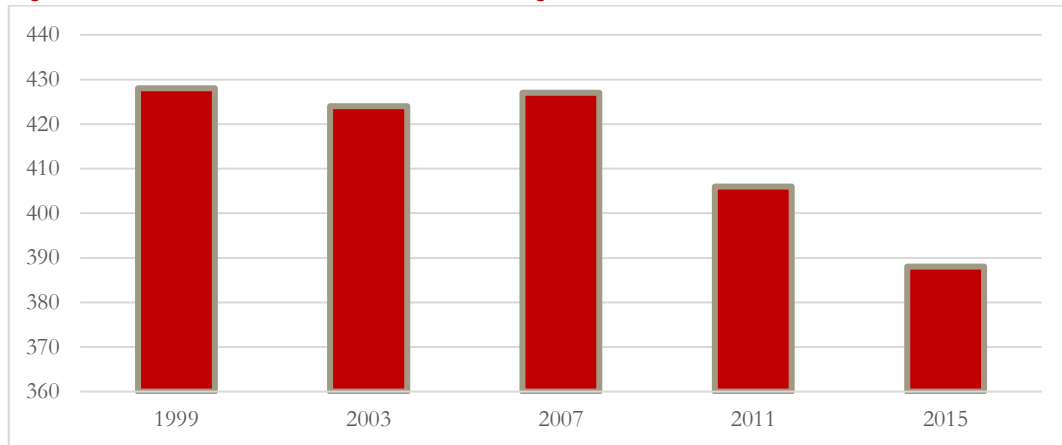
The highest share of students has obtained a TAWJIHI education certificate from the science- and literature specialisations. The least students obtained a certificate from the Shari'a

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.moe.gov.jo>

specialisation. An estimate of the number of drop-outs is not available, as some of those who fail the 12<sup>th</sup> grade drop-out, join the labour market, or reapply for the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

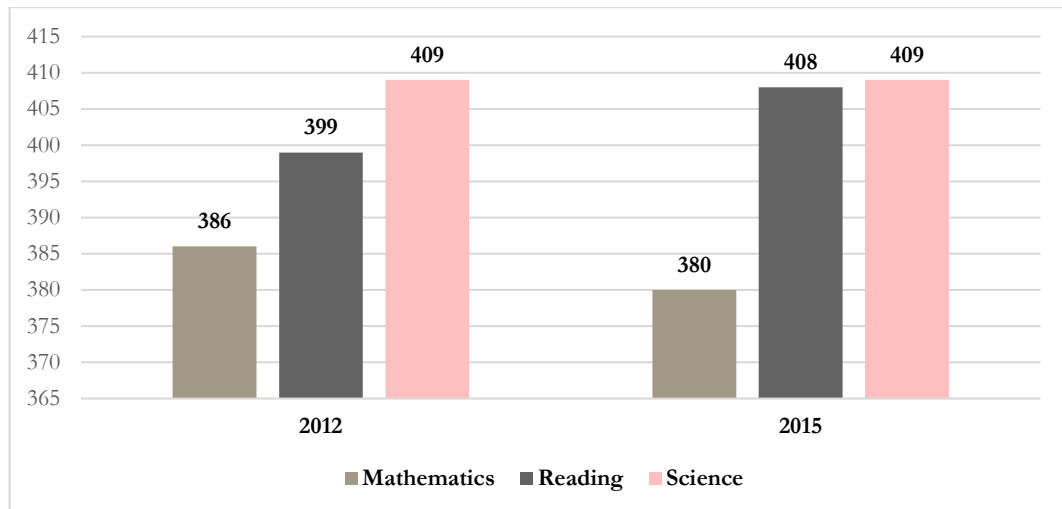
**Jordan’s rank in mathematics and science fell between 2007 and 2015** This is illustrated by the Trend in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) scores, which is based on overall scores of mathematics and science tests.<sup>12</sup> These results are provided every four years by the International Study Centre.

**Figure 2.3 Math and science scores in 8th grade decreased between 2007 and 2015**



Source: [https://timssandpirs.bc.edu/timss2011/downloads/T11\\_IR\\_Mathematics\\_FullBook.pdf](https://timssandpirs.bc.edu/timss2011/downloads/T11_IR_Mathematics_FullBook.pdf)

**Figure 2.4 PISA scores also decreased in mathematics, increased in reading and remained stable in science from 2012 to 2015**



Source: <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/sitedocument/PISA-2015-technical-report-final.pdf>, [PISA-2012-technical-report-final.pdf](#)

**The PISA scores decreased by 6 points in mathematics, increased 9 points in reading and remained unchanged in science from 2012 to 2015.**<sup>13</sup> The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a test conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and

<sup>12</sup> TIMSS assessment report of 2015  
<sup>13</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf>

Development (OECD), intended to evaluate the education system and to measure the 15 years olds' school public scholastic performance in Mathematic, Reading and Science.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.4 Vocational Education

**In the absence of the Tawjihi, students only have access to the VTC and have no possibility to progress to any form of advanced studies.** Bridging from vocational to academic education is only possible through Tawjihi and community college, but it is only reserved for a few. Those vocational education students who succeed in the Tawjihi have access to community colleges, where they can obtain a diploma and may progress to university. A rough estimate is implies that less than 4% of the secondary vocational education students are able to bridge the gap and get to the university. Pathways are being opened from TVET to higher education, however, by an (informal) agreement between the VTC and the Al-Balqa' Applied University (BAU) in 2012, graduates from some VTC institutes who pass the Tawjihi can enrol in a two-year diploma program in a community college. VTC graduates who do not pass the Tawjihi can still have access to a two-year technical diploma at the VTC. However, this type of bridging at the technician level for VTC students is still limited.

**VTCs in Jordan provides various vocational training for students who do not pass or want to obtain a technical diploma for one more year.** In total, 24,606 students were registered to the VCT, divided over the several training programs shown in Table 2.3.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> The number of students for each training course not available and publish



**Table 2.3** Jordan offers a wide selection of vocational training programs<sup>16</sup>


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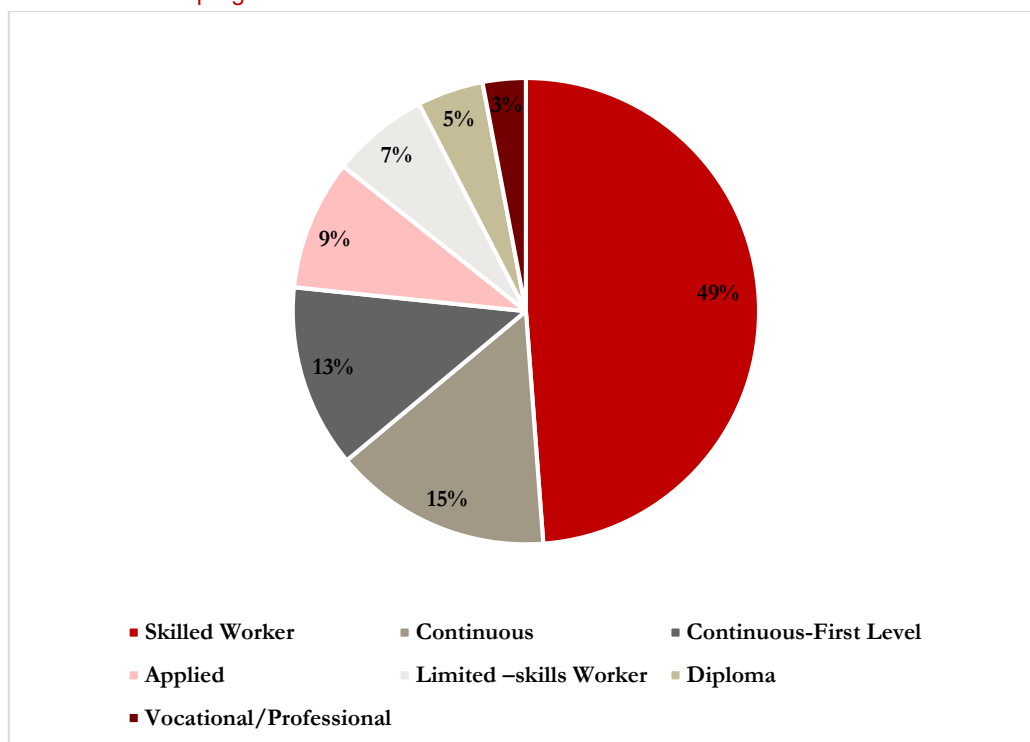
<b>Vocational Training Programs</b>
Metal Formation and General Mechanical Maintenance
Electricity
Maintenance of vehicles and vehicles
Electronics
Personal services
Information technology
Sale and commercial services
Pharmaceutical industries
Food industries
Handicraft and Handicraft Industry
Air conditioning and plumbing
Carpentry, upholstery and decoration
Hospitality and Tourism
Textile and leather industries
Construction
Water and environment
Energy and renewable energy
Printing and binding
Agricultural occupations

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Source: VTC Report, 2016

<sup>16</sup> The number of students in each training program. The ranking of fields in order of popularity is not available as formal information and published by VTC.

**Figure 2.5** Skilled workers represent almost half of the inflow of students to vocational training programs.



Source: [http://vtc.gov.jo/vtcen/Uploads/Editor\\_attach\\_1532415043\\_1513.pdf](http://vtc.gov.jo/vtcen/Uploads/Editor_attach_1532415043_1513.pdf)

**Skilled workers represent almost half of the inflow of students to vocational training programs (VTC).** Continuous and continuous-first level represent half of remaining students. Vocational/professional were found to represent the lowest share of the inflow of students. The duration for each programme is approximately 2 years.<sup>17</sup>

**Currently, the vocational education system is facing major challenges in Jordan.** These challenges include low government spending, outdated curricula, outdated equipment, limited spending on raw material, lack of linkages to the labour market, lack of internships programs, lack of qualified teachers, lack of accreditation of specialisation, and a lack of quality control. The low quality of vocational education has discouraged students to join the vocational education stream in Jordan. Only students with low grades are forced to join the vocational education stream.

**The Ministry of Education has registered 193 vocational sites in Jordan.**<sup>18</sup> These sites are similar to general school sites but are partly allocated for vocational education purposes. At the Ministry of Education, any school that teaches vocational education is labelled a site. In addition, the vocational education corporation offers vocational centres that provide vocational training.

**There are seven main specialisations in the vocational stream.** These include information technology, health, sharia, agriculture, manufacturing, hospitality, and home economics.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> <http://vtc.gov.jo>, Annual Report, 2016

<sup>18</sup> Stakeholders mapping – Skills for Employment and Social Inclusion.

<sup>19</sup> Home economics is a Tawjihi specialisation recognised by the Ministry of Education since 1996. This programme includes sewing, cosmetics, traditional crafts, food production, and child education.

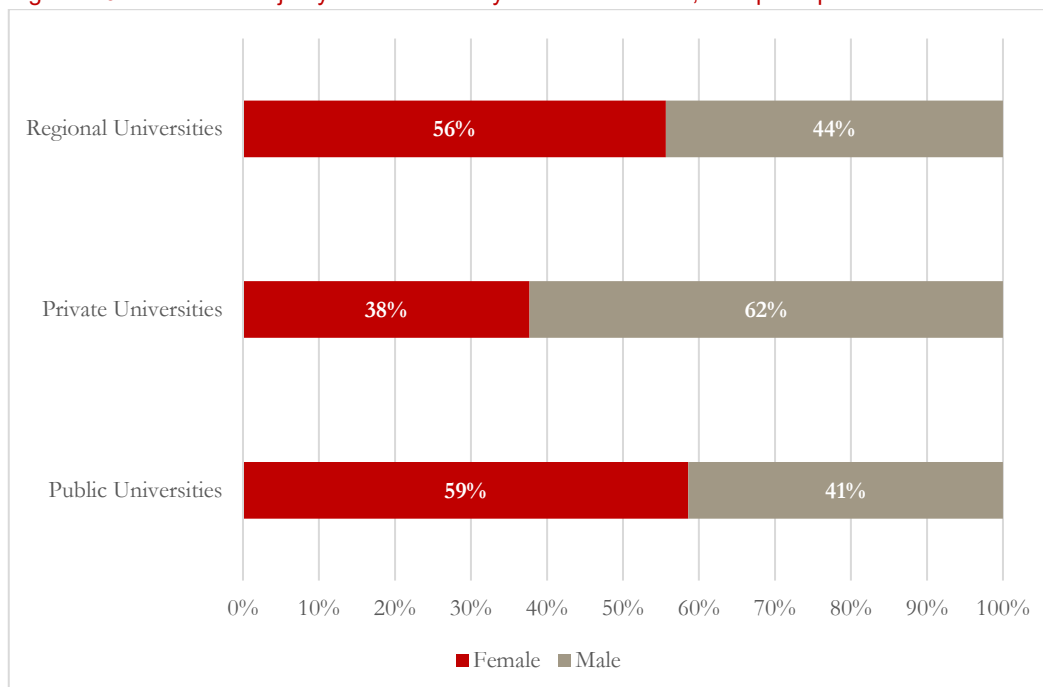
## 2.5 Tertiary education

The tertiary education in Jordan consists of 3 levels: bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D.<sup>20</sup> At the bachelor's level, students need to complete 4 years of education in order to graduate. However, some specialisations like medicine, pharmacy and engineering require 5 or 6 years of education. At the master's level, students are required to complete 2 years of education, whereas the Ph.D. requires 4 years of education.<sup>21</sup>

### 2.5.1 Bachelor's level

The total inflow of student at the bachelor's level for 2016-2017 academic year was 66,308, distributed over 3 types of universities: public, private and regional universities. The figure below shows that more females are enrolled in regional- and public universities, whereas the majority of the students at private universities are male.<sup>22</sup>

