



Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in Jordan

International Labour Organization 2019

Women in Jordan account for almost half of the total population, yet less than 18 per cent of the total labour force.¹ The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that the gender gap in Jordan's labour force participation resulted in a loss of \$8 billion USD in the value of GDP in 2018.² This represents a significant challenge with serious implications on national growth and productivity. The ILO Jordan Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP 2018-2022), developed and signed by national social partners, addresses these and other labour market challenges, specifically under its priority to "creat(e) a level playing field for Jordanians, refugees and migrant women and men through decent working conditions for all." In this regard, ILO projects in Jordan streamline gender considerations across various areas of expertise. In the first half of 2019, projects advanced female economic empowerment through the following key outputs and activities:

National Framework on Employment and Empowerment

The ILO has provided technical input in the development and operationalization of a monitoring and evaluation plan under the National Framework on Employment and Empowerment (NFEE). NFEE represents an integrated package of policy and programmatic interventions that promote the employment of Jordanians. The ILO project has advised the Ministry of Labour to collect sex disaggregated data for all training and employment opportunities, and consider targets for female participation in occupations where women are not traditionally represented.



- Out of training projects launched under the framework, women's participation ranged between 18-46 per cent, and depended on the sector where the training took place.
- There is currently no quota for female participation in trainings, but this is an area where the Ministry is invested in making progress.
- Targets and data for female participation were largely concentrated in sectors that conform to traditional gender preferences (Daycare 100 per cent, Health 72 per cent, IT 56 per cent);

ILO Employment Services

Since 2017, the ILO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, has set up 13 Employment Service Centres across Jordan. The centres provide career guidance and job matching services to both Jordanian and Syrian job-seekers. Since 2017, over 10,000 job-seekers have been placed in jobs through these centres, 39.3 per cent of whom are women.

- An internal gender assessment was conducted by two employment service officers in May 2019. Prior to the assessment, the officers participated in a week-long introductory workshop on Participatory Gender Audit (PGA).
- Key findings include:
 - Employment officers focus on women's actual needs (needs that address immediate, day-to-day concerns, such as transportation) and have limited understanding of women's strategic needs (changes to social structures and relationships of power).
 - There is a lack of a gender-specific strategy for the employment of women.
- Key recommendations include:
 - The development of a gender-based strategy and action plan.
 - Set monthly targets for each officer to meet, refer and place female job-seekers.

As a result, the ILO employment service officers now have monthly targets for the percent of female job-seekers they meet with, refer and place. This new monthly target was introduced alongside a wider discussion on female labour force participation and the role of employment services.

Support for Syrian and Jordanian female entrepreneurs

- In 2017, the ILO supported a small group of Syrian and Jordanian women to set up a production kitchen. The kitchen now serves as a supplier for a major sweet manufacturer in Irbid, as well as individual customers. Since the opening of the kitchen, the ILO has received numerous requests from female beneficiaries, who are also interested to start and expand their own businesses. In response, the ILO, in partnership with the Jordan River Foundation, capacitated 15 national trainers on the Women Do Business Methodology.³ The 15 trainers will train 100 Syrian and Jordanian women to start and/or expand their own businesses. At the conclusion of the training, a business competition will award promising start-ups with seed funding.

Employment services for Syrian and Jordanian female agriculture workers

- In July 2019, a focus group discussion was held with 20 female agricultural workers, to better understand their employment service needs. As an outcome of the meeting, a package of support was developed to help female agriculture workers find employment and stay on the job including work injury insurance, transportation and childcare support.



Better Work Jordan (BWJ)

- The 40th Better Work Jordan Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting, held in January 2019, endorsed the 2019-2022 Better Work Jordan Gender Strategy. The strategy focuses on addressing intersecting forms of discrimination, including those based on gender and migration status; enhancing awareness on health-related issues including reproductive health and mental health; strengthening women's voices in the factories and the trade unions; and enhancing the potential of women workers and facilitating their career progression.
- In 2017-2018, BWJ, in cooperation with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), conducted a pilot project to enhance productivity in garment satellite factories (small scale factories in rural areas) to create sustainable employment opportunities for rural Jordanian women.
- BWJ delivered a workshop on gender norms to the executive members of the General Trade Union of Workers in Textile, Garment & Clothing Industries (GTU) to analyse challenges vs. opportunities in relation to gender; it also conducted an initial gender participatory audit through desk review in June 2019.
- BWJ organised a two-day Training of Trainers (ToT) for Respectful Workplace Programme in June 2019 for 20 factory participants. The training was jointly facilitated by BW Global gender officer and BWJ training and industrial relations officer. Through facilitation-based activities, the participants gained a better understanding of sexual harassment prevention, policies and grievance procedures; as well as roles and responsibilities.
- In June 2019, Better Work Jordan conducted an industrial seminar on sexual harassment prevention in Arabic in collaboration with MOL Women and Children Affair directorate. A total of 44 participants from different factories joined the seminar and exchanged different levels of expertise. The discussion was around the definition, types and forms of sexual harassment, work-related national laws in regards to sexual harassment and its implementation. Participants shared ideas on the implementation of sexual harassment policies at the factory level. For example, one factory hired female trainers to facilitate communication between male supervisors and female workers and to prevent misconduct.