Figure 2.6 The majority of the university student is female, except for private universities



Source: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Annual Statistics Report, 2016-2017 (<http://www.mohe.gov.jo>)

### 2.5.2 Postgraduate level

The postgraduate level consists of professional diploma, higher diploma, master, and PhD.<sup>23</sup> the total inflow of students for postgraduate levels for the 2016-2017 academic year was 9146. The

<sup>20</sup> Higher education duration may vary ( 4 years Bachelor , 2 years master , 4 years PhD)

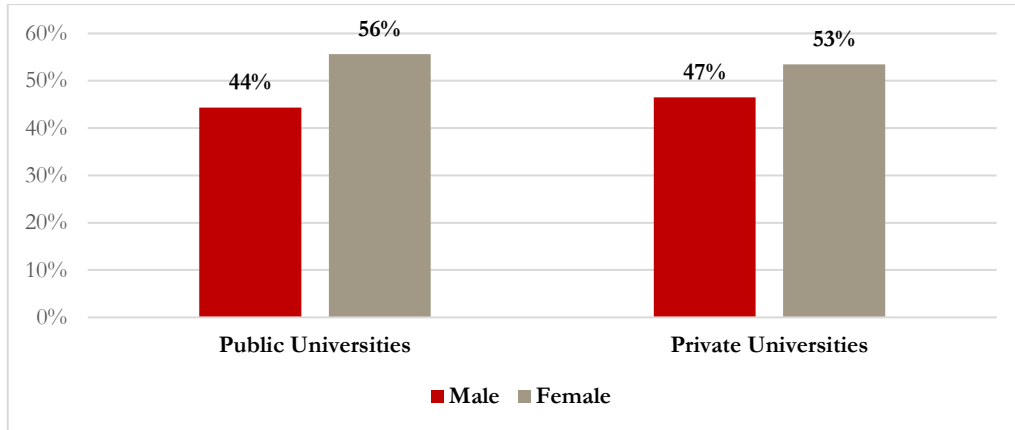
<sup>21</sup> <http://www.mohe.gov.jo/ar/pages/Legislation.aspx>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.mohe.gov.jo>, annual statistic report, 2016-2017

<sup>23</sup> According to the [www.dictionary.cambridge.org](http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org), the post graduate education define as: a student who has already received one degree and is studying at a university for a more advanced degree. (Masters, PhD, professional diplomas and higher diplomas)

figure below shows that the female share in the enrolment at public and private universities was 56% and 53% respectively.<sup>24</sup>

**Figure 2.7** The share of females enrolled in postgraduate education is higher than the male share



Source: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Annual Statistics Report, 2016-2017 (<http://www.mohe.gov.jo>)

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.mohe.gov.jo>, annual statistic report, 2016-2017

## 2.6 Outflow

### 2.6.1 Bachelor's level

Table 2.4 Male students at the bachelor's level have a strong preference for the fields of Trade and Business and Engineering.

Field	Numbers	%
Trade and business	7,429	27%
Engineering	6,124	22%
Medical studies <sup>25</sup>	2,481	9%
Mathematics and Computer Science	2,274	8%
Humanities, religious sciences and literature	1,425	5%
Educational Sciences and Teacher Preparation	1,078	4%
Natural Sciences	1,027	4%
Physical studies	974	4%
Islamic studies	974	4%
Law	934	3%
Social and behavioural sciences	611	2%
Services, Tourism and Restaurants	549	2%
Arts	544	2%
Architecture	361	1%
Agriculture	345	1%
Media / Mass Communication and Documentation	254	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,384</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Annual Statistics Report, 2016-2017 (<http://www.mohe.gov.jo>)

**Male students at the bachelor level have a strong preference for the fields of Trade and Business and Engineering.** Media/Mass Communication and Documentation was found to be the least preferred among male bachelor students.

<sup>25</sup> Medical Studies consists of (Medicine, Pharmacy, veterinary medicine, Nursing, Dentist, Medical Sciences)

**Table 2.5** Female students at the bachelor's level have a strong preference for the fields of Trade and Business and Engineering.

Field	Numbers	%
Trade and business	6,342	19%
Medical Studies <sup>26</sup>	4,919	14%
Educational Sciences and Teacher Preparation	4,628	14%
Humanities, religious sciences and literature	4,585	14%
Engineering	2,490	7%
Mathematics and Computer Science	2,442	7%
Natural Sciences	1,982	6%
Islamic studies	1,502	4%
Social and behavioural sciences	1,368	4%
Arts	792	2%
Law	605	2%
Architecture	581	2%
Agriculture	493	1%
Physical studies	468	1%
Media / Mass Communication and Documentation	428	1%
Services, Tourism and Restaurants	333	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,958</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Annual Statistics Report, 2016-2017 (<http://www.mohe.gov.jo>)

The fields of trade and Business and Medical studies were found to be the most preferred by female bachelor students as well. However, preferences were more diverse, since many female students were also enrolled in the fields of Educational Sciences and Teacher Preparation on the one hand and Humanities, Religious sciences and literature on the other hand. The field of services, tourism and restaurants was found to be the least preferred among female bachelor students.

<sup>26</sup> Medical Studies consists of (Medicine, Pharmacy, veterinary medicine, Nursing, Dentist, Medical Sciences)

## 2.6.2 Postgraduate level

Table 2.6 Male postgraduate students prefer to graduate in the fields of trade & business, medical studies, and engineering.

Field	Professional Diploma	Higher Diploma	Master's	Ph.D	Full Ph.D
Trade and business	8	4	402	13	0
Educational Sciences and Teacher Preparation	3	34	94	71	0
Social and Behavioural Science	0	0	110	69	0
Islamic studies	0	0	116	62	0
Medical Studies	0	0	67	3	80
Humanities, religious sciences and literature	0	1	111	34	0
Engineering	0	1	129	0	0
Law	0	0	88	25	0
Natural Sciences	0	0	87	14	0
Mathematics and Computer Science	0	0	80	1	0
Physical studies	0	0	49	21	0
Agriculture	0	0	19	3	0
Arts	0	0	36	0	0
Media / Mass Communication and Documentation	0	0	29	0	0
Services, Tourism and Restaurants	0	0	16	0	0
Architecture	0	0	8	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>1,441</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>80</b>

Source: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Annual Report, 2016-2017 (<http://www.mohe.gov.jo>)

Male students at the postgraduate level prefer to complete education in the fields of trade & business, medical studies, and engineering. Humanities, social science, and religious/Islamic studies were popular as well. Architecture was found to be the field with the lowest number of male graduates. At the Ph.D. level, all Ph.D. graduates in 2016-2017 were in medical studies.

**Table 2.7** Female postgraduate students prefer to graduate in the fields of trade & business, education, social & behavioural sciences, and medical studies.

Field	Professional Diploma	Higher Diploma	Master's	Ph.D	Full Ph.D
Trade and business	65	10	438	21	0
Educational Sciences and Teacher Preparation	7	99	251	86	0
Social and Behavioural Science	0	1	237	40	0
Medical Studies	0	0	191	13	49
Humanities, religious sciences and literature	0	0	172	30	0
Natural Sciences	0	0	145	13	0
Engineering	0	0	127	0	0
Mathematics and Computer Science	0	0	110	4	0
Islamic studies	0	0	77	24	0
Law	0	0	42	8	0
Arts	0	0	44	0	0
Architecture	0	0	37	0	0
Agriculture	0	0	36	0	0
Services, Tourism and Restaurants	0	0	35	0	0
Physical studies	0	0	24	9	0
Media / Mass Communication and Documentation	0	0	24	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>1,990</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>49</b>

Source: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Annual Statistics Report, 2016-2017 (<http://www.mohe.gov.jo>)

**Female students at the postgraduate level prefer to complete education in the fields of trade & business, education, and social & behavioural sciences.** The field with the lowest female graduates were physical studies and media / mass communication and documentation. Just as for male Ph.D. students, all female Ph.D. students who graduated in 2016-2017 were graduates in medicine.



## 2.7 Studying abroad

Jordan has some of the best universities in the region including Princes Sumaya University, Jordan University, Jordan University for Science and Technology and German Jordan University. The Jordan University is ranked 1,200 of the world universities while the Jordan University for Science and Technology is ranked 1,706 out of 11,995 worldwide ranked universities.<sup>27</sup>

**Table 2.8** Jordanian students who study abroad, clearly prefer to study medicine or engineering at all levels of education: bachelor, master, and PhD.

Level	Field	Number	%
<b>Bachelor</b>	Medicine	4,706	44%
	Other specialisation	3,386	31%
	Engineering	2,013	19%
	Dentistry	540	5%
	Pharmacy	155	1%
<b>Total</b>		<b>10,800</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Masters</b>	Medicine	2,292	79%
	Other specialisation	362	13%
	Engineering	171	6%
	Dentistry	37	1%
	Pharmacy	24	1%
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,886</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>PhD</b>	Medicine	2,071	84%
	Other specialisation	256	10%
	Engineering	78	3%
	Dentistry	64	3%
	Pharmacy	3	0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,472</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: <http://www.mohe.gov.jo>, annual report (2016-2017)

**Jordanian students who study abroad, clearly prefer to study medicine or engineering at all levels of education: bachelor, master, and PhD.** It is part of the Jordanian culture to pursue those jobs that are well respected by the community, leading many students to choose for medicine

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.webometrics.info/en/aw/jordan>  
<http://www.topuniversities.com/universities/princess-sumaya-university-technology/undergrad>  
<http://www.topuniversities.com/universities/university-jordan>  
<http://www.topuniversities.com/universities/jordan-university-science-technology>  
<http://www.topuniversities.com/universities/german-jordanian-university>

or engineering. Moreover, Jordan has limited capacity to absorb medical students, leading to an outflow of these students. However, many of the medicine and engineering graduates decide to come back to Jordan, whereas graduates from other fields prefer to stay abroad to continue their higher studies or pursue a career looking for better living circumstances.

**Table 2.9** All studies combined, the majority of the Jordanian students that study abroad, prefer to be resided in the USA, followed by Egypt and Sudan.

Countries	Numbers	%
USA	2,330	9.3%
Egypt	2,215	8.9%
Sudan	2,091	8.4%
Ukraine	1,971	7.9%
Malaysia	1,700	6.8%
UK	1,640	6.6%
Kuwait	1,544	6.2%
Russian Federation	1,147	4.6%
Turkish Cyprus	2,000	8.0%
Turkey	1,006	4.0%
Other <sup>28</sup>	7,278	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,922</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: <http://www.mohe.gov.jo>, annual report (2016-2017)

All studies combined, the majority of the Jordanian students that study abroad, prefer to be resided in the USA, followed by Egypt and Sudan. There is no formal information that indicate the reasoning behind these choices and preferences.

## 2.8 Policy

Jordan has started a major reform program to enhance the basic education as there are still many challenges left to solve.<sup>29</sup> Challenges in public education sector include low quality of education provided by the ministry including poor curricula, low government spending on education (10% of total budget), limited skills of teachers to deliver, not all schools are connected to internet, poor infrastructure, low quality of education provided at the early childhood education. Moreover, 80% of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grader underperform in reading and have lower scores on TIMSS and PISA, there is a high failure of 12 grade exam and there a no linkages with the labour market.. Finally, the Jordanian public education sector is also challenged by the increased number of Syrian refugees in public schools.

<sup>28</sup> Others Countries (included all countries that have below 1000 Jordanian students (Algeria, Hungary, China, UAE, Palestine, Syria Yemen Australia, Germany, Sultanate of Oman, Canada, Pakistan, Cyprus, Saudi Arabia, Italia, Iraq, Lebanon, Romania, India, Libya, France, Bahrain, Greece, Kazakhstan, Austria, Spain, Armenia, Morocco, West, sunset, Azerbaijan, Korea, New Zealand, Tunisia, Netherlands, White Russia, South Africa, Japan, Ireland, Sweden, Portugal, Poland, Denmark, Taiwan, Belgium)

<sup>29</sup> Jordan Times Sep6th , 2016

**For the Education sector, the government of Jordan has established several future development pillars.** These include high scores on Early Development Instrument (EDI) assessments, Early Grade Maths Assessment (EGRA), and on Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGMA). Furthermore, Early Childhood Education Development ( ECED) efforts between all relevant stakeholders should be properly coordinated, monitored and evaluated such that all early years provisions meet international expectations for quality and female participation in the workforce is increased. Key institutions involved Jordan's educational system include the Ministry of Education, the National centre of Human Resource Development, Queen Rania Training academy, the Madrasti Initiative, and the Curricula and assessment centre.



## 3 Labour Market

### 3.1 Introduction

**The Jordanian labour market faces some serious challenges, including high unemployment and a mismatch between supply and demand.** According to the latest labour market statistics, conducted by the Jordanian department of statistics, the unemployment rate nearly doubled in recent years, from 13% in 2012 to 24% in 2016.<sup>30</sup> The Jordanian government has taken several steps to minimise the gap through the issuance of the “Human Resource Strategy” which improves the links between the basic education output to the higher education and the TVET education and training into the labour market.

**One major concern is the influx of large numbers of refugees into Jordan. Despite robust economic growth rates, the national economy has not expanded enough to absorb all these new entrants to the labour market.** In the past, the Gulf countries used to provide employment opportunities for high skilled and educated unemployed Jordanians. Given the slowdown in their economies because they diverted the government spending from economic development projects to defence and military armament, the Gulf countries are sending back Jordanians which is putting more pressure on the Jordanian labour market.

**In recent years, Jordan adopted a human resource strategy focused on the development of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training sector (TVET).** This strategy aims at minimising the gap between the supply and the labour demand. Jordan has identified certain interventions to improve the labour market: increasing access to the training and education of TVET, improving the quality of graduates, creating accountability and governance in place, establishing innovative ideas to improve the sector and introducing new mind-set programs in order to enhance participation in the labour market.

**In addition to the above, Jordan introduced the National Employment-Technical and Vocational Education and Training (E-TVET) strategy** which focuses on improvement of the Governance; Relevance of Education and Training for Employability; Increased Inclusiveness of the TVET System; Performance Measurement; and Sustainable and Effective Funding.<sup>31</sup> In the sustainability of effective funding, Jordan will have to increase funding to enhance the quality of education and training of the TVET. This will ensure high quality of supply of labour to the market.

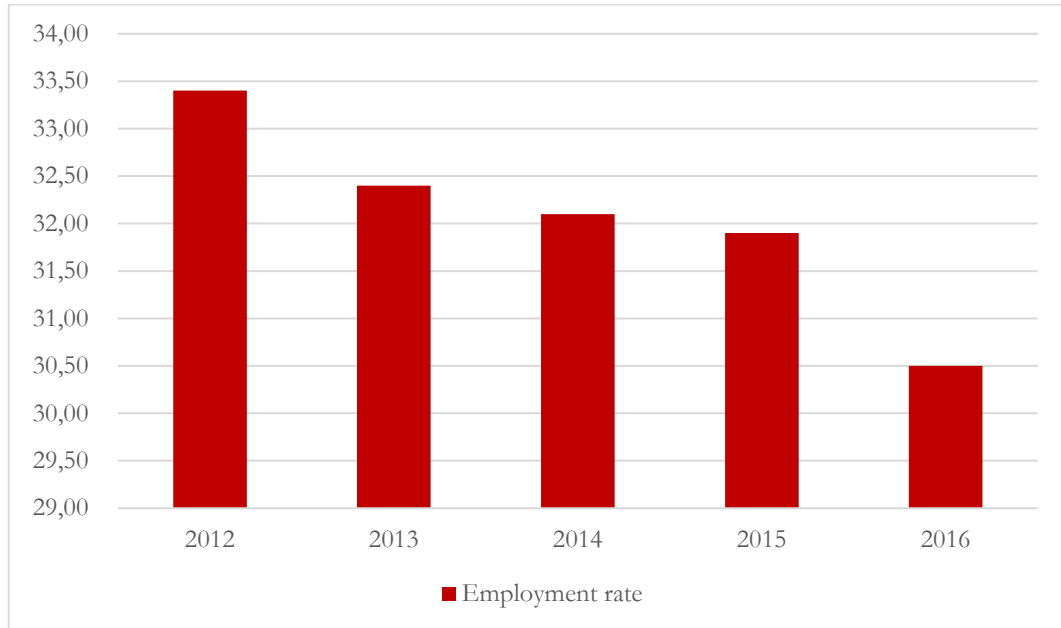
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<sup>30</sup> <http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/DataBank/JOBS/JOBS2012-2016.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> E-TVET strategy 2014-2020

### 3.2 Employment

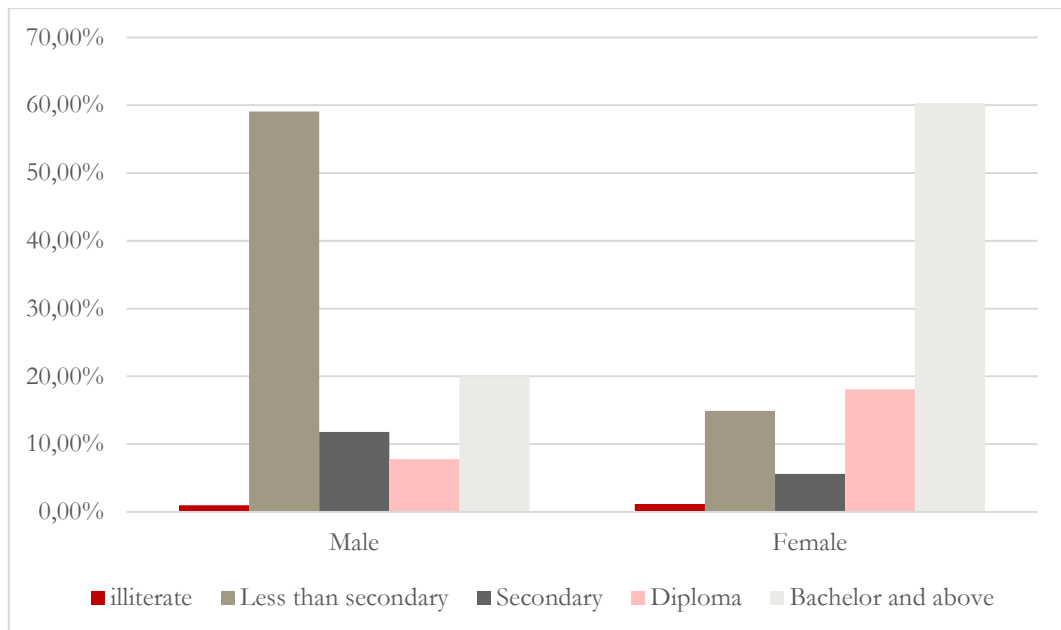
**Figure 3.1** Jordan's employment rate decreased from 33.4% in 2012 to 30.5% in 2016, indicating a decline in the economy and decrease of the economic growth.



Source: Jordanian Ministry of Labour, Annual Report, 2016

**Jordan's employment rate decreased from 33.4% in 2012 to 30.5% in 2016, indicating a decline in the economy and decrease of the economic growth.** The Jordan department of statistics, measures the employment rate as the number of people who have a job as a percentage of the working age population.

**Figure 3.2** Among the employed workers, the relative share of illiterates is negligible. However, female employed workers are higher educated.



Source: Jordanian Ministry of Labour, Annual Report, 2016

**Working women are higher educated than working men.** Around 60% of working males have less than secondary education, compared with around 15% for females. Remarkably, however, 20% of working males have obtained bachelor's degrees and above, whereas 60% of working females have completed higher education. This seems related to the fact that enrolment in higher education is also higher for women, and that women are perhaps less likely to take lower-level jobs.

**Table 3.1 The age groups 30-39 and 30-49 have the highest shares in total employment.**

Age Group/Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
15-19	2.9	2.7	3.4	3.2	3.2
20-24	12.4	12.5	12.9	13.5	13.8
25-29	18.0	17.2	17.2	17.0	16.1
30-39	33.0	33.4	31.9	29.7	30.5
40-49	22.7	23.0	23.6	23.3	23.0
50-59	8.6	8.7	8.9	10.4	10.5
60+	2.4	2.5	2.2	3.0	3.0

Source: Jordanian Ministry of Labour, National Labour Market Indicators, 2013-2017 (<http://www.mol.gov.jo>)

**The highest number of employed was for the age group 30-39 for the past 5 years, followed by the 40-49 age group.** The age groups with the lowest rates were the 60+ group, followed by the 15-19 age group.

Table 3.2 More than half of all jobs are in trade, public administration, or education.

Sector	2015	2016	2017
<b>Agriculture, Forestry, and fishing</b>	1.7	1.9	1.7
<b>Manufacturing</b>	10	9.7	10
<b>Construction</b>	6	6.1	4.9
<b>Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles</b>	15.3	15.4	15.8
<b>Transportation and storage</b>	7.7	7.6	7.1
<b>Accommodation and food service activities</b>	2.5	2.9	2.8
<b>Information and communication</b>	1.6	1.3	1.5
<b>Financial and insurance activities</b>	1.7	1.9	1.8
<b>Professional, scientific and technical activities</b>	2.5	2.8	3.2
<b>Administrative and support service activities</b>	1.2	1.3	1.3
<b>Public administration and defence and social security</b>	26.3	26.1	25.9
<b>Education</b>	12.4	11.5	12.8
<b>Human health and social work activities</b>	5	5.1	5.1
<b>Other service activities</b>	2.3	2.5	2.5
<b>Other<sup>32</sup></b>	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%

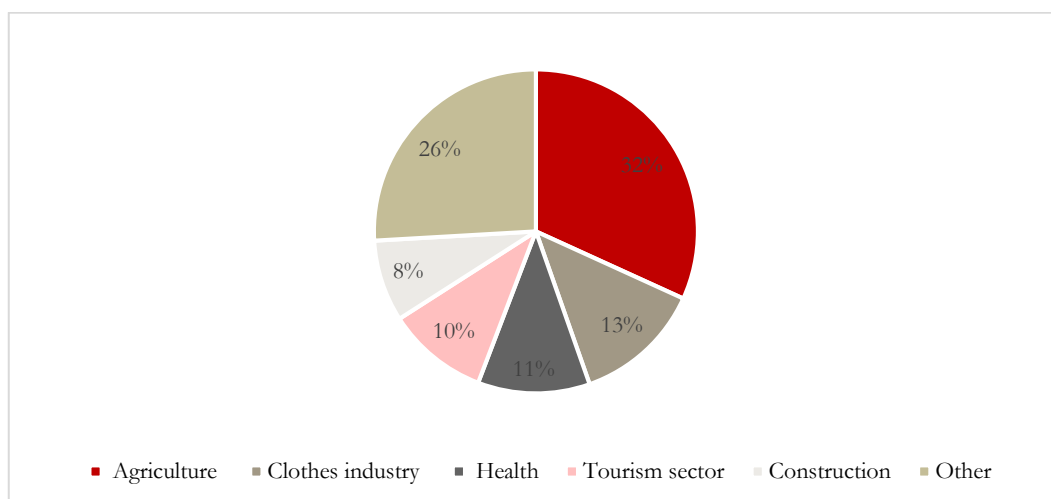
Source: Jordanian Ministry of Labour, National Labour Market Indicators, 2013-2017 (<http://www.mol.gov.jo>)

**More than a quarter of employment is in public administration.** This includes a significant share of employees in the army, defence and the government sector. Like in a number of other middle eastern countries, working for the public sector is considered desirable because of the provided stability and security and many other advantages like a high salary, food, clothes, and transportation from and to work. Other important sectors are Wholesale and Trade; Education; Manufacturing, and Transportation. The percentage of Jordanian employed in transportation ranged from 7.7% to 7.1% in the last 3 years. This high percentage can be explained by the rise of smart transportation applications, such as Uber and Careem.

<sup>32</sup> Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods and services-producing activities of households for own use, Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies, Arts, entertainment and recreation, Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities, Mining and Quarrying



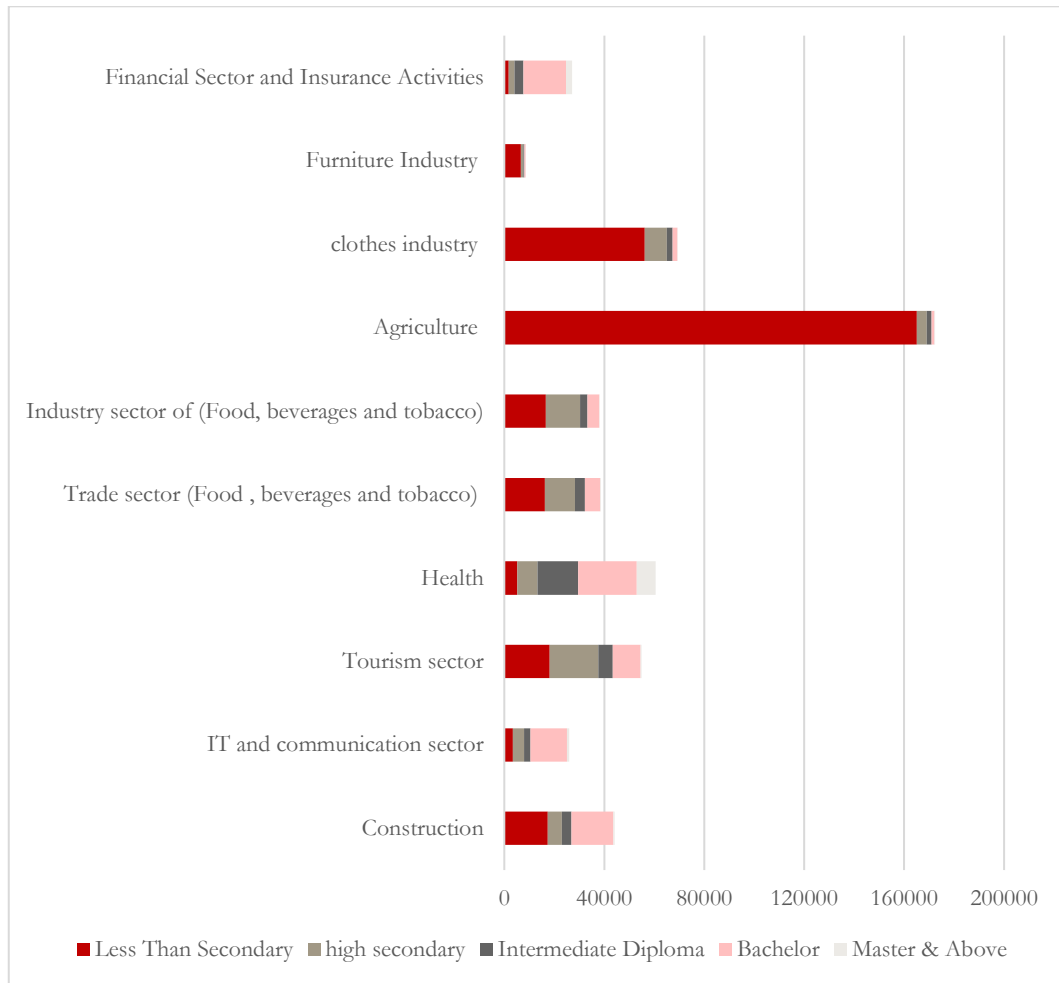
Figure 3.3 The agricultural sector employs around 1/3 of workers (including foreign workers).