Promoting women employment in labour intensive work

The ILO's "Employment through Labour Intensive Infrastructure in Jordan," launched in 2016, is supporting the creation of immediate jobs for both vulnerable Jordanian and Syrian refugee women and men, using labour intensive methods in infrastructure works. Supported by the Germany Government, through the German Development Bank (KfW) the project has designed a gender strategy aimed at ensuring the participation of women in jobs available under the project. The strategy has become a central tool to guide the creation of a gender-friendly working environment, ensuring safe and decent working conditions for women, equal access to jobs and training, as well as equal pay. Other measures, such as awareness raising sessions, have helped break some cultural barriers preventing women from working alongside men on roads. To-date, 26 percent of those employed under the project have been women.



Gender Sensitive Labour Law

- With technical support from the ILO and ongoing joint advocacy, the Labour Law was amended in 2019 and now includes the principle of gender pay, flexi-work arrangements and flexi-hours, paternity leave as well as day care facilities for the children of workers with family responsibilities. The amended law was published on May 16, 2019.

National Framework for Workplace Daycares

- In partnership with the civil society organization SADAQA, the ILO developed a national framework for workplace daycares. The framework was endorsed by the government and later saw the establishment of new daycare centers and training for child care professionals.
- To help increase women employment in satellite factories, Better Work Jordan and partners supported the establishment of day-care facilities in different garment factories across Jordan. To-date, 5 nurseries out of a total of 9 are operating in satellite units across Jordan.

Digital payment and grievance mechanisms for private school teachers

- In 2017, the National Committee for Pay Equity (NCPE) and the ILO supported the “Stand Up for Teachers” campaign, designed to empower female teachers in private schools. The committee and ILO helped train teachers to understand and advocate for their labour rights. Since 2017, 400 teachers organized to secure fair wages and paid leave over the holidays. In addition, active complaint procedures have helped resolve 60 complaints through mediation and had 80 per cent of all complaints (240) resolved in an amenable manner.
- After continued advocacy and dialogue, the Pay Equity project in Jordan witnessed the adoption of mandatory digital payments for all private school teachers in Jordan. Prior to this regulation, teachers were paid in cash, with reports of non-payment, late-payment and underpayment that could not be substantiated with records.

Jordan becomes a member in Equal Pay Coalition

- Under the Pay Equity project, and in cooperation with Ministry of Labour and the Jordan National Committee for Women, the National Committee for Equal Pay was recognized under the Equal Pay International Coalition, led by the ILO, UNWomen and OECD.

- ¹ ILOSTAT, Labour Force by Sex and Age https://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/oracle/webcenter/portalapp/pagehierarchy/Page27.jspx?subject=EAP&indicator=EAP_2EAP_SEX_AGE_NB&datasetCode=A&collectionCode=ILOEST&_afLoop=1462131408388004&_afWindowMode=0&_afWindowId=fwjyohwp_1#!%403%40%Findicator%3DEAP_2EAP_SEX_AGE_NB%26_afWindowId%3Dfwjyohwp_126%subject%3DEAP%26_afLoop%3D146213140838800426%datasetCode%3DA%26collectionCode%3DIOEST%26_afWindowMode%3D026%_adf.ctrl-state%3Dfwjyohwp_62
- ² International Labour Organization. Global Wage Report 2018/19/ What lies behind gender pay gaps. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_650553.pdf
- ³ The Women Do Business methodology was developed by the ILO in Yemen in 2011, to train female entrepreneurs to develop basic business skills. Through 40 hours of theoretical training, participants generate business plans and benefit from ongoing mentorship to launch or expand their businesses.