Source: Jordanian Ministry of Labour, Sector Studies 2018 (<http://www.mol.gov.jo>)

**The agricultural sector employs around 1/3 of workers (including foreign workers).** This can be explained by the fact that this sector is very labour intensive, agricultural land is widely available, and employment statistics include self-employment in agriculture. In addition, this sector is relatively attractive to foreign workers because most of them only have agricultural work permits.

**Figure 3.4** The lower educated are mainly employed in agriculture and the clothing industry, while the higher educated are mainly employed in services.

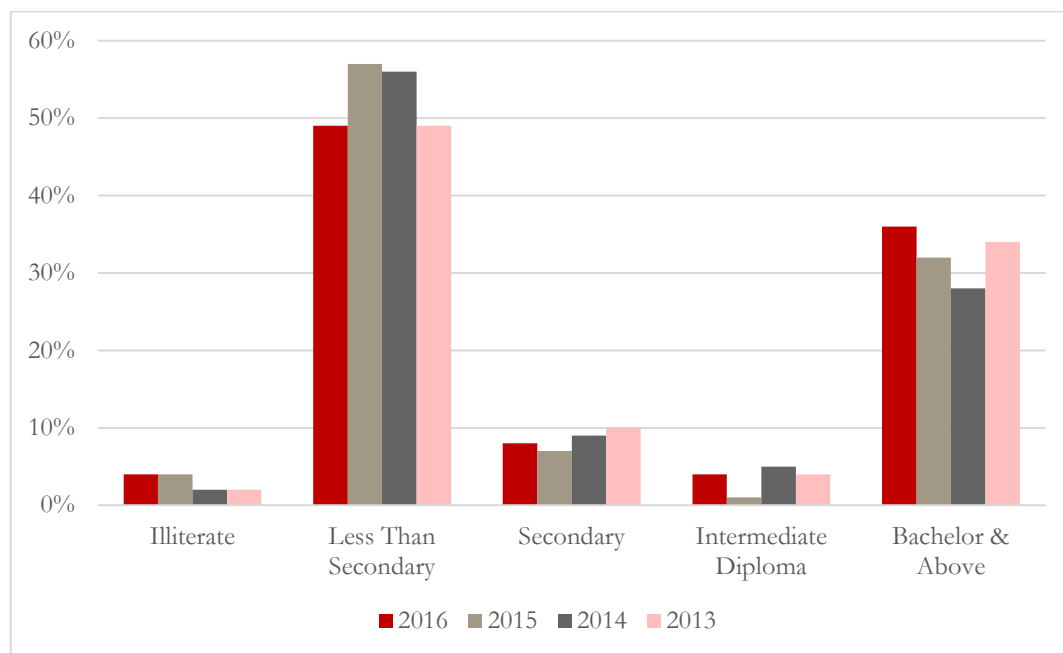


Source: Jordanian Ministry of Labour, Sector Studies 2018 (<http://www.mol.gov.jo>)

**The majority of the lower educated population is employed in agriculture and the clothing industry.** And conversely, nearly all workers in agriculture are low educated. This is the segment of the population that has less than secondary education, i.e., who did not complete high school. The higher educated segment of the population, which are those with bachelor's degrees or higher, are most employed in services sectors, including financial services, health services, ICT, construction, and tourism.

### 3.3 Vacancies

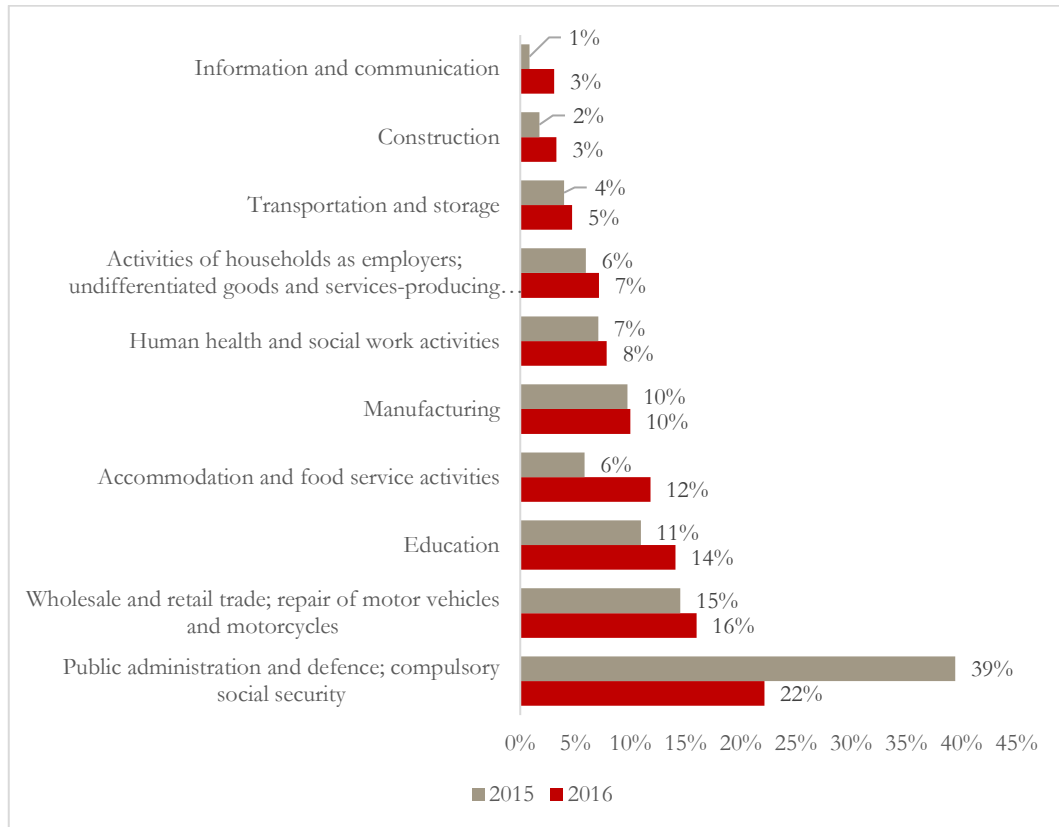
Figure 3.5 Judged by the number of vacancies, there are shortages of low-skilled workers (unless they are illiterate) as well as shortages for higher educated workers.



Source: <http://www.mol.gov.jo>, sectors studies, 2018

**Around half of all vacancies tend to be for workers with less than secondary education, while around 30% of all vacancies are for university-educated workers.** There are generally few vacancies for those who are illiterate or those with only a secondary or intermediate diploma.

**Figure 3.6** Most vacancies are in public administration and defence, followed by trade.

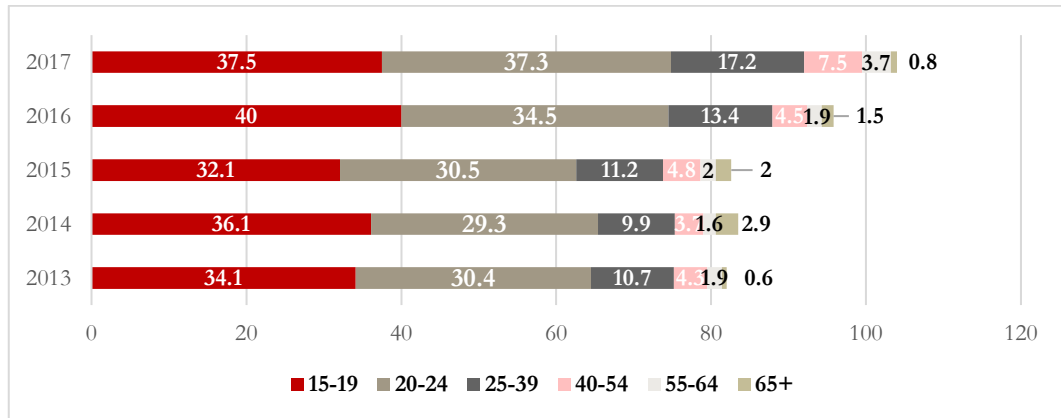


Source: <http://www.mol.gov.jo>, annual report, 2016

**Given the large size of the public sector, it is not surprising that most vacancies in the Jordanian job market tend to be in public administration and defence.** As Figure 3.6 shows, the share of these vacancies did however decrease, from 39% in 2015 to 22% in 2016. The second largest sector with significant shares of vacancies is the trade sector, with 15% of vacancies in 2015 and 16% in 2016. ICT, on the other hand, was the sector with the fewest vacancies: 1% in 2015 and 3% in 2016.

### 3.4 Unemployment

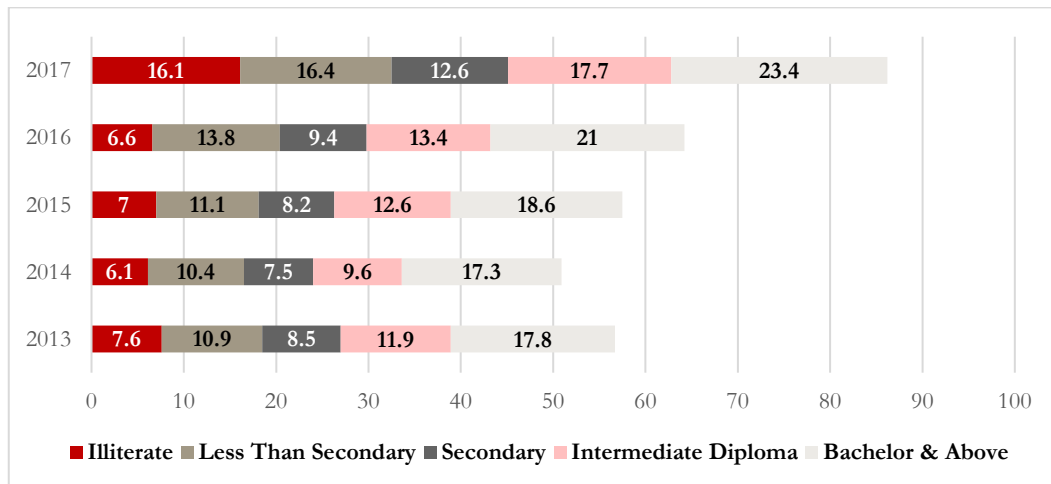
Figure 3.7 Youth unemployment is around 37%, and has risen for 20-24 year olds in recent years.



Source: Jordan Ministry of Labour: <http://www.mol.gov.jo>

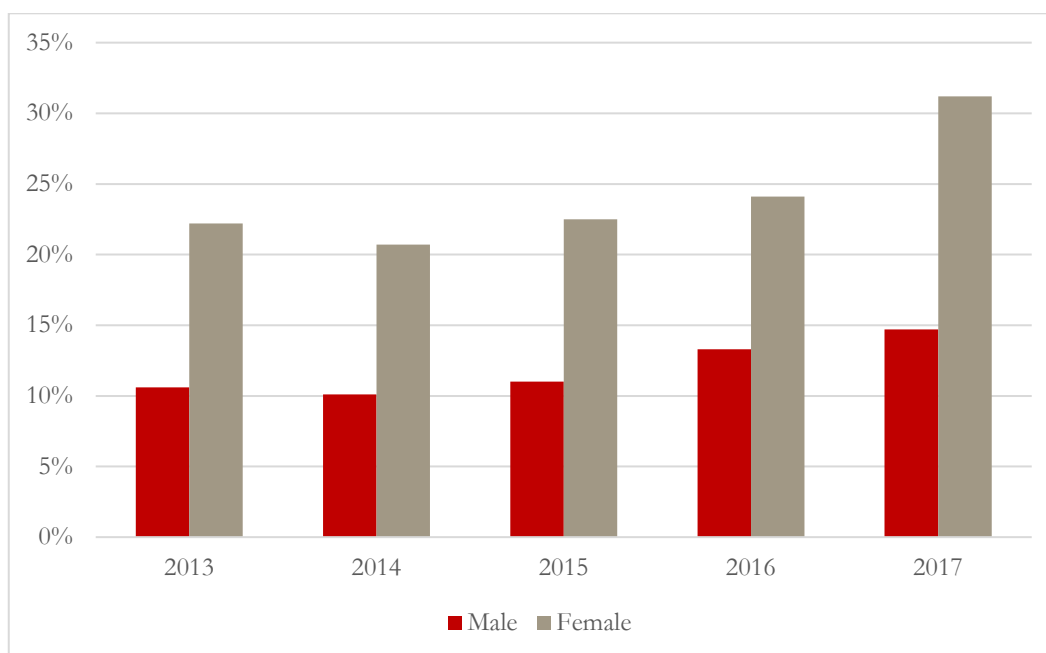
**Unemployment rates are highest among young and higher educated people.** As shown in the figure above, unemployment rates were the highest among the 15-19 and 20-24 age groups, followed by the 25-39 age group. Figure 3.8 below shows that the unemployment rate is the highest among people with at least a bachelor diploma, followed by the group of people with an intermediate diploma. The unemployment rate for the illiterate, however, was found to be rather low (except for 2017). In general, the number of job opportunities are short of the number of job seekers. Moreover, due to a culture of shame, people are reluctant to work in a sector that does not align with their educational background (sector and level).

Figure 3.8 Jordanians with a bachelor's degree face the highest unemployment rate, but unemployment has increased for all levels of education.



Source: <http://www.mol.gov.jo>

**Figure 3.9** The unemployment rate for females in Jordan was found to be approximately twice as high as the male unemployment rate over the last five years.



Source: <http://www.mol.gov.jo>

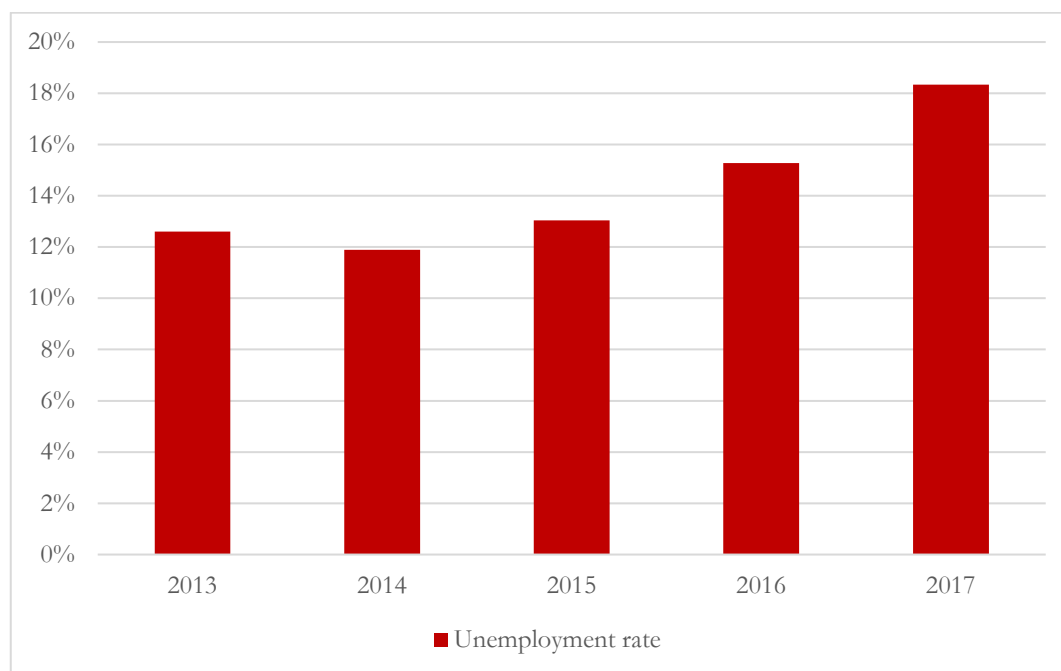
**The unemployment rate for women in Jordan was approximately double the male unemployment rate over the last five years.** Cultural barriers, such as refusing to work for female superiors, may be important reason for this difference. However, in absolute numbers, only around 27% of the roughly 250,000 unemployed people were female.<sup>33</sup> This reflects the low labour force participation rate of women.

### 3.5 Key challenges

**Jordan still faces several challenges in the labour market.** Most importantly, there is an increasing mismatch between the supply and demand of labour, due to an increase in the number of graduate students at the bachelor level and a significant increase of inflow of refugees from Syria and other surrounding Gulf countries. Secondly, (cultural) barriers for female employment are present, leading to very low female participation rates. Moreover, the wages are rather low and the costs of transportation are relatively high. Finally, the governance model is very weak, there is a culture of shame to join the vocational training, and there is a poor perception of the TVET System output by the labour market.

<sup>33</sup> <http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/DataBank/JOBS/JObs2012-2016.pdf>

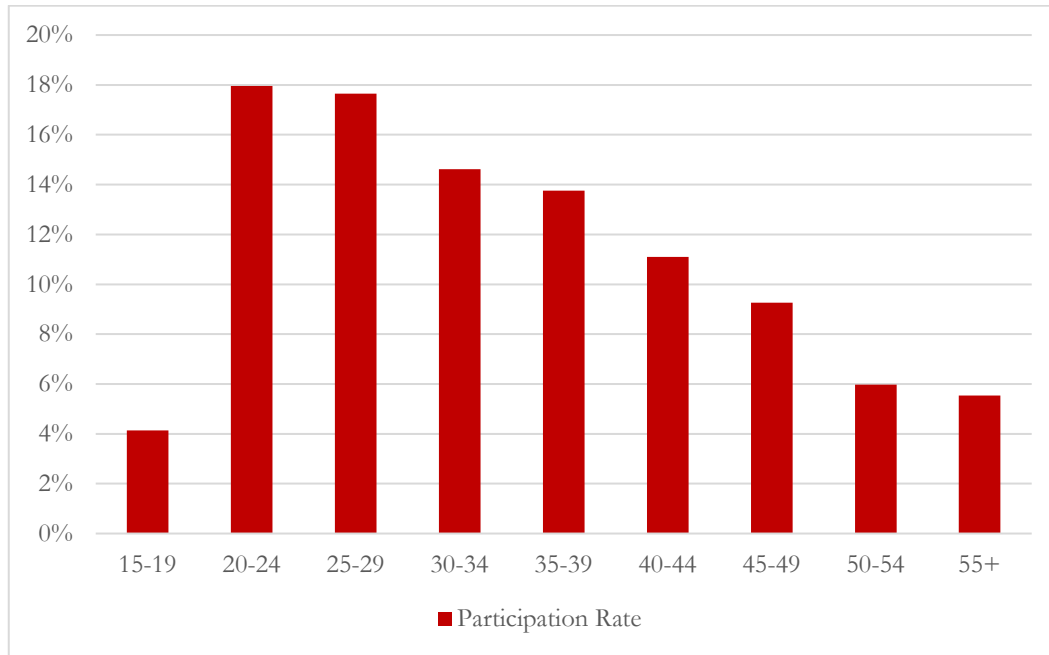
Figure 3.10 The unemployed rate has increased since 2014



Source: <http://www.mol.gov.jo>, the national labour market indicators, 2013-2017

As shown by the figure above, the unemployment rate has increased from 13% in 2015 to 18% in 2017, as a result of a recession and the corresponding low economic growth over the last five years.

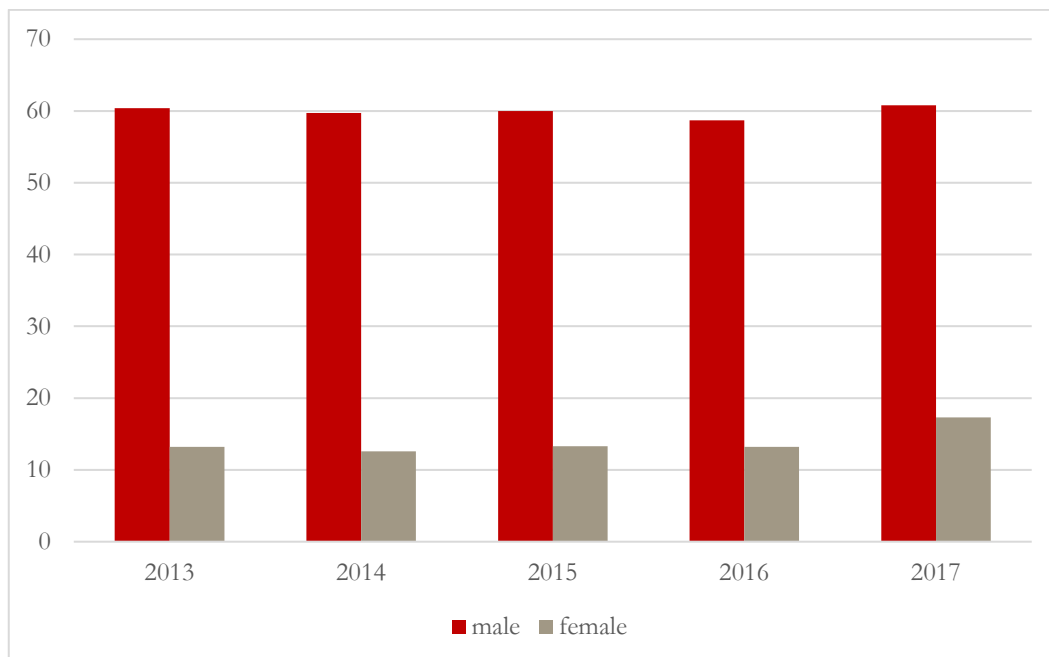
Figure 3.11 High youth participation in the labour force by age groups (20-24 and 25-29)



Source: <http://www.mol.gov.jo>, the national labour market indicators, 2013-2017

As shown by the figure above, the age groups with the highest share in the Jordanian labour force were the 20-24 and 25-29 age groups. Logically, the 15-19 age group represents the smallest share, because many of them are still enrolled in the educational system. Moreover, the people in the 50-54 and 55+ age groups represent a rather small share in the Jordanian labour force as well.<sup>34</sup>

Figure 3.12 Barriers in terms of culture, transportation and salary have led to very low participation rates for females between 2013 and 2017.



<sup>34</sup> [www.mol.gov.jo](http://www.mol.gov.jo), labour market statistics, Different years



Source: <http://www.mol.gov.jo>, the national labour market indicators, 2013-2017

**Barriers in terms of culture, transportation and salary have led to very low participation rates for females between 2013 and 2017.** However, it has increased from 13.2% to 17.3%, whereas the male rate remained fairly stable around 60%. The total Jordanian labour force is estimated at 1.8 million with a growth rate of 5% for the past 5 years. However, the vast majority of the labour force still consists of men.



## 4 Migration

**Jordan is a small country that has experienced large net inflows of migrants – both refugees and labour migrants.** In recent years, the Jordanian population is estimated to have increased by nearly 45%, from around 7 million in 2011 to around 10 million in 2017.<sup>35</sup> Out of these, there are around 700,000 registered refugees under UNHCR mandate, 95% of which are Syrian refugees, and some 340,000 registered migrant workers. Moreover, Jordan hosts more 2 million people of Palestinian descent registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), who have lived in the country for decades.<sup>36</sup> Given these statistics, Jordan has been called one of the top refugee hosting country in the world.<sup>37</sup>

**The main reason for the large inflow of refugees is Jordan’s relatively safe location in the center of a conflict-prone region.** Jordan borders with Syria in the north and with Iraq in the north-east. Given its geographic proximity and ‘safe haven status’, Jordan has attracted a significant number of refugees from the region, including Syria, Iraq, Sudan, and Yemen (and previously Palestine).

**The main reason for the large inflow of labour migrants is the fact that Jordan has more attractive employment and income opportunities than some of its neighbours.** Many individuals and families from outside Jordan have been looking for economic opportunities in Jordan. For example, Jordan has attracted large inflows of Egyptian workers, who tend to work in the agriculture and construction sector. According to the Ministry of Labour of Jordan, there are now around 341,000 registered migrant workers in Jordan.<sup>38</sup> This number does not yet include the large stock of unregistered migrant workers.

**Out of a working age population of over 4 million, only 40 percent of Jordanian nationals were economically active in 2017 and only 13 percent of these were women.** Besides such low participation rates, Jordan suffers from growing unemployment, rising from 13 percent in 2015 to 18.3 percent in 2017. Highly-educated women are particularly affected: 33 percent were unemployed and as many as 54 percent of women with a university degree were unemployed in 2017.<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, over half of the jobs created in the private sector, predominantly low-skilled and low-paid, are estimated to be filled by migrant workers. This illustrates the stakes and challenges of immigration to Jordan.

### 4.1 Inward Migration

**The vast majority of refugees in Jordan originate from Syria, followed by Iraq and Sudan.** Based on the latest UNHCR data, Jordan now hosts around 691,000 refugees, of which almost 95 percent (around 653,000) are from Syria. The number of Syrian refugees has increased rapidly since

<sup>35</sup> Official population estimates by the Jordan Department of Statistics (DOS):

[Http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/DataBank/Population\\_Estimares/2017/PopulationEstimates.pdf](http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/DataBank/Population_Estimares/2017/PopulationEstimates.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> These are not migrants (i.e., born-abroad). They were born in Jordan, with the status of refugee.

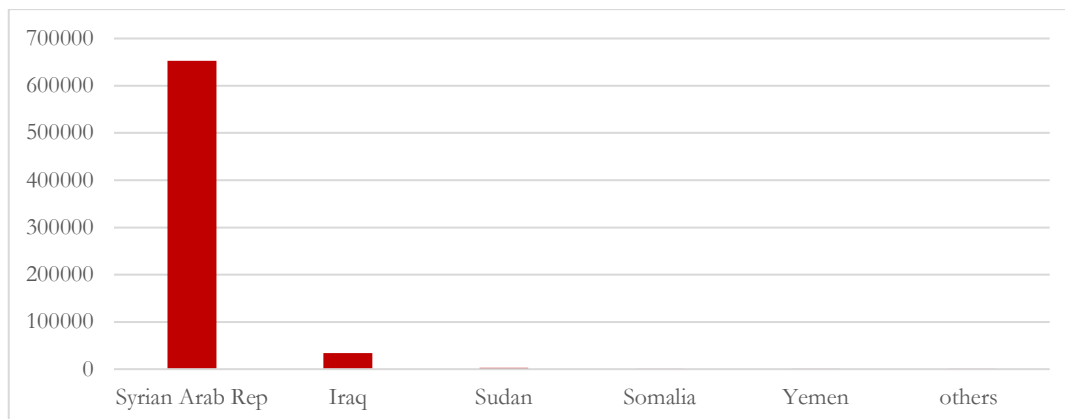
<sup>37</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2017-countries-of-asylum-for-migrants/>.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.mol.gov.jo>, The National Labour Market Indicators, 2013-2017

<sup>39</sup> Data is taken from official Jordanian statistics (DoS data).

the Syrian conflict started in 2011. The number of Iraqi refugees appears to have declined somewhat.<sup>40</sup> The total number of asylum seekers is estimated by UNHCR at 43,818, but the UNHCR database does not provide a breakdown for asylum seekers by country.

**Figure 4.1** The vast majority (almost 95%) of refugees in Jordan are from Syria



Source: UNCHR Annual Statistics 2017 (<http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/demographics>)

**Based on UNHCR statistics, more than 730,000 refugees arrived in Jordan between 2011 and 2017.** This is more than the estimated stock of refugees because some refugees did not stay in the country. Based on IOM statistics, the number of voluntary return from country of destination (host country) in 2016 was estimated at 54,000. However, in 2016 this number was only 18,000.<sup>41</sup>

**Table 4.1** More than 730,000 refugees arrived in Jordan between 2011 and 2017.

Year	Stock of refugees arrivals
2011	460,559
2012	30,8463
2013	648,022
2014	673,681
2015	689,339
2016	720,812
2017	734,783

Source: UNHCR (2018)

<sup>40</sup> De Bel-Air (2016) noted that, as of September 2015, around 629,000 Syrian refugees and almost 50,000 Iraqi refugees were registered in Jordan.

<sup>41</sup> [https://migrationdataportal.org/?t=2016&ci=avrr\\_origin&cm49=400](https://migrationdataportal.org/?t=2016&ci=avrr_origin&cm49=400)

Table 4.2 Most refugees and asylum seekers are below the age of 18

Locations	Age Groups			Total
	0-17	18-59	60+	
<b>Refugee camps</b>	<b>79,268</b>	<b>54,868</b>	<b>3,387</b>	<b>137,523</b>
<i>Mafraq: Zataari Camp</i>	44,078	31,132	2075	77,285
<i>Zarqa: Emirates Jordanian Camp (EJC)</i>	4,272	2,551	158	6,981
<i>Zarqa: Azraq Camp</i>	30,918	21,185	1154	53,257
<b>Main governorates</b>	<b>234,700</b>	<b>251,813</b>	<b>25,161</b>	<b>511,674</b>
<i>Amman</i>	102,929	130,800	14,153	247,882
<i>Irbid</i>	66,441	55,886	5,524	127,851
<i>Mafraq</i>	40,426	41,654	3,512	85,592
<i>Zarqa</i>	24,904	23,473	1,972	50,349
<b>Other governorates</b>	<b>35,951</b>	<b>34,932</b>	<b>2,874</b>	<b>73,757</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>349,919</b>	<b>341,613</b>	<b>31,422</b>	<b>722,954</b>

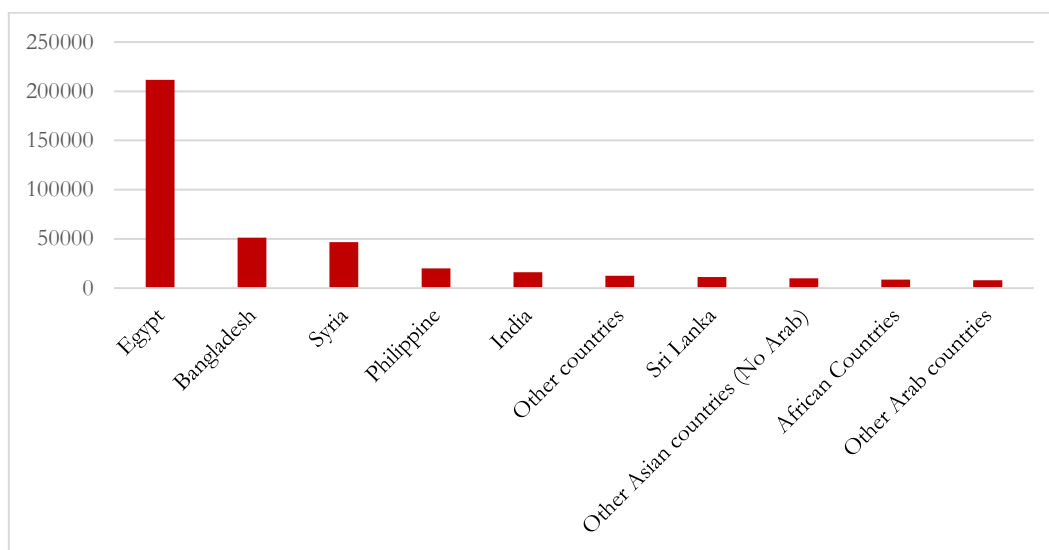
Source: UNCHR Annual Statistics 2017 (<http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/demographics>)

When we look at the stock of registered migrant workers, the top 3 countries of origin are **Egypt, Bangladesh, and Syria**. The figure below shows the distribution of work permits granted by MoL for foreign labours working in Jordan in 2017. As shown clearly, the majority of the work permits (53%) was issued for Egyptian workers, mainly distributed over the agricultural sector and the construction and building sector. The second largest group that received about 13% of all work permits were workers from Bangladesh. This is related to the many Bangladeshi factories (Bangladesh investment) located in Jordan, especially in the Special Economic Zones or QIZs.<sup>42</sup> and the clothing industry. Finally, Syrian workers were granted 12% of the total work permits, mainly in the food industry sector.<sup>43</sup> Note that these numbers are based on registered work permits and therefore do not include foreign migrant workers that work without a formal work permit.

<sup>42</sup> The Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZs) are special economic zones set up in Jordan in the aftermath of the peace process with Israel in 1994 and the signing of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Jordan and the USA in 2001. They were seen as an incubator of the reforms' implementation process and, especially, of the development of export-led, labour intensive industrial plants, mainly in the sector of textile and garment. QIZs offer duty- and quota-free access to the US and EU markets for products manufactured by "qualifying" enterprises located in those enclaves, which must meet certain quota regarding foreign participation to qualify under the program. Its declared aim is to serve as a tool of regional integration with Israel, as well as to attract and channel Foreign Direct Investments, mainly towards rural, poverty-stricken areas of the country and provide job opportunities for local unskilled workers.

<sup>43</sup> Ministry of Labour, National Labour Market Indicators 2013-2017: <http://www.mol.gov.jo>

Figure 4.2 The top 3 countries of origin for work permits are Egypt, Bangladesh, and Syria



Source: Ministry of Labour of Jordan (2017): <http://www.mol.gov.jo>

**Most migrant workers in Jordan appear to have a relatively low level of education.** As many as 96% of them only have a secondary diploma or below, and often earn less than the minimum wage. They are employed mainly in low-skilled and low-paid jobs. The key sectors of employment are agriculture, manufacturing, construction, tourism, wholesale trade and personal services (including domestic work). Female immigrants from Sri Lanka, Philippines and Bangladesh dominate the area of household domestic work, although some Sri Lankan and Bangladeshi women are also found to work in manufacturing (the apparel and garment industry) in QIZ.<sup>44</sup>

**The impact of Iraqi labour on the Jordanian economy has gone relatively unnoticed.** Not only are their numbers relatively small, but they also work in sectors where they are not competing directly with the poor Jordanians, being concentrated in high-skilled jobs such as junior doctors or teachers/professors in the private sector (positions left vacant by the Jordanian emigrants).

**In contrast, the inflow of Syrian workers has been more controversial.** A vast majority of these workers has not completed secondary education (85% of Syrians in Jordan, as compared to 58% of Jordanians). At the same time, they are believed to be workers with experience in low- and medium-skilled jobs, concentrated in the construction, wholesale and retail sectors (especially in the Irbid, Mafraq and Amman governorates), which puts them in direct competition with low-skilled Jordanian and Egyptian workers. Moreover, Syrian workers often accept low wages because they are illegal and do not always have work permits. They are looking for this low wage as an additional amount to the financial support they receive from NGOs.<sup>45</sup>

**Most migrant workers in Jordan are male.** In 2014, 324,410 foreign nationals were holding a valid labour permit, of whom 78% were male. The vast majority were Egyptian nationals: 65% of all foreign workers and 83% of all male foreign workers. Bangladeshi workers, on the other hand, made up 13% of all permit holders and 48% of the female workers, followed by Filipinas and Sri Lankans (respectively 21% and 15% of legal female workers). The Mol and social security

<sup>44</sup> ETF (2017)

<sup>45</sup> ETF (2017)

corporation laws allowed migrants workers to be enrolled in social security only if they have valid work permits. The Jordanian governments grants all migrant workers full access to public health care and education, but there are some limits to their economic activities. For example, migrant workers are not allowed to buy a house or car or own a private business<sup>46</sup>.

**Nearly 300,000 Syrian refugees are estimated to be working in Jordan.** According to UNHCR statistics, around 292,000 Syrian refugees are employed in Jordan (and aged between 18-59). It is estimated that nearly 54,000 of them work without work permits in construction, wholesale and trade, manufacturing, food and other services. On the other hand, some 21,000 Syrian refugees are estimated to work with work permits in those same sectors.<sup>47</sup>

## 4.2 Outward Migration

**In addition to hosting large stocks of immigrants, Jordan also has large numbers of nationals abroad, particularly in Saudi Arabia, UAE, and the United States.** According to UN/DESA, the total number of Jordanian expatriates was estimated to near 745,00 in 2017.

Around 2015, according to partial statistics from receiving countries,<sup>48</sup> the vast majority of Jordanian expatriates resided in Arab countries (84%). Key destinations were the Gulf States, more specifically Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). These two countries together hosted an estimated 450,000 Jordanians, or 60% of all Jordanian migrants.

**Among Jordanian nationals that immigrated to OECD countries, the most popular countries were the US, Germany, UK, Sweden, and Canada (2013-2015 data, De Bel-Air 2016)** Like in the rich Gulf states, Jordanians in the UK and North America were often highly-skilled professionals, while those in Northern European countries were more often less educated refugees. Migration to North America developed as an alternative to Gulf States in the 1990s, and have been providing a stable economic context and good employment opportunities. Since 2003 and the hike in oil prices, Jordanian emigrants have been turning to the Gulf States again.<sup>49</sup> Yet, some returns may happen as a result of labour nationalisation policies in the Gulf.

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<sup>46</sup> De Bel-Air (2016).

<sup>47</sup> ILO (2015). See <https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/syrian-refugee-unit-work-permit-progress-report-january-2018> for more recent numbers.

<sup>48</sup> The Gulf States, where Jordanian migrants are many, do not provide statistics of foreign residents by country of nationality.

<sup>49</sup> De Bel-Air (2016).

**Table 4.3** Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Palestine, and the United States are the most important destinations for Jordanian emigrants (2015)

Country of destination	Number of Jordanian emigrants	Percentage of Jordanian emigrants
Saudi Arabia	250,000	32%
UAE	200,000	26%
Kuwait	55,081	7%
Qatar	40,000	5%
Oman	7,403	1%
Bahrain	7,000	1%
Palestine	55,709	7%
Libya	20,408	3%
Iraq	10,336	1%
<b>Total Arab countries</b>	<b>660,000</b>	<b>84%</b>
United States	65,618	9%
Canada	9,400	1%
<b>Total North America</b>	<b>75,018</b>	<b>10%</b>
EU		
Germany	8,836	1%
UK	7,000	1%
Sweden	3,898	1%
Other EU	20,000	3%
<b>Total EU</b>	<b>39,734</b>	<b>5%</b>
Australia	5,960	1%
<b>Total emigrants</b>	<b>785,000</b>	

Source: Reproduced from De Bel-Air (2016), Migration Profile: Jordan, Migration Policy Centre.

**Most Jordanian emigrants migrated for economic reasons.** A survey carried out by the European Training Foundation (ETF) among employed emigrants and returnees in 2014 found that nearly two-thirds (63%) of emigrants had migrated for economic reasons, either ‘out of necessity’ or ‘out of choice’, because working conditions were better abroad. Around one third of respondents (32%) stated that the main reason was the lack of decent employment opportunities in Jordan (ETF 2017).

**Most Jordanian emigrants are males (86%) and are highly educated.** As many as 63% hold university degrees and 22% had secondary education. Of these migrants, 17% worked in the wholesale and retail sectors, 3% in education, 12% in construction, 10% in manufacturing and 9% in administration. Nearly 88% of them received formal job contracts from the host country before migration, and 85% of these complied with the terms of the contract upon arrival. (ETF 2017)



### 4.3 Syrian Migrants

Since the conflict in Syria started in 2011, an estimated 5 million Syrian refugees have fled the country.<sup>50</sup> Most of them fled to neighbouring countries, with key destinations being Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt. UNHCR estimates that around 668,000 Syrians are registered in Jordan.<sup>51</sup> The Jordanian government estimates that the total number of Syrian refugees in Jordan (registered and unregistered) has reached 1.3 million<sup>52</sup>.

**Most Syrian refugees live in the centre and north of the country.** The majority of registered migrants live in northern governorates (Amman and Mafraq) and the other two main governorates (Irbid and Zarqa).

**Around 81% of Syrian refugees in Jordan now live outside refugee camps.** According to UNCHR, 126,235 (19%) registered Syrian refugees live in camps: Zaatari camp (78,340), Emirati Jordanian camp (6,832), Azraq camp (40,470).<sup>53</sup>

Table 4.4 Most Syrian refugees in Jordan live in Amman, Mafraq and Irbid.

Governorate	Percentages (%)	Number
Amman	29.3%	195,465
Mafraq	24.4%	162,904
Irbid	21.0%	139,916
Zarqa	14.6%	97,172
Balqa	3.0%	19,730
Madaba	2.0%	13,093
Jarash	1.5%	9,854
Karak	1.4%	9,035
Maan	1.2%	7,680
Ajlun	1.1%	7,185
Aqaba	0.5%	3,546
Tafilah	0.3%	1,792

Source: UNHCR (2018): <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36>

**Most Syrian refugees are between 18-59 years of age.** Among male Syrians, 23.5% are aged 18-59, and around 18% are younger. Among female Syrians, 22% are between 18-59 and 19% are younger. Only 2.2% of men and 1.6% of women are older than 59.

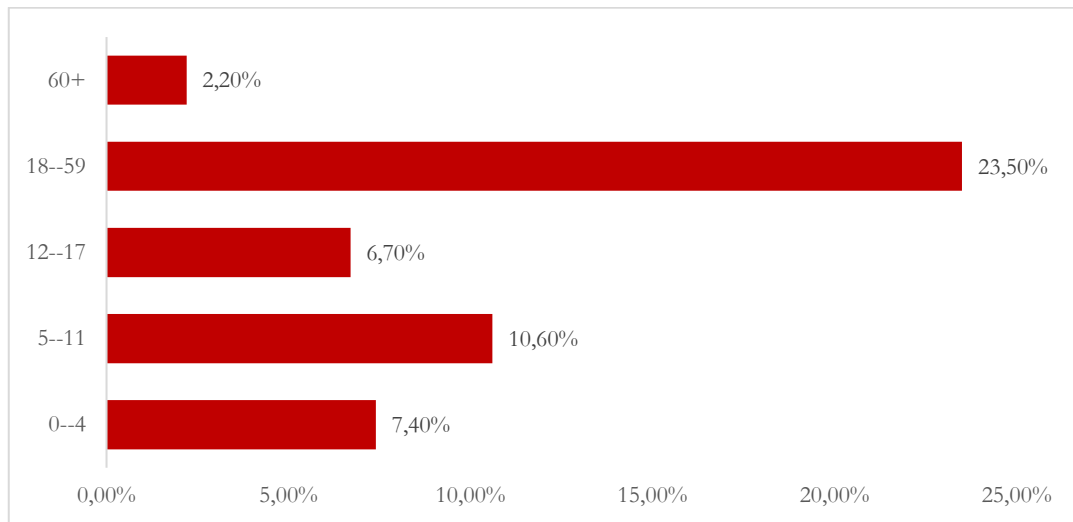
<sup>50</sup> OCHA (Nov 2017), Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview

<sup>51</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36>

<sup>52</sup> Jordan Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC), Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis 2015,

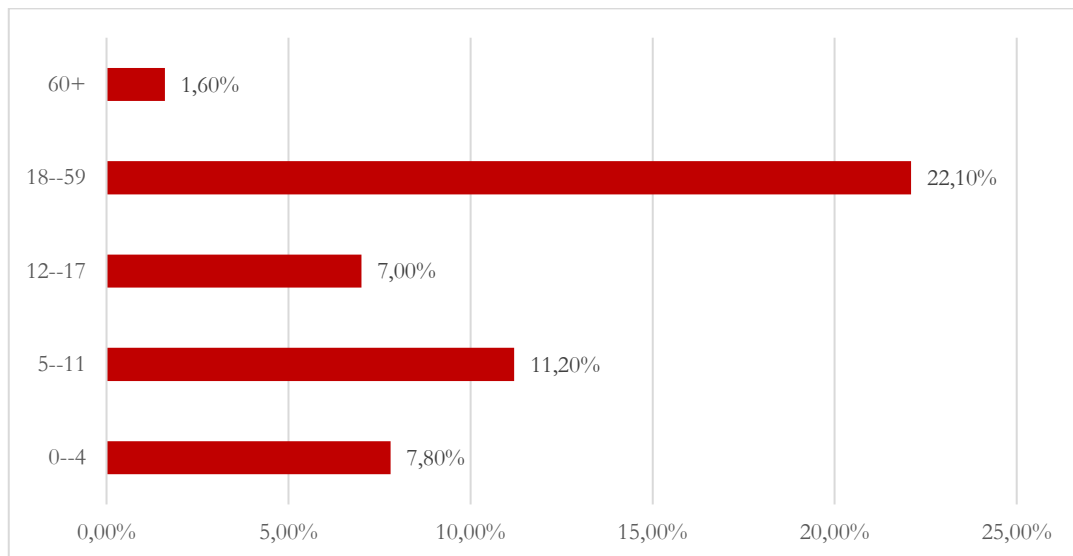
<sup>53</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36>

**Figure 4.3** The majority of female refugees are in (18-59) age groups.



Source: UNHCR (2018): <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36>

**Figure 4.4** The majority of male refugees are in (18-59) age groups.



Source: UNHCR (2018): <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36>

**Most Syrian refugees in Jordan are low educated.** According to UNHCR, as many as 60% of Syrians in Jordan above the age of 15 never completed their high school degree.<sup>54</sup> According to ILO (2015), only 9% had more than high school education and 46% had only primary (elementary) school or less. Yet another estimate is that 45% had primary school education, 28% secondary school education, and 18% had not completed primary school.<sup>55</sup> This low level of education appears to be related to the fact that many Syrian refugees come from rural villages and small towns in Syria, such as Dara'a, Homs, Hama and Damascus suburbs. Most of them obtained an education level below the Tawjihi (secondary degree) certificate level.

<sup>54</sup> Impact of the Syrian refugees on Jordan labour market – ILO/FAFO 2015

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.care.at/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2017-CARE-Jordan-Syrian-refugees-Fact-Sheet-final-web-15062017.pdf>

**School enrolment rates are low for Syrian children in Jordan, which could be related to a high level of child labour.** Only 65% of Syrian refugee children are enrolled in basic education, and many are reported to drop out of school in order to work. This is in sharp contrast with Jordanian children, virtually 100% of which are by law enrolled in basic education.<sup>56</sup> According to UNHCR, enrolment for Syrian refugee children in formal education increased from 126,127 children in 2016-17 to 130,668 in 2017-18.<sup>57</sup> The average family size for Syrian refugees in Jordan is estimated at 4.7.<sup>58</sup>

**Vocational training and vocational jobs are popular among Syrian refugees in Jordan.** Based on anecdotal evidence, it appears that many Syrians in Jordan prefer to obtain vocational skills rather than academic degrees, as they feel more secure in vocational jobs. This could explain why many of them join the labour market at an early stage.

**The majority of male Syrian refugees in Jordan with employment work in agriculture (farming), mechanics, or construction.** Syrian women appear to be often involved in home-based activities in food processing and catering. The main sectors of employment besides construction include are: wholesale and retail (23%), manufacturing (16%), transport (10%) and agriculture and forestry (9%), according to a field survey.<sup>59</sup> During 2017, however, 46,717 work permits were issued by the Ministry of Labour, of which 26,394 (56%) were first-time permits. Almost all the permits (95%) were granted to males. The Ministry's records of legal permits indicate that the bulk (43%) of permits delivered to Syrians were issued for the agricultural sector, 19.2 % for the construction sector, 12.5% for the manufacturing sector and 9.2% for the retail sector. Other sectors each received less than 1% of all permits issued to Syrian workers in 2017.<sup>60</sup> The discrepancy between the two sources probably indicates the gap between total and legal employment's patterns, as well as recent efforts (see the "policy" section) to streamline Syrian refugees to specific sectors, shunned by Jordanian job-seekers.

**The majority of Syrian refugees work in the informal sector.** This is despite the fact that they lose many of the formal employment rights.<sup>61</sup> One possible reasons (based on anecdotal, unconfirmed evidence) is the misperception by some Syrian refugees that working in the formal sector will ban them from receiving food stamps from different UN agencies. This has discouraged many of them to work in the informal sector, despite assurances from UNHCR that this assumption is incorrect.

**A recent study found that Syrian refugees experience a number of barriers when applying for work permits.** In particular, they were found to face barriers in the following areas:<sup>62</sup>

- Difficulties in obtaining the necessary documentation to access work permits
- Lack of clear and concise information about employment-related regulation
- Quotas on the employment of Jordanians and closed professions

<sup>56</sup> [https://www.rescuerefugees.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Refugees-English-final\\_0.pdf](https://www.rescuerefugees.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Refugees-English-final_0.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/63925>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.care.at/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2017-CARE-Jordan-Syrian-refugees-Fact-Sheet-final-web-15062017.pdf>

<sup>59</sup> Impact of the Syrian refugees on Jordan labour market – ILO/FAFO 20

<sup>60</sup> Syrian Refugee Unit Work Permit Progress Report, June 2018

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/61688>.

<sup>61</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36>

<sup>62</sup> SIPA (2017), Examining Barriers to Workforce Inclusion of Syrian Refugees in Jordan, School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) Columbia University, July, 2017

- Lack of labour market information about labour demand and supply

**The same study found that the following barriers affected the preference of Syrian refugees to seek employment in the export industry:**<sup>63</sup>

- Low wages in the export industry and higher wage opportunities in the informal sector
- Prohibitive commuting distance and cost
- Perceptions of sub-optimal working conditions in factories
- Societal attitudes towards women's employment
- Fears related to work formalisation
- The existence of more appealing job opportunities in the informal sector
- Employers' hiring preferences

## 4.4 Migration policies

**The key institutions dealing with migration issues in Jordan are the following:**

- Ministry of Interior (MoI)
- Minister of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)
- Ministry of Labour (MoL)
- Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
- International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

### 4.4.1 General regulations

**Foreign residents in Jordan are bound to their employer by the *kafala* (sponsorship) system, which requires foreign workers to depend on a local guarantor.** The Law on Residence and Foreigners' Affairs (1973, modified in 1998) and the By-Law No. 3 of 1997 regulating Visa Requirements govern the entry and sojourn of foreigners. Some nationalities can enter the country without a visa, such as Egyptian nationals, but only stay for a period of one month. Citizens from most Asian labour-exporting countries (Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Bangladesh, for instance) have to obtain their entry visas prior to entering Jordan. A valid residency permit (renewable every year), is now mandatory for all legal workers.

**Decision-making process regarding immigration/employment policies stems from the King (who provides the vision), the government ministries, and semi-public investment promotion corporations (investors and business owners).** The Ministry of Labour coordinates with public sector institutions for the implementation of the process. Regular bilateral agreements govern the entry of each nationality into the Jordanian labour market. These include, for example, design employment conditions and minimum salaries.

**The 1996 Labour Law organises the recruitment of foreign workers.** Work contracts must be obtained before departure, through the Jordanian diplomatic and economic representations in the

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<sup>63</sup> SIPA (2017), Examining Barriers to Workforce Inclusion of Syrian Refugees in Jordan, School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) Columbia University, July, 2017

country of origin and employers/sponsors must settle recruitment and work permit fees before workers enter Jordan. Labour permits are delivered by the Labour Migration Directorate of the Ministry of Labour.

**In order to promote the employment of Jordanians, national job applicants are given priority over foreign applicants.** Some occupational sectors are closed to non-nationals, among which are medical, engineering, administrative and accounting professions, clerical work including typing and secretarial work, telephones and communication works, warehouse work, sales, interior decoration, teaching professions, electricians, car repair professions, gas selling in main cities, drivers, and guards. An exception can be granted if no Jordanian candidate is found to be suitable.<sup>64</sup> In this case, a clearance from the Public Employment Service and, if applicable, the concerned professional union is required.

**Table 4.5 A total of 16 professions are closed to non-nationals (including Syrian refugees)**

<b>Accounting and administrative jobs</b>	<b>Medical Jobs</b>
Engineering jobs	Clerical jobs (typing and secretarial jobs)
Operator jobs, phones and plug boards	Hair-cutting /including (Cosmetics)
Warehouses jobs	Teaching professions
Selling – all categories	Loading and unloading workers
Selling fuel in the main cities	Mechanical jobs and car mechanics
Drivers	Foreign Regional Offices/expatriates
Cleaners in private schools and hotels	Guardsmen and messengers

Source: Ministry of Labour (2017), Closed Professions Report: [www.mol.gov.jo](http://www.mol.gov.jo)

**In professions and sectors open to foreigners, some quotas set the maximum share of non-nationals admitted.** These can reach up to 60 to 70 percent of the workforce in physically-challenging, unhealthy occupations or for professions imposing night shifts, such as bakeries and certain industries.<sup>65</sup> Over the years, fees levied on foreign workers seeking work permits increased notably towards discouraging business owners to employ foreigners, as well as to provide funds for the training Jordanian manpower.

**Initially, domestic services and agriculture sectors were exempted from the provisions of the 1996 Labour Law.** Even though the Jordanian Parliament formally amended the Labour Law in 2008 to incorporate domestic labour, as well as employment in agriculture, within the provisions of the Law, “Jordanian labour laws do not largely apply to agriculture workers. These workers are not covered under the Social Security Corporation.” (ILO, 2018: 7).

**Regulations still favor Jordanians over foreigners.** In 2016, the minimum salary was raised to JD220 per month for nationals (about US\$300), whilst foreigners’ minimum wage remained at JD110. Nonetheless, compliance to international labour standards and the Jordanian Labour Law, workers’ well-being and fair recruitment practices were addressed by the government of Jordan, in partnership with ILO and other agencies. For example, the Better Work Jordan (BWJ) program, a joint initiative of the International Labour Organisation and the International Finance Corporation, targeted the apparel industry. ILO’s Integrated Program on Fair Recruitment (FAIR) is currently

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.mol.gov.jo/Pages/viewpage.aspx?pageID=206>.

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.mol.gov.jo/Pages/viewpage.aspx?pageID=205>.

being implemented to recruit Nepalese workers for the garment sector. The FAIRWAY project (Regional Fair Migration in the Middle East Project), is focused on supporting the improvement of working and living conditions of migrant workers in Jordan, particularly domestic and construction workers.

#### 4.4.2 Policy developments linked to Syria

Since the advent of the war in Syria in March 2011, Jordan has been receiving Syrian refugees within the framework of its Law of Residency and Foreigners' Affairs.<sup>66</sup> Those among them who seek asylum and access to UNHCR's services in Jordan are automatically recognised as *prima facie* refugees under the framework of a Jordan-UNHCR Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 1998 and partially amended in 2014.<sup>67</sup> Jordan is indeed not a signatory of the 1951 Convention on Refugees. Yet, entries to Jordan were quickly restricted, due to security concerns.<sup>68</sup> Verification campaign started in February 2015, to biometrically register Syrian refugees living in urban areas and issue them new cards from the Ministry of Interior. Those "service cards" give access to services and assistance such as education and health. Governmental services available to Syrian refugees living outside the camps, however, have been decreasing. Since late 2014, access to healthcare centres stopped being free. The government claimed the health sector was already overburdened and budgets stretched (Francis, 2015: 24). Since February 2018, Syrian refugees are no longer able to access the non-insured Jordanian rate for health, and should now pay 80% of foreigner rates.<sup>69</sup>

**The terms of the MoU signed with UNHCR all support Jordan's stance that the refugees' stay in Jordan should be temporary.** In spite of Syrians' investments and wealth creation, prices went up and the competition of native workers with Syrians, was and still is an especially sensitive issue.<sup>70</sup> The terms of the 1998 Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Jordan and UNHCR indeed stipulate that registered refugees, especially Syrians residing in camps, were not permitted to work in Jordan. Non-refugee Syrians, that is, Iraqis or other nationals could legally enter the labour market, under conditions granted to other foreigners. This require obtaining a work permit, itself conditional on residency, on having a sponsor/employer to pay permit fees and choosing a profession opened to non-Jordanians.

**The Jordan-EU Mobility Partnership<sup>71</sup> was established in October 2014.<sup>72</sup>** Jordan being a privileged partner of the EU as situated on one of the "migratory routes" from West Asia to Europe, the document designed the framework for cooperation in the field of managing migration, mobility, asylum and borders. Besides opening negotiations on an agreement for the readmission

<sup>66</sup> Syrians need to register with UNHCR and the Jordanian Ministry of Interior only if they want to access assistance and services available to asylum seekers (Chatelard, 2016: 23).

<sup>67</sup> To give UNHCR 90 days to examine applications submitted by refugees who enter Jordan.

<sup>68</sup> Due to Jordan's participation in the anti-terrorism coalition and since September 2014, in the attempts at the infiltration of activists, as well as operations by local supporters of Da'esh.

<sup>69</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/fr/documents/download/65322>

<sup>70</sup> As demonstrated in the press: <http://eng.majalla.com/2014/07/article55250594>; [http://muftah.org/syrian-refugees-jordanian-economy/#.V\\_44muCLTIU](http://muftah.org/syrian-refugees-jordanian-economy/#.V_44muCLTIU).

<sup>71</sup> Between Jordan and twelve EU-Member States: Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden.

<sup>72</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-14-1109\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-1109_en.htm); [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/docs/20141009\\_joint\\_declaration\\_establishing\\_the\\_eu-jordan\\_mobility\\_partnership\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/docs/20141009_joint_declaration_establishing_the_eu-jordan_mobility_partnership_en.pdf)

of irregular migrants having transited through Jordan before reaching the EU, the EU and Jordan were to begin negotiations on an agreement to facilitate the visa issuing procedures.<sup>73</sup>

**Background to the Jordan-EU Mobility Partnership was the fact that increasing numbers of Syrians were taking up irregular employment on low-paid jobs in the informal economy.** The EU was also experiencing mounting migration pressure from its South and South-East borders, which culminated in the “migration crisis” of 2015. The need was thus increasingly felt to address the question of Syrian refugees’ conditions in their host countries.

**The London Donors’ Conference “Supporting Syria and the Region” of February 2016 brought together international humanitarian and development actors seeking a new and “holistic” approach to the issue of refugees in host communities.** The conference was co-hosted by the UK, Germany, Kuwait, Norway, and the United Nations. The approach has anchored on three interlinked pillars, meant to support Jordan’s growth agenda whilst maintaining its resilience and economic stability:<sup>74</sup>

1. “Turning the Syrian refugee crisis into a development opportunity” that attracts new investments and opens up the EU markets with simplified rules of origin, creating jobs for vulnerable Jordanians and Syrian refugees whilst supporting the post-conflict Syrian economy;<sup>75</sup>
2. Rebuilding and strengthening the resilience of Jordanian host communities by adequately financing the Jordan Response Plan 2016-2018 through grants;
3. Mobilising sufficient grants and concessionary financing to support the macroeconomic framework and address Jordan’s financing needs over the following three years.<sup>76</sup>

**The Conference was said to have “changed the nature of the refugee response in several ways”.** The first change was the large scale of the dedicated funding: the London Conference resulted in pledges of \$12 billion in grants and more than \$40 billion in loans for the region up until 2020, compared to \$3.2 billion for the humanitarian response. The second change was the fact that these funding mechanisms offered “unique incentive structures (such as new trade agreements)” and came with “development plans and reform agendas agreed by Jordan and development partners such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, including pre-identified targets and objectives that unlock the next funding tranche.”<sup>77</sup>

**In return for this massive development, humanitarian and technical assistance, as well as enhanced prospects for enhancing trade opportunities in the EU, the Jordanian government committed to take numerous measures to support labour market integration of Syrian refugees.** In particular, they committed to undertaking “the necessary administrative

<sup>73</sup> <http://carim-south.eu/database/legal-module/joint-declaration-establishing-the-eu-jordan-mobility-partnership/>.

<sup>74</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/498021/Supporting\\_Syria\\_the\\_Region\\_London\\_2016\\_-\\_Jordan\\_Statement.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/498021/Supporting_Syria_the_Region_London_2016_-_Jordan_Statement.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> Rules of origin are the technical criteria needed to determine the national source of a product. This determines whether a specific product qualifies for duty free or other preferential access under a given trade agreement, since duties and restrictions in several cases depend upon the source of imports. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/roi\\_e/roi\\_info\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/roi_e/roi_info_e.htm) and Jordan Strategy Forum: <http://jsf.org/sites/default/files/Relaxing%20the%20Rules%20of%20Origin%20for%20Jordanian%20Industries.pdf>.

<sup>76</sup> As part of Jordan entering into a new Extended Fund Facility program with the IMF.

<sup>77</sup> See Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker and Mansour-Ille (2018: 3).



changes to allow Syrian refugees to apply for work permits both inside and outside of the [Special Economic] zones”, “formalise their existing businesses and to set up new, tax-generating businesses, including access to investor residencies, in accordance with the existing laws and regulations” and lift “restrictions preventing small economic activities within the camps hosting Syrian refugees, and on commerce with people outside the camps”. Focussing on sectors characterised by a low Jordanian participation and a high ratio of foreign workers (e.g. construction, agriculture, service industry, cleaning) and by a high degree of skills match (e.g. handicrafts, textiles), the target of 200,000 job opportunities for Syrians Jordan’s labour force was set. Jordan also committed to facilitating access to education for Syrian children and to incorporating all vulnerable children, Syrian and Jordanian, as well as to increasing opportunities for Syrian youth to receive vocational training.<sup>78</sup>

**As part of commitments made at the February London Conference, and in addition to its financial and technical assistance, the EU further relaxed the rules of origin applicable to Jordan-EU bilateral trade in June 2016.** This preferential access to the EU market for certain goods is, however, conditional on meeting the employment targets.<sup>79</sup> The agreement only concerns businesses located in the 18 Special Economic zones that employ a minimum quota of Syrian refugees (15% at the outset, increasing to 25% in year three),<sup>80</sup> and could be expanded to the entire Kingdom if the equivalent of 200,000 full time jobs are created (ILO, 2017: 7).

**As announced at the London Conference of February 2016, the EU and Jordan also adopted an EU-Jordan Compact (2016-2018).** The Compact outlines and reaffirms mutual commitments and priority actions, including towards Syrian refugees.<sup>81</sup> The overall strategy of the compact was the following: “by creating incentives for increased Jordanian exports to the EU and employment of Syrian refugees, the EU could both help support Jordan - a strategic partner [...] and induce refugees to stay in Jordan with concrete job opportunities”.<sup>82</sup>

**The London Conference was followed by several more conferences in Brussels.** These Brussels I (5 April 2017) and Brussels II Conferences (24-25 April 2018) Conferences focussed on fund-raising and humanitarian issues related to the Syrian refugees and political solutions to the conflict.

**In addition, the government of Jordan and other actors implemented a number of measures to help deliver on its commitments to generate more jobs for Jordanians and Syrian refugees.** These measures, which aimed to remain complying with pre-existing national regulations aimed at the “Jordanisation” of the workforce, included:<sup>83</sup>

- Syrians residing in camps were allowed to work outside the camps.

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/498021/Supporting\\_Syria\\_the\\_Region\\_London\\_2016\\_-\\_Jordan\\_Statement.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/498021/Supporting_Syria_the_Region_London_2016_-_Jordan_Statement.pdf)

<sup>79</sup>

During a period of ten years, the new scheme applies to 52 different product categories including textiles and garments, engineering and electrical products, chemical products, plastic products, and furniture and wood products.

<sup>80</sup>

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-2570\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2570_en.htm)

<sup>81</sup>

<http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12384-2016-ADD-1/en/pdf>

<sup>82</sup>

<https://euobserver.com/opinion/141669>.

<sup>83</sup>

Which include having some sectors and occupations closed to non-Jordanians and having sector-specific quotas for Jordanian workers.



- Work permit procedures and regulations were amended, and the Government of Jordan agreed to issue permits for Syrian refugees free of charge. Originally set to last for three months only, this time period has been expanding regularly since December 2016 (ILO, 2017: 8).
- Work permit fees were waived in April 2016.
- Requirement for employers to submit proof of social security for their workers at the time of submitting work permit applications were waived.
- In September 2016, medical examination requirements for Syrian workers were waived<sup>84</sup>
- In 2017, the Ministry of Labour signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Construction Contractors Association, which waived all quotas for hiring Jordanians in the sector (ILO, 2017: 8-9), and thus opened avenues for the hiring of Syrians in the sector.
  - In May 2016, the decision was made to allow cooperatives to apply for work permits on behalf of Syrian refugee workers in the sector of agriculture. This decision facilitated the recruitment of Syrians through lifting the requirement for the work permit to be tied to a single employer, thus enabling the worker to move between employers in the context of seasonal labour demand in agriculture (ILO, 2017: 11). The General Federation of Jordanian trade unions (GFJTU) also sponsored several thousands of such “flexible” or “freelance” work permits., for example in the construction sector.<sup>85</sup>
- During 2018, a seventh grace period for Syrian refugees was decided. Work permits will remain valid until 31 December 2018.
- On June 3, 2018, the Cabinet voted on excluding Syrian refugees working in the manufacturing sector from the quotas of workforce “Jordanisation” in the sector, set under the country’s National Empowerment and Employment Programme (NEEP).<sup>86</sup>
- UNHCR also reported that the government made it easier for Syrian refugees to obtain One year renewable Ministry of Interior cards, free of Charge

**The number of Syrians with work permits in Jordan has increased substantially since the London Conference.** Between December 2015 and December 2016, the number of Syrians with work permits grew from approximately 4,000 to 40,000. As of June 2018 (last data available as of October 2018), 105,404 permits had been issued since January 1, 2016 and 21,889 permits were issued in the first half of 2018 alone. Between February 2017 and June 30, 2018, 17,470 permits were granted to workers from Syrian camps.<sup>87</sup>

**The government of Jordan launched the Jordan response plan 2018-2020 in order to respond to and mitigate the impact of the Syria crisis on the country.** Efforts have concentrated on the employment of Syrian refugees, targeting 4 specific objectives:<sup>88</sup>

1. Improved short term self-reliance measures in order to promote access to income in preparation for long-term economic opportunities
2. Increased access to formal employment opportunities meeting decent work and protection standards

<sup>84</sup> The Ministry of Labour permitted Syrians to use the medical examination they had already undergone to obtain their Ministry of Interior service card. Issued all Syrians, whether registered as refugees or not, the service card served to identify and keep records of Syrians in Jordan.

<sup>85</sup> Ministry of Labour Syrian Refugee Unit, monthly progress reports December 2017 (<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/61688>) and June 2018 (<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/64904>).

<sup>86</sup> Ministry of Labour Syrian Refugee Unit, monthly progress report June 2018.

<sup>87</sup> Syrian Refugee Unit Work Permit Progress Report, June 2018  
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/61688>.

<sup>88</sup> Jordan Response Plan For the Syria Crisis, Platform for the Syria Crisis Jordan Response, 2018-2020

3. Increase support to entrepreneurs to develop and scale market-driven businesses within an improved enabling environment
4. Promote sustainable development and long-term growth through increased capacity of national and local institution

**The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) also started a project on “Mitigating the Impact of Syria Crisis in the Host Communities”.** This project aims at:<sup>89</sup>

- Creating short-term employment opportunities and developing economic recovery initiatives geared towards improvement of livelihoods and basic social services delivery.
- Enhancing local economic development through skills-matching and exchange, MSMEs growth and capacity development;
- Improving delivery of municipal and social services
- Providing technical support to coordination of host community concerns

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<sup>89</sup> <http://www.jo.undp.org/content/jordan/en/home/projects/mitigating-the-impact-of-syria-crisis-in-the-host-communities.html>

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